

Hazard of New Fortunes, a — Volume 2 eBook

Hazard of New Fortunes, a — Volume 2 by William Dean Howells

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Page 1

By William Dean Howells

PART SECOND

I.

The evening when March closed with Mrs. Green's reduced offer, and decided to take her apartment, the widow whose lodgings he had rejected sat with her daughter in an upper room at the back of her house. In the shaded glow of the drop-light she was sewing, and the girl was drawing at the same table. From time to time, as they talked, the girl lifted her head and tilted it a little on one side so as to get some desired effect of her work.

"It's a mercy the cold weather holds off," said the mother. "We should have to light the furnace, unless we wanted to scare everybody away with a cold house; and I don't know who would take care of it, or what would become of us, every way."

"They seem to have been scared away from a house that wasn't cold," said the girl. "Perhaps they might like a cold one. But it's too early for cold yet. It's only just in the beginning of November."

"The Messenger says they've had a sprinkling of snow."

"Oh yes, at St. Barnaby! I don't know when they don't have sprinklings of snow there. I'm awfully glad we haven't got that winter before us."

The widow sighed as mothers do who feel the contrast their experience opposes to the hopeful recklessness of such talk as this. "We may have a worse winter here," she said, darkly.

"Then I couldn't stand it," said the girl, "and I should go in for lighting out to Florida double-quick."

"And how would you get to Florida?" demanded her mother, severely.

"Oh, by the usual conveyance Pullman vestibuled train, I suppose. What makes you so blue, mamma?" The girl was all the time sketching away, rubbing out, lifting her head for the effect, and then bending it over her work again without looking at her mother.

"I am not blue, Alma. But I cannot endure this—this hopefulness of yours."

"Why? What harm does it do?"

“Harm?” echoed the mother.

Pending the effort she must make in saying, the girl cut in: “Yes, harm. You’ve kept your despair dusted off and ready for use at an instant’s notice ever since we came, and what good has it done? I’m going to keep on hoping to the bitter end. That’s what papa did.”

It was what the Rev. Archibald Leighton had done with all the consumptive’s buoyancy. The morning he died he told them that now he had turned the point and was really going to get well. The cheerfulness was not only in his disease, but in his temperament. Its excess was always a little against him in his church work, and Mrs. Leighton was right enough in feeling that if it had not been for the ballast of her instinctive despondency he would have made shipwreck of such small chances of prosperity as befell him in life. It was not from him that his daughter

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got her talent, though he had left her his temperament intact of his widow's legal thirds. He was one of those men of whom the country people say when he is gone that the woman gets along better without him. Mrs. Leighton had long eked out their income by taking a summer boarder or two, as a great favor, into her family; and when the greater need came, she frankly gave up her house to the summer-folks (as they call them in the country), and managed it for their comfort from the small quarter of it in which she shut herself up with her daughter.

The notion of shutting up is an exigency of the rounded period. The fact is, of course, that Alma Leighton was not shut up in any sense whatever. She was the pervading light, if not force, of the house. She was a good cook, and she managed the kitchen with the help of an Irish girl, while her mother looked after the rest of the housekeeping. But she was not systematic; she had inspiration but not discipline, and her mother mourned more over the days when Alma left the whole dinner to the Irish girl than she rejoiced in those when one of Alma's great thoughts took form in a chicken-pie of incomparable savor or in a matchless pudding. The off-days came when her artistic nature was expressing itself in charcoal, for she drew to the admiration of all among the lady boarders who could not draw. The others had their reserves; they readily conceded that Alma had genius, but they were sure she needed instruction. On the other hand, they were not so radical as to agree with the old painter who came every summer to paint the elms of the St. Barnaby meadows. He contended that she needed to be a man in order to amount to anything; but in this theory he was opposed by an authority, of his own sex, whom the lady sketchers believed to speak with more impartiality in a matter concerning them as much as Alma Leighton. He said that instruction would do, and he was not only, younger and handsomer, but he was fresher from the schools than old Harrington, who, even the lady sketchers could see, painted in an obsolescent manner. His name was Beaton—Angus Beaton; but he was not Scotch, or not more Scotch than Mary Queen of Scots was. His father was a Scotchman, but Beaton was born in Syracuse, New York, and it had taken only three years in Paris to obliterate many traces of native and ancestral manner in him. He wore his black beard cut shorter than his mustache, and a little pointed; he stood with his shoulders well thrown back and with a lateral curve of his person when he talked about art, which would alone have carried conviction even if he had not had a thick, dark bang coming almost to the brows of his mobile gray eyes, and had not spoken English with quick, staccato impulses, so as to give it the effect of epigrammatic and sententious French. One of the ladies said that you always thought of him as having spoken French after it was over, and accused herself of wrong in not being able to feel afraid of him. None of the ladies was afraid of him, though they could not believe that he was really so deferential to their work as he seemed; and they knew, when he would not criticise Mr. Harrington's work, that he was just acting from principle.

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They may or may not have known the deference with which he treated Alma's work; but the girl herself felt that his abrupt, impersonal comment recognized her as a real sister in art. He told her she ought to come to New York, and draw in the League, or get into some painter's private class; and it was the sense of duty thus appealed to which finally resulted in the hazardous experiment she and her mother were now making. There were no logical breaks in the chain of their reasoning from past success with boarders in St. Barnaby to future success with boarders in New York. Of course the outlay was much greater. The rent of the furnished house they had taken was such that if they failed their experiment would be little less than ruinous.

But they were not going to fail; that was what Alma contended, with a hardy courage that her mother sometimes felt almost invited failure, if it did not deserve it. She was one of those people who believe that if you dread harm enough it is less likely to happen. She acted on this superstition as if it were a religion.

"If it had not been for my despair, as you call it, Alma," she answered, "I don't know where we should have been now."

"I suppose we should have been in St. Barnaby," said the girl. "And if it's worse to be in New York, you see what your despair's done, mamma. But what's the use? You meant well, and I don't blame you. You can't expect even despair to come out always just the way you want it. Perhaps you've used too much of it." The girl laughed, and Mrs. Leighton laughed, too. Like every one else, she was not merely a prevailing mood, as people are apt to be in books, but was an irregularly spheroidal character, with surfaces that caught the different lights of circumstance and reflected them. Alma got up and took a pose before the mirror, which she then transferred to her sketch. The room was pinned about with other sketches, which showed with fantastic indistinctness in the shaded gaslight. Alma held up the drawing. "How do you like it?"

Mrs. Leighton bent forward over her sewing to look at it. "You've got the man's face rather weak."

"Yes, that's so. Either I see all the hidden weakness that's in men's natures, and bring it to the surface in their figures, or else I put my own weakness into them. Either way, it's a drawback to their presenting a truly manly appearance. As long as I have one of the miserable objects before me, I can draw him; but as soon as his back's turned I get to putting ladies into men's clothes. I should think you'd be scandalized, mamma, if you were a really feminine person. It must be your despair that helps you to bear up. But what's the matter with the young lady in young lady's clothes? Any dust on her?"

"What expressions!" said Mrs. Leighton. "Really, Alma, for a refined girl you are the most unrefined!"

“Go on—about the girl in the picture!” said Alma, slightly knocking her mother on the shoulder, as she stood over her.

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"I don't see anything to her. What's she doing?"

"Oh, just being made love to, I suppose."

"She's perfectly insipid!"

"You're awfully articulate, mamma! Now, if Mr. Wetmore were to criticise that picture he'd draw a circle round it in the air, and look at it through that, and tilt his head first on one side and then on the other, and then look at you, as if you were a figure in it, and then collapse awhile, and moan a little and gasp, 'Isn't your young lady a little too-too—' and then he'd try to get the word out of you, and groan and suffer some more; and you'd say, 'She is, rather,' and that would give him courage, and he'd say, 'I don't mean that she's so very—' 'Of course not.' 'You understand?' 'Perfectly. I see it myself, now.' 'Well, then'—and he'd take your pencil and begin to draw—I should give her a little more—Ah?' 'Yes, I see the difference.'—'You see the difference?' And he'd go off to some one else, and you'd know that you'd been doing the wishy-washest thing in the world, though he hadn't spoken a word of criticism, and couldn't. But he wouldn't have noticed the expression at all; he'd have shown you where your drawing was bad. He doesn't care for what he calls the literature of a thing; he says that will take care of itself if the drawing's good. He doesn't like my doing these chic things; but I'm going to keep it up, for I think it's the nearest way to illustrating."

She took her sketch and pinned it up on the door.

"And has Mr. Beaton been about, yet?" asked her mother.

"No," said the girl, with her back still turned; and she added, "I believe he's in New York; Mr. Wetmore's seen him."

"It's a little strange he doesn't call."

"It would be if he were not an artist. But artists never do anything like other people. He was on his good behavior while he was with us, and he's a great deal more conventional than most of them; but even he can't keep it up. That's what makes me really think that women can never amount to anything in art. They keep all their appointments, and fulfil all their duties just as if they didn't know anything about art. Well, most of them don't. We've got that new model to-day."

"What new model?"

"The one Mr. Wetmore was telling us about the old German; he's splendid. He's got the most beautiful head; just like the old masters' things. He used to be Humphrey Williams's model for his Biblical-pieces; but since he's dead, the old man hardly gets anything to do. Mr. Wetmore says there isn't anybody in the Bible that Williams didn't

paint him as. He's the Law and the Prophets in all his Old Testament pictures, and he's Joseph, Peter, Judas Iscariot, and the Scribes and Pharisees in the New."

"It's a good thing people don't know how artists work, or some of the most sacred pictures would have no influence," said Mrs. Leighton.

"Why, of course not!" cried the girl. "And the influence is the last thing a painter thinks of—or supposes he thinks of. What he knows he's anxious about is the drawing and the color. But people will never understand how simple artists are. When I reflect what a complex and sophisticated being I am, I'm afraid I can never come to anything in art. Or I should be if I hadn't genius."

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"Do you think Mr. Beaton is very simple?" asked Mrs. Leighton.

"Mr. Wetmore doesn't think he's very much of an artist. He thinks he talks too well. They believe that if a man can express himself clearly he can't paint."

"And what do you believe?"

"Oh, I can express myself, too."

The mother seemed to be satisfied with this evasion. After a while she said, "I presume he will call when he gets settled."

The girl made no answer to this. "One of the girls says that old model is an educated man. He was in the war, and lost a hand. Doesn't it seem a pity for such a man to have to sit to a class of affected geese like us as a model? I declare it makes me sick. And we shall keep him a week, and pay him six or seven dollars for the use of his grand old head, and then what will he do? The last time he was regularly employed was when Mr. Mace was working at his Damascus Massacre. Then he wanted so many Arab sheiks and Christian elders that he kept old Mr. Lindau steadily employed for six months. Now he has to pick up odd jobs where he can."

"I suppose he has his pension," said Mrs. Leighton.

"No; one of the girls"—that was the way Alma always described her fellow-students—"says he has no pension. He didn't apply for it for a long time, and then there was a hitch about it, and it was somethinged—vetoed, I believe she said."

"Who vetoed it?" asked Mrs. Leighton, with some curiosity about the process, which she held in reserve.

"I don't know—whoever vetoes things. I wonder what Mr. Wetmore does think of us—his class. We must seem perfectly crazy. There isn't one of us really knows what she's doing it for, or what she expects to happen when she's done it. I suppose every one thinks she has genius. I know the Nebraska widow does, for she says that unless you have genius it isn't the least use. Everybody's puzzled to know what she does with her baby when she's at work—whether she gives it soothing syrup. I wonder how Mr. Wetmore can keep from laughing in our faces. I know he does behind our backs."

Mrs. Leighton's mind wandered back to another point. "Then if he says Mr. Beaton can't paint, I presume he doesn't respect him very much."

"Oh, he never said he couldn't paint. But I know he thinks so. He says he's an excellent critic."

“Alma,” her mother said, with the effect of breaking off, “what do you suppose is the reason he hasn’t been near us?”

“Why, I don’t know, mamma, except that it would have been natural for another person to come, and he’s an artist at least, artist enough for that.”

“That doesn’t account for it altogether. He was very nice at St. Barnaby, and seemed so interested in you—your work.”

“Plenty of people were nice at St. Barnaby. That rich Mrs. Horn couldn’t contain her joy when she heard we were coming to New York, but she hasn’t poured in upon us a great deal since we got here.”

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"But that's different. She's very fashionable, and she's taken up with her own set. But Mr. Beaton's one of our kind."

"Thank you. Papa wasn't quite a tombstone-cutter, mamma."

"That makes it all the harder to bear. He can't be ashamed of us. Perhaps he doesn't know where we are."

"Do you wish to send him your card, mamma?" The girl flushed and towered in scorn of the idea.

"Why, no, Alma," returned her mother.

"Well, then," said Alma.

But Mrs. Leighton was not so easily quelled. She had got her mind on Mr. Beaton, and she could not detach it at once. Besides, she was one of those women (they are commoner than the same sort of men) whom it does not pain to take out their most intimate thoughts and examine them in the light of other people's opinions. "But I don't see how he can behave so. He must know that—"

"That what, mamma?" demanded the girl.

"That he influenced us a great deal in coming—"

"He didn't. If he dared to presume to think such a thing—"

"Now, Alma," said her mother, with the clinging persistence of such natures, "you know he did. And it's no use for you to pretend that we didn't count upon him in—in every way. You may not have noticed his attentions, and I don't say you did, but others certainly did; and I must say that I didn't expect he would drop us so."

"Drop us!" cried Alma, in a fury. "Oh!"

"Yes, drop us, Alma. He must know where we are. Of course, Mr. Wetmore's spoken to him about you, and it's a shame that he hasn't been near us. I should have thought common gratitude, common decency, would have brought him after—after all we did for him."

"We did nothing for him—nothing! He paid his board, and that ended it."

"No, it didn't, Alma. You know what he used to say—about its being like home, and all that; and I must say that after his attentions to you, and all the things you told me he said, I expected something very dif—"

A sharp peal of the door-bell thrilled through the house, and as if the pull of the bell-wire had twitched her to her feet, Mrs. Leighton sprang up and grappled with her daughter in their common terror.

They both glared at the clock and made sure that it was five minutes after nine. Then they abandoned themselves some moments to the unrestricted play of their apprehensions.

II.

"Why, Alma," whispered the mother, "who in the world can it be at this time of night? You don't suppose he—"

"Well, I'm not going to the door, anyhow, mother, I don't care who it is; and, of course, he wouldn't be such a goose as to come at this hour." She put on a look of miserable trepidation, and shrank back from the door, while the hum of the bell died away, in the hall.

"What shall we do?" asked Mrs. Leighton, helplessly.

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"Let him go away—whoever they are," said Alma.

Another and more peremptory ring forbade them refuge in this simple expedient.

"Oh, dear! what shall we do? Perhaps it's a despatch."

The conjecture moved Alma to no more than a rigid stare. "I shall not go," she said. A third ring more insistent than the others followed, and she said: "You go ahead, mamma, and I'll come behind to scream if it's anybody. We can look through the side-lights at the door first."

Mrs. Leighton fearfully led the way from the back chamber where they had been sitting, and slowly descended the stairs. Alma came behind and turned up the hall gas-jet with a sudden flash that made them both jump a little. The gas inside rendered it more difficult to tell who was on the threshold, but Mrs. Leighton decided from a timorous peep through the scrims that it was a lady and gentleman. Something in this distribution of sex emboldened her; she took her life in her hand, and opened the door.

The lady spoke. "Does Mrs. Leighton live heah?" she said, in a rich, throaty voice; and she feigned a reference to the agent's permit she held in her hand.

"Yes," said Mrs. Leighton; she mechanically occupied the doorway, while Alma already quivered behind her with impatience of her impoliteness.

"Oh," said the lady, who began to appear more and more a young lady, "Ah didn't know but Ah had mistaken the hoase. Ah suppose it's rather late to see the apawtments, and Ah most ask you to pawdon us." She put this tentatively, with a delicately growing recognition of Mrs. Leighton as the lady of the house, and a humorous intelligence of the situation in the glance she threw Alma over her mother's shoulder. "Ah'm afraid we most have frightened you."

"Oh, not at all," said Alma; and at the same time her mother said, "Will you walk in, please?"

The gentleman promptly removed his hat and made the Leightons an inclusive bow. "You awe very kind, madam, and I am sorry for the trouble we awe giving you." He was tall and severe-looking, with a gray, trooperish mustache and iron-gray hair, and, as Alma decided, iron-gray eyes. His daughter was short, plump, and fresh-colored, with an effect of liveliness that did not all express itself in her broad-vowelled, rather formal speech, with its odd valuations of some of the auxiliary verbs, and its total elision of the canine letter.

"We awe from the Soath," she said, "and we arrived this mawning, but we got this cyahd from the brokah just befo' dinnah, and so we awe rathah late."

“Not at all; it’s only nine o’clock,” said Mrs. Leighton. She looked up from the card the young lady had given her, and explained, “We haven’t got in our servants yet, and we had to answer the bell ourselves, and—”

“You were frightened, of course,” said the young lady, caressingly.

The gentleman said they ought not to have come so late, and he offered some formal apologies.

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"We should have been just as much scared any time after five o'clock," Alma said to the sympathetic intelligence in the girl's face.

She laughed out. "Of coase! Ah would have my hawt in my moath all day long, too, if Ah was living in a big hoase alone."

A moment of stiffness followed; Mrs. Leighton would have liked to withdraw from the intimacy of the situation, but she did not know how. It was very well for these people to assume to be what they pretended; but, she reflected too late, she had no proof of it except the agent's permit. They were all standing in the hall together, and she prolonged the awkward pause while she examined the permit. "You are Mr. Woodburn?" she asked, in a way that Alma felt implied he might not be.

"Yes, madam; from Charlottesboag, Virginia," he answered, with the slight umbrage a man shows when the strange cashier turns his check over and questions him before cashing it.

Alma writhed internally, but outwardly remained subordinate; she examined the other girl's dress, and decided in a superficial consciousness that she had made her own bonnet.

"I shall be glad to show you my rooms," said Mrs. Leighton, with an irrelevant sigh. "You must excuse their being not just as I should wish them. We're hardly settled yet."

"Don't speak of it, madam," said the gentleman, "if you can overlook the trouble we awe giving you at such an unseasonable houah."

"Ah'm a hoasekeepah mahself," Miss Woodburn joined in, "and Ah know ho' to accyoant fo' everything."

Mrs. Leighton led the way up-stairs, and the young lady decided upon the large front room and small side room on the third story. She said she could take the small one, and the other was so large that her father could both sleep and work in it. She seemed not ashamed to ask if Mrs. Leighton's price was inflexible, but gave way laughing when her father refused to have any bargaining, with a haughty self-respect which he softened to deference for Mrs. Leighton. His impulsiveness opened the way for some confidence from her, and before the affair was arranged she was enjoying in her quality of clerical widow the balm of the Virginians' reverent sympathy. They said they were church people themselves.

"Ah don't know what yo' mothah means by yo' hoase not being in oddah," the young lady said to Alma as they went down-stairs together. "Ah'm a great hoasekeepah mahself, and Ah mean what Ah say."



They had all turned mechanically into the room where the Leightons were sitting when the Woodburns rang: Mr. Woodburn consented to sit down, and he remained listening to Mrs. Leighton while his daughter bustled up to the sketches pinned round the room and questioned Alma about them.

“Ah suppose you awe going to be a great awtust?” she said, in friendly banter, when Alma owned to having done the things. “Ah’ve a great notion to take a few lessons mahself. Who’s yo’ teachah?”

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Alma said she was drawing in Mr. Wetmore's class, and Miss Woodburn said: "Well, it's just beautiful, Miss Leighton; it's grand. Ah suppose it's raght expensive, now? Mah goodness! we have to cyoant the coast so much nowadays; it seems to me we do nothing but cyoant it. Ah'd like to hah something once without askin' the price."

"Well, if you didn't ask it," said Alma, "I don't believe Mr. Wetmore would ever know what the price of his lessons was. He has to think, when you ask him."

"Why, he most be chomming," said Miss Woodburn. "Perhaps Ah maght get the lessons for nothing from him. Well, Ah believe in my soul Ah'll trah. Now ho' did you begin? and ho' do you expect to get anything oat of it?" She turned on Alma eyes brimming with a shrewd mixture of fun and earnest, and Alma made note of the fact that she had an early nineteenth-century face, round, arch, a little coquettish, but extremely sensible and unspoiled-looking, such as used to be painted a good deal in miniature at that period; a tendency of her brown hair to twine and twist at the temples helped the effect; a high comb would have completed it, Alma felt, if she had her bonnet off. It was almost a Yankee country-girl type; but perhaps it appeared so to Alma because it was, like that, pure Anglo-Saxon. Alma herself, with her dull, dark skin, slender in figure, slow in speech, with aristocratic forms in her long hands, and the oval of her fine face pointed to a long chin, felt herself much more Southern in style than this blooming, bubbling, bustling Virginian.

"I don't know," she answered, slowly.

"Going to take po'traits," suggested Miss Woodburn, "or just paint the ahdeal?" A demure burlesque lurked in her tone.

"I suppose I don't expect to paint at all," said Alma. "I'm going to illustrate books—if anybody will let me."

"Ah should think they'd just joamp at you," said Miss Woodburn. "Ah'll tell you what let's do, Miss Leighton: you make some pictures, and Ah'll wrahte a book fo' them. Ah've got to do something. Ali maght as well wrahte a book. You know we Southerners have all had to go to woak. But Ah don't mand it. I tell papa I shouldn't ca' fo' the disgrace of bein' poo' if it wasn't fo' the inconvenience."

"Yes, it's inconvenient," said Alma; "but you forget it when you're at work, don't you think?"

"Mah, yes! Perhaps that's one reason why poo' people have to woak so hawd-to keep their wands off their poverty."

The girls both tittered, and turned from talking in a low tone with their backs toward their elders, and faced them.

“Well, Madison,” said Mr. Woodburn, “it is time we should go. I bid you good-night, madam,” he bowed to Mrs. Leighton. “Good-night,” he bowed again to Alma.

His daughter took leave of them in formal phrase, but with a jolly cordiality of manner that deformed it. “We shall be roand raght soon in the mawning, then,” she threatened at the door.

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"We shall be all ready for you," Alma called after her down the steps.

"Well, Alma?" her mother asked, when the door closed upon them.

"She doesn't know any more about art," said Alma, "than—nothing at all. But she's jolly and good-hearted. She praised everything that was bad in my sketches, and said she was going to take lessons herself. When a person talks about taking lessons, as if they could learn it, you know where they belong artistically."

Mrs. Leighton shook her head with a sigh. "I wish I knew where they belonged financially. We shall have to get in two girls at once. I shall have to go out the first thing in the morning, and then our troubles will begin."

"Well, didn't you want them to begin? I will stay home and help you get ready. Our prosperity couldn't begin without the troubles, if you mean boarders, and boarders mean servants. I shall be very glad to be afflicted with a cook for a while myself."

"Yes; but we don't know anything about these people, or whether they will be able to pay us. Did she talk as if they were well off?"

"She talked as if they were poor; poo' she called it."

"Yes, how queerly she pronounced," said Mrs. Leighton. "Well, I ought to have told them that I required the first week in advance."

"Mamma! If that's the way you're going to act!"

"Oh, of course, I couldn't, after he wouldn't let her bargain for the rooms. I didn't like that."

"I did. And you can see that they were perfect ladies; or at least one of them." Alma laughed at herself, but her mother did not notice.

"Their being ladies won't help if they've got no money. It 'll make it all the worse."

"Very well, then; we have no money, either. We're a match for them any day there. We can show them that two can play at that game."

III.

Arnus Beaton's studio looked at first glance like many other painters' studios. A gray wall quadrangularly vaulted to a large north light; casts of feet, hands, faces hung to nails about; prints, sketches in oil and water-color stuck here and there lower down; a rickety table, with paint and palettes and bottles of varnish and siccative tossed

comfortlessly on it; an easel, with a strip of some faded mediaeval silk trailing from it; a lay figure simpering in incomplete nakedness, with its head on one side, and a stocking on one leg, and a Japanese dress dropped before it; dusty rugs and skins kicking over the varnished floor; canvases faced to the mop-board; an open trunk overflowing with costumes: these features one might notice anywhere. But, besides, there was a bookcase with an unusual number of books in it, and there was an open colonial writing-desk, claw-footed, brass-handled, and scutcheoned, with foreign periodicals—French and English—littering its leaf, and some pages of manuscript scattered among them. Above all, there was a sculptor's revolving stand, supporting a bust which Beaton was modelling, with an eye fixed as simultaneously as possible on the clay and on the head of the old man who sat on the platform beside it.

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Few men have been able to get through the world with several gifts to advantage in all; and most men seem handicapped for the race if they have more than one. But they are apparently immensely interested as well as distracted by them. When Beaton was writing, he would have agreed, up to a certain point, with any one who said literature was his proper expression; but, then, when he was painting, up to a certain point, he would have maintained against the world that he was a colorist, and supremely a colorist. At the certain point in either art he was apt to break away in a frenzy of disgust and wreak himself upon some other. In these moods he sometimes designed elevations of buildings, very striking, very original, very chic, very everything but habitable. It was in this way that he had tried his hand on sculpture, which he had at first approached rather slightly as a mere decorative accessory of architecture. But it had grown in his respect till he maintained that the accessory business ought to be all the other way: that temples should be raised to enshrine statues, not statues made to ornament temples; that was putting the cart before the horse with a vengeance. This was when he had carried a plastic study so far that the sculptors who saw it said that Beaton might have been an architect, but would certainly never be a sculptor. At the same time he did some hurried, nervous things that had a popular charm, and that sold in plaster reproductions, to the profit of another. Beaton justly despised the popular charm in these, as well as in the paintings he sold from time to time; he said it was flat burglary to have taken money for them, and he would have been living almost wholly upon the bounty of the old tombstone-cutter in Syracuse if it had not been for the syndicate letters which he supplied to Fulkerson for ten dollars a week.

They were very well done, but he hated doing them after the first two or three, and had to be punched up for them by Fulkerson, who did not cease to prize them, and who never failed to punch him up. Beaton being what he was, Fulkerson was his creditor as well as patron; and Fulkerson being what he was, had an enthusiastic patience with the elusive, facile, adaptable, unpractical nature of Beaton. He was very proud of his art-letters, as he called them; but then Fulkerson was proud of everything he secured for his syndicate. The fact that he had secured it gave it value; he felt as if he had written it himself.

One art trod upon another's heels with Beaton. The day before he had rushed upon canvas the conception of a picture which he said to himself was glorious, and to others (at the table d'hôte of Maroni) was not bad. He had worked at it in a fury till the light failed him, and he execrated the dying day. But he lit his lamp and transferred the process of his thinking from the canvas to the opening of the syndicate letter which he knew Fulkerson would be coming for in the morning. He remained talking

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so long after dinner in the same strain as he had painted and written in that he could not finish his letter that night. The next morning, while he was making his tea for breakfast, the postman brought him a letter from his father enclosing a little check, and begging him with tender, almost deferential, urgency to come as lightly upon him as possible, for just now his expenses were very heavy. It brought tears of shame into Beaton's eyes—the fine, smouldering, floating eyes that many ladies admired, under the thick bang—and he said to himself that if he were half a man he would go home and go to work cutting gravestones in his father's shop. But he would wait, at least, to finish his picture; and as a sop to his conscience, to stay its immediate ravaging, he resolved to finish that syndicate letter first, and borrow enough money from Fulkerson to be able to send his father's check back; or, if not that, then to return the sum of it partly in Fulkerson's check. While he still teemed with both of these good intentions the old man from whom he was modelling his head of Judas came, and Beaton saw that he must get through with him before he finished either the picture or the letter; he would have to pay him for the time, anyway. He utilized the remorse with which he was tingling to give his Judas an expression which he found novel in the treatment of that character—a look of such touching, appealing self-aborrence that Beaton's artistic joy in it amounted to rapture; between the breathless moments when he worked in dead silence for an effect that was trying to escape him, he sang and whistled fragments of comic opera.

In one of the hushes there came a blow on the outside of the door that made Beaton jump, and swear with a modified profanity that merged itself in apostrophic prayer. He knew it must be Fulkerson, and after roaring "Come in!" he said to the model, "That 'll do this morning, Lindau."

Fulkerson squared his feet in front of the bust and compared it by fleeting glances with the old man as he got stiffly up and suffered Beaton to help him on with his thin, shabby overcoat.

"Can you come to-morrow, Lindau?"

"No, not to-morrow, Mr. Peaton. I haf to zit for the young ladties."

"Oh!" said Beaton. "Wet-more's class? Is Miss Leighton doing you?"

"I don't know their namess," Lindau began, when Fulkerson said:

"Hope you haven't forgotten mine, Mr. Lindau? I met you with Mr. March at Maroni's one night." Fulkerson offered him a universally shakable hand.

"Oh yes! I am gladt to zee you again, Mr. Vulkerson. And Mr. Marge—he don't zeem to gome any more?"

“Up to his eyes in work. Been moving on from Boston and getting settled, and starting in on our enterprise. Beaton here hasn’t got a very flattering likeness of you, hey? Well, good-morning,” he said, for Lindau appeared not to have heard him and was escaping with a bow through the door.

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Beaton lit a cigarette which he pinched nervously between his lips before he spoke. "You've come for that letter, I suppose, Fulkerson? It isn't done."

Fulkerson turned from staring at the bust to which he had mounted. "What you fretting about that letter for? I don't want your letter."

Beaton stopped biting his cigarette and looked at him. "Don't want my letter? Oh, very good!" he bristled up. He took his cigarette from his lips, and blew the smoke through his nostrils, and then looked at Fulkerson.

"No; I don't want your letter; I want you."

Beaton disdained to ask an explanation, but he internally lowered his crest, while he continued to look at Fulkerson without changing his defiant countenance. This suited Fulkerson well enough, and he went on with relish, "I'm going out of the syndicate business, old man, and I'm on a new thing." He put his leg over the back of a chair and rested his foot on its seat, and, with one hand in his pocket, he laid the scheme of 'Every Other Week' before Beaton with the help of the other. The artist went about the room, meanwhile, with an effect of indifference which by no means offended Fulkerson. He took some water into his mouth from a tumbler, which he blew in a fine mist over the head of Judas before swathing it in a dirty cotton cloth; he washed his brushes and set his palette; he put up on his easel the picture he had blocked on the day before, and stared at it with a gloomy face; then he gathered the sheets of his unfinished letter together and slid them into a drawer of his writing-desk. By the time he had finished and turned again to Fulkerson, Fulkerson was saying: "I did think we could have the first number out by New-Year's; but it will take longer than that—a month longer; but I'm not sorry, for the holidays kill everything; and by February, or the middle of February, people will get their breath again and begin to look round and ask what's new. Then we'll reply in the language of Shakespeare and Milton, 'Every Other Week; and don't you forget it.'" He took down his leg and asked, "Got a pipe of 'baccy anywhere?"

Beaton nodded at a clay stem sticking out of a Japanese vase of bronze on his mantel. "There's yours," he said; and Fulkerson said, "Thanks," and filled the pipe and sat down and began to smoke tranquilly.

Beaton saw that he would have to speak now. "And what do you want with me?"

"You? Oh yes," Fulkerson humorously dramatized a return to himself from a pensive absence. "Want you for the art department."

Beaton shook his head. "I'm not your man, Fulkerson," he said, compassionately. "You want a more practical hand, one that's in touch with what's going. I'm getting further and further away from this century and its claptrap. I don't believe in your enterprise; I

don't respect it, and I won't have anything to do with it. It would-choke me, that kind of thing."

"That's all right," said Fulkerson. He esteemed a man who was not going to let himself go cheap. "Or if it isn't, we can make it. You and March will pull together first-rate. I don't care how much ideal you put into the thing; the more the better. I can look after the other end of the schooner myself."

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"You don't understand me," said Beaton. "I'm not trying to get a rise out of you. I'm in earnest. What you want is some man who can have patience with mediocrity putting on the style of genius, and with genius turning mediocrity on his hands. I haven't any luck with men; I don't get on with them; I'm not popular." Beaton recognized the fact with the satisfaction which it somehow always brings to human pride.

"So much the better!" Fulkerson was ready for him at this point. "I don't want you to work the old-established racket the reputations. When I want them I'll go to them with a pocketful of rocks—knock-down argument. But my idea is to deal with the volunteer material. Look at the way the periodicals are carried on now! Names! names! names! In a country that's just boiling over with literary and artistic ability of every kind the new fellows have no chance. The editors all engage their material. I don't believe there are fifty volunteer contributions printed in a year in all the New York magazines. It's all wrong; it's suicidal. 'Every Other Week' is going back to the good old anonymous system, the only fair system. It's worked well in literature, and it will work well in art."

"It won't work well in art," said Beaton. "There you have a totally different set of conditions. What you'll get by inviting volunteer illustrations will be a lot of amateur trash. And how are you going to submit your literature for illustration? It can't be done. At any rate, I won't undertake to do it."

"We'll get up a School of Illustration," said Fulkerson, with cynical security. "You can read the things and explain 'em, and your pupils can make their sketches under your eye. They wouldn't be much further out than most illustrations are if they never knew what they were illustrating. You might select from what comes in and make up a sort of pictorial variations to the literature without any particular reference to it. Well, I understand you to accept?"

"No, you don't."

"That is, to consent to help us with your advice and criticism. That's all I want. It won't commit you to anything; and you can be as anonymous as anybody." At the door Fulkerson added: "By-the-way, the new man—the fellow that's taken my old syndicate business—will want you to keep on; but I guess he's going to try to beat you down on the price of the letters. He's going in for retrenchment. I brought along a check for this one; I'm to pay for that." He offered Beaton an envelope.

"I can't take it, Fulkerson. The letter's paid for already." Fulkerson stepped forward and laid the envelope on the table among the tubes of paint.

"It isn't the letter merely. I thought you wouldn't object to a little advance on your 'Every Other Week' work till you kind of got started."

Beaton remained inflexible. "It can't be done, Fulkerson. Don't I tell you I can't sell myself out to a thing I don't believe in? Can't you understand that?"

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"Oh yes; I can understand that first-rate. I don't want to buy you; I want to borrow you. It's all right. See? Come round when you can; I'd like to introduce you to old March. That's going to be our address." He put a card on the table beside the envelope, and Beaton allowed him to go without making him take the check back. He had remembered his father's plea; that unnerved him, and he promised himself again to return his father's poor little check and to work on that picture and give it to Fulkerson for the check he had left and for his back debts. He resolved to go to work on the picture at once; he had set his palette for it; but first he looked at Fulkerson's check. It was for only fifty dollars, and the canny Scotch blood in Beaton rebelled; he could not let this picture go for any such money; he felt a little like a man whose generosity has been trifled with. The conflict of emotions broke him up, and he could not work.

IV

The day wasted away in Beaton's hands; at half-past four o'clock he went out to tea at the house of a lady who was At Home that afternoon from four till seven. By this time Beaton was in possession of one of those other selves of which we each have several about us, and was again the laconic, staccato, rather worldlified young artist whose moments of a controlled utterance and a certain distinction of manner had commended him to Mrs. Horn's fancy in the summer at St. Barnaby.

Mrs. Horn's rooms were large, and they never seemed very full, though this perhaps was because people were always so quiet. The ladies, who outnumbered the men ten to one, as they always do at a New York tea, were dressed in sympathy with the low tone every one spoke in, and with the subdued light which gave a crepuscular uncertainty to the few objects, the dim pictures, the unexcited upholstery, of the rooms. One breathed free of bric-a-brac there, and the new-comer breathed softly as one does on going into church after service has begun. This might be a suggestion from the voiceless behavior of the man-servant who let you in, but it was also because Mrs. Horn's At Home was a ceremony, a decorum, and not festival. At far greater houses there was more gayety, at richer houses there was more freedom; the suppression at Mrs. Horn's was a personal, not a social, effect; it was an efflux of her character, demure, silentious, vague, but very correct.

Beaton easily found his way to her around the grouped skirts and among the detached figures, and received a pressure of welcome from the hand which she momentarily relaxed from the tea-pot. She sat behind a table put crosswise of a remote corner, and offered tea to people whom a niece of hers received provisionally or sped finally in the outer room. They did not usually take tea, and when they did they did not usually drink it; but Beaton was, feverishly glad of his cup; he took rum and lemon in it, and stood talking at Mrs. Horn's side till the next arrival should displace him: he talked in his French manner.

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"I have been hoping to see you," she said. "I wanted to ask you about the Leightons. Did they really come?"

"I believe so. They are in town—yes. I haven't seen them."

"Then you don't know how they're getting on—that pretty creature, with her cleverness, and poor Mrs. Leighton? I was afraid they were venturing on a rash experiment. Do you know where they are?"

"In West Eleventh Street somewhere. Miss Leighton is in Mr. Wetmore's class."

"I must look them up. Do you know their number?"

"Not at the moment. I can find out."

"Do," said Mrs. Horn. "What courage they must have, to plunge into New York as they've done! I really didn't think they would. I wonder if they've succeeded in getting anybody into their house yet?"

"I don't know," said Beaton.

"I discouraged their coming all I could," she sighed, "and I suppose you did, too. But it's quite useless trying to make people in a place like St. Barnaby understand how it is in town."

"Yes," said Beaton. He stirred his tea, while inwardly he tried to believe that he had really discouraged the Leightons from coming to New York. Perhaps the vexation of his failure made him call Mrs. Horn in his heart a fraud.

"Yes," she went on, "it is very, very hard. And when they won't understand, and rush on their doom, you feel that they are going to hold you respons—"

Mrs. Horn's eyes wandered from Beaton; her voice faltered in the faded interest of her remark, and then rose with renewed vigor in greeting a lady who came up and stretched her glove across the tea-cups.

Beaton got himself away and out of the house with a much briefer adieu to the niece than he had meant to make. The patronizing compassion of Mrs. Horn for the Leightons filled him with indignation toward her, toward himself. There was no reason why he should not have ignored them as he had done; but there was a feeling. It was his nature to be careless, and he had been spoiled into recklessness; he neglected everybody, and only remembered them when it suited his whim or his convenience; but he fiercely resented the inattentions of others toward himself. He had no scruple about breaking an engagement or failing to keep an appointment; he made promises without thinking of their fulfilment, and not because he was a faithless person, but because he

was imaginative, and expected at the time to do what he said, but was fickle, and so did not. As most of his shortcomings were of a society sort, no great harm was done to anybody else. He had contracted somewhat the circle of his acquaintance by what some people called his rudeness, but most people treated it as his oddity, and were patient with it. One lady said she valued his coming when he said he would come because it had the charm of the unexpected. "Only it shows that it isn't always the unexpected that happens," she explained.

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It did not occur to him that his behavior was immoral; he did not realize that it was creating a reputation if not a character for him. While we are still young we do not realize that our actions have this effect. It seems to us that people will judge us from what we think and feel. Later we find out that this is impossible; perhaps we find it out too late; some of us never find it out at all.

In spite of his shame about the Leightons, Beaton had no present intention of looking them up or sending Mrs. Horn their address. As a matter of fact, he never did send it; but he happened to meet Mr. Wetmore and his wife at the restaurant where he dined, and he got it of the painter for himself. He did not ask him how Miss Leighton was getting on; but Wetmore launched out, with Alma for a tacit text, on the futility of women generally going in for art. "Even when they have talent they've got too much against them. Where a girl doesn't seem very strong, like Miss Leighton, no amount of chic is going to help."

His wife disputed him on behalf of her sex, as women always do.

"No, Dolly," he persisted; "she'd better be home milking the cows and leading the horse to water."

Do you think she'd better be up till two in the morning at balls and going all day to receptions and luncheons?"

"Oh, guess it isn't a question of that, even if she weren't drawing. You knew them at home," he said to Beaton.

"Yes."

"I remember. Her mother said you suggested me. Well, the girl has some notion of it; there's no doubt about that. But—she's a woman. The trouble with these talented girls is that they're all woman. If they weren't, there wouldn't be much chance for the men, Beaton. But we've got Providence on our own side from the start. I'm able to watch all their inspirations with perfect composure. I know just how soon it's going to end in nervous breakdown. Somebody ought to marry them all and put them out of their misery."

"And what will you do with your students who are married already?" his wife said. She felt that she had let him go on long enough.

"Oh, they ought to get divorced."

"You ought to be ashamed to take their money if that's what you think of them."

"My dear, I have a wife to support."

Beaton intervened with a question. "Do you mean that Miss Leighton isn't standing it very well?"

"How do I know? She isn't the kind that bends; she's the kind that breaks."

After a little silence Mrs. Wetmore asked, "Won't you come home with us, Mr. Beaton?"

"Thank you; no. I have an engagement."

"I don't see why that should prevent you," said Wetmore. "But you always were a punctilious cuss. Well!"

Beaton lingered over his cigar; but no one else whom he knew came in, and he yielded to the threefold impulse of conscience, of curiosity, of inclination, in going to call at the Leightons'. He asked for the ladies, and the maid showed him into the parlor, where he found Mrs. Leighton and Miss Woodburn.

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The widow met him with a welcome neatly marked by resentment; she meant him to feel that his not coming sooner had been noticed. Miss Woodburn bubbled and gurgled on, and did what she could to mitigate his punishment, but she did not feel authorized to stay it, till Mrs. Leighton, by studied avoidance of her daughter's name, obliged Beaton to ask for her. Then Miss Woodburn caught up her work, and said, "Ah'll go and tell her, Mrs. Leighton." At the top of the stairs she found Alma, and Alma tried to make it seem as if she had not been standing there. "Mah goodness, chald! there's the handsomest young man asking for you down there you evah saw. Alh told you' mothah Ah would come up fo' you."

"What—who is it?"

"Don't you know? But bo' could you? He's got the most beautiful eyes, and he wea's his hai' in a bang, and he talks English like it was something else, and his name's Mr. Beaton."

"Did he-ask for me?" said Alma, with a dreamy tone. She put her hand on the stairs rail, and a little shiver ran over her.

"Didn't I tell you? Of coase he did! And you ought to go raght down if you want to save the poo' fellah's lahfe; you' mothah's just freezin' him to death."

V.

"She is?" cried Alma. "Tchk!" She flew downstairs, and flitted swiftly into the room, and fluttered up to Beaton, and gave him a crushing hand-shake.

"How very kind, of you to come and see us, Mr. Beaton! When did you come to New York? Don't you find it warm here? We've only just lighted the furnace, but with this mild weather it seems too early. Mamma does keep it so hot!" She rushed about opening doors and shutting registers, and then came back and sat facing him from the sofa with a mask of radiant cordiality. "How have you been since we saw you?"

"Very well," said Beaton. "I hope you're well, Miss Leighton?"

"Oh, perfectly! I think New York agrees with us both wonderfully. I never knew such air. And to think of our not having snow yet! I should think everybody would want to come here! Why don't you come, Mr. Beaton?"

Beaton lifted his eyes and looked at her. "I—I live in New York," he faltered.

"In New York City!" she exclaimed.

"Surely, Alma," said her mother, "you remember Mr. Beaton's telling us he lived in New York."

"But I thought you came from Rochester; or was it Syracuse? I always get those places mixed up."

"Probably I told you my father lived at Syracuse. I've been in New York ever since I came home from Paris," said Beaton, with the confusion of a man who feels himself played upon by a woman.

"From Paris!" Alma echoed, leaning forward, with her smiling mask tight on. "Wasn't it Munich where you studied?"

"I was at Munich, too. I met Wetmore there."

"Oh, do you know Mr. Wetmore?"

"Why, Alma," her mother interposed again, "it was Mr. Beaton who told you of Mr. Wetmore."

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"Was it? Why, yes, to be sure. It was Mrs. Horn who suggested Mr. Ilcomb. I remember now. I can't thank you enough for having sent me to Mr. Wetmore, Mr. Beaton. Isn't he delightful? Oh yes, I'm a perfect Wetmorian, I can assure you. The whole class is the same way."

"I just met him and Mrs. Wetmore at dinner," said Beaton, attempting the recovery of something that he had lost through the girl's shining ease and steely sprightliness. She seemed to him so smooth and hard, with a repellent elasticity from which he was flung off. "I hope you're not working too hard, Miss Leighton?"

"Oh no! I enjoy every minute of it, and grow stronger on it. Do I look very much wasted away?" She looked him full in the face, brilliantly smiling, and intentionally beautiful.

"No," he said, with a slow sadness; "I never saw you looking better."

"Poor Mr. Beaton!" she said, in recognition of his doleful tune. "It seems to be quite a blow."

"Oh no—"

"I remember all the good advice you used to give me about not working too hard, and probably it's that that's saved my life—that and the house-hunting. Has mamma told you of our adventures in getting settled?"

"Some time we must. It was such fun! And didn't you think we were fortunate to get such a pretty house? You must see both our parlors." She jumped up, and her mother followed her with a bewildered look as she ran into the back parlor and flashed up the gas.

"Come in here, Mr. Beaton. I want to show you the great feature of the house." She opened the low windows that gave upon a glazed veranda stretching across the end of the room. "Just think of this in New York! You can't see it very well at night, but when the southern sun pours in here all the afternoon—"

"Yes, I can imagine it," he said. He glanced up at the bird-cage hanging from the roof. "I suppose Gypsy enjoys it."

"You remember Gypsy?" she said; and she made a cooing, kissing little noise up at the bird, who responded drowsily. "Poor old Gypsum! Well, he sha'n't be disturbed. Yes, it's Gyp's delight, and Colonel Woodburn likes to write here in the morning. Think of us having a real live author in the house! And Miss Woodburn: I'm so glad you've seen her! They're Southern people."

"Yes, that was obvious in her case."

“From her accent? Isn’t it fascinating? I didn’t believe I could ever endure Southerners, but we’re like one family with the Woodburns. I should think you’d want to paint Miss Woodburn. Don’t you think her coloring is delicious? And such a quaint kind of eighteenth-century type of beauty! But she’s perfectly lovely every way, and everything she says is so funny. The Southerners seem to be such great talkers; better than we are, don’t you think?”

“I don’t know,” said Beaton, in pensive discouragement. He was sensible of being manipulated, operated, but he was helpless to escape from the performer or to fathom her motives. His pensiveness passed into gloom, and was degenerating into sulky resentment when he went away, after several failures to get back to the old ground he had held in relation to Alma. He retrieved something of it with Mrs. Leighton; but Alma glittered upon him to the last with a keen impenetrable candor, a child-like singleness of glance, covering unfathomable reserve.

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"Well, Alma," said her mother, when the door had closed upon him.

"Well, mother." Then, after a moment, she said, with a rush: "Did you think I was going to let him suppose we were piqued at his not coming? Did you suppose I was going to let him patronize us, or think that we were in the least dependent on his favor or friendship?"

Her mother did not attempt to answer her. She merely said, "I shouldn't think he would come any more."

"Well, we have got on so far without him; perhaps we can live through the rest of the winter."

"I couldn't help feeling sorry for him. He was quite stupefied. I could see that he didn't know what to make of you."

"He's not required to make anything of me," said Alma.

"Do you think he really believed you had forgotten all those things?"

"Impossible to say, mamma."

"Well, I don't think it was quite right, Alma."

"I'll leave him to you the next time. Miss Woodburn said you were freezing him to death when I came down."

"That was quite different. But, there won't be any next time, I'm afraid," sighed Mrs. Leighton.

Beaton went home feeling sure there would not. He tried to read when he got to his room; but Alma's looks, tones, gestures, whirled through and through the woof of the story like shuttles; he could not keep them out, and he fell asleep at last, not because he forgot them, but because he forgave them. He was able to say to himself that he had been justly cut off from kindness which he knew how to value in losing it. He did not expect ever to right himself in Alma's esteem, but he hoped some day to let her know that he had understood. It seemed to him that it would be a good thing if she should find it out after his death. He imagined her being touched by it under those circumstances.

VI.

In the morning it seemed to Beaton that he had done himself injustice. When he uncovered his Judas and looked at it, he could not believe that the man who was



capable of such work deserved the punishment Miss Leighton had inflicted upon him. He still forgave her, but in the presence of a thing like that he could not help respecting himself; he believed that if she could see it she would be sorry that she had cut herself off from his acquaintance. He carried this strain of conviction all through his syndicate letter, which he now took out of his desk and finished, with an increasing security of his opinions and a mounting severity in his judgments. He retaliated upon the general condition of art among us the pangs of wounded vanity, which Alma had made him feel, and he folded up his manuscript and put it in his pocket, almost healed of his humiliation. He had been able to escape from its sting so entirely while he was writing that the notion of making his life more and more literary commended itself to him. As it was now evident that the future was to be one

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of renunciation, of self-forgetting, an oblivion tinged with bitterness, he formlessly reasoned in favor of reconsidering his resolution against Fulkerson's offer. One must call it reasoning, but it was rather that swift internal dramatization which constantly goes on in persons of excitable sensibilities, and which now seemed to sweep Beaton physically along toward the 'Every Other Week' office, and carried his mind with lightning celerity on to a time when he should have given that journal such quality and authority in matters of art as had never been enjoyed by any in America before. With the prosperity which he made attend his work he changed the character of the enterprise, and with Fulkerson's enthusiastic support he gave the public an art journal of as high grade as 'Les Lettres et les Arts', and very much that sort of thing. All this involved now the unavailing regret of Alma Leighton, and now his reconciliation with her they were married in Grace Church, because Beaton had once seen a marriage there, and had intended to paint a picture of it some time.

Nothing in these fervid fantasies prevented his responding with due dryness to Fulkerson's cheery "Hello, old man!" when he found himself in the building fitted up for the 'Every Other Week' office. Fulkerson's room was back of the smaller one occupied by the bookkeeper; they had been respectively the reception-room and dining-room of the little place in its dwelling-house days, and they had been simply and tastefully treated in their transformation into business purposes. The narrow old trim of the doors and windows had been kept, and the quaintly ugly marble mantels. The architect had said, Better let them stay they expressed epoch, if not character.

"Well, have you come round to go to work? Just hang up your coat on the floor anywhere," Fulkerson went on.

"I've come to bring you that letter," said Beaton, all the more haughtily because he found that Fulkerson was not alone when he welcomed him in these free and easy terms. There was a quiet-looking man, rather stout, and a little above the middle height, with a full, close-cropped iron-gray beard, seated beyond the table where Fulkerson tilted himself back, with his knees set against it; and leaning against the mantel there was a young man with a singularly gentle face, in which the look of goodness qualified and transfigured a certain simplicity. His large blue eyes were somewhat prominent; and his rather narrow face was drawn forward in a nose a little too long perhaps, if it had not been for the full chin deeply cut below the lip, and jutting firmly forward.

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"Introduce you to Mr. March, our editor, Mr. Beaton," Fulkerson said, rolling his head in the direction of the elder man; and then nodding it toward the younger, he said, "Mr. Dryfoos, Mr. Beaton." Beaton shook hands with March, and then with Mr. Dryfoos, and Fulkerson went on, gayly: "We were just talking of you, Beaton—well, you know the old saying. Mr. March, as I told you, is our editor, and Mr. Dryfoos has charge of the publishing department—he's the counting-room incarnate, the source of power, the fountain of corruption, the element that prevents journalism being the high and holy thing that it would be if there were no money in it." Mr. Dryfoos turned his large, mild eyes upon Beaton, and laughed with the uneasy concession which people make to a character when they do not quite approve of the character's language. "What Mr. March and I are trying to do is to carry on this thing so that there won't be any money in it—or very little; and we're planning to give the public a better article for the price than it's ever had before. Now here's a dummy we've had made up for 'Every Other Week', and as we've decided to adopt it, we would naturally like your opinion of it, so's to know what opinion to have of you." He reached forward and pushed toward Beaton a volume a little above the size of the ordinary duodecimo book; its ivory-white pebbled paper cover was prettily illustrated with a water-colored design irregularly washed over the greater part of its surface: quite across the page at top, and narrowing from right to left as it descended. In the triangular space left blank the title of the periodical and the publisher's imprint were tastefully lettered so as to be partly covered by the background of color.

"It's like some of those Tartarin books of Daudet's," said Beacon, looking at it with more interest than he suffered to be seen. "But it's a book, not a magazine." He opened its pages of thick, mellow white paper, with uncut leaves, the first few pages experimentally printed in the type intended to be used, and illustrated with some sketches drawn into and over the text, for the sake of the effect.

"A Daniel—a Daniel come to judgment! Sit down, Dan'el, and take it easy." Fulkerson pushed a chair toward Beaton, who dropped into it. "You're right, Dan'el; it's a book, to all practical intents and purposes. And what we propose to do with the American public is to give it twenty-four books like this a year—a complete library—for the absurd sum of six dollars. We don't intend to sell 'em—it's no name for the transaction—but to give 'em. And what we want to get out of you—beg, borrow, buy, or steal from you is an opinion whether we shall make the American public this princely present in paper covers like this, or in some sort of flexible boards, so they can set them on the shelf and say no more about it. Now, Dan'el, come to judgment, as our respected friend Shylock remarked."

Beacon had got done looking at the dummy, and he dropped it on the table before Fulkerson, who pushed it away, apparently to free himself from partiality. "I don't know anything about the business side, and I can't tell about the effect of either style on the sales; but you'll spoil the whole character of the cover if you use anything thicker than that thickish paper."

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"All right; very good; first-rate. The ayes have it. Paper it is. I don't mind telling you that we had decided for that paper before you came in. Mr. March wanted it, because he felt in his bones just the way you do about it, and Mr. Dryfoos wanted it, because he's the counting-room incarnate, and it's cheaper; and I 'wanted it, because I always like to go with the majority. Now what do you think of that little design itself?"

"The sketch?" Beaton pulled the book toward him again and looked at it again. "Rather decorative. Drawing's not remarkable. Graceful; rather nice." He pushed the book away again, and Fulkerson pulled it to his aide of the table.

"Well, that's a piece of that amateur trash you despise so much. I went to a painter I know-by-the-way, he was guilty of suggesting you for this thing, but I told him I was ahead of him—and I got him to submit my idea to one of his class, and that's the result. Well, now, there ain't anything in this world that sells a book like a pretty cover, and we're going to have a pretty cover for 'Every Other Week' every time. We've cut loose from the old traditional quarto literary newspaper size, and we've cut loose from the old two-column big page magazine size; we're going to have a duodecimo page, clear black print, and paper that 'll make your mouth water; and we're going to have a fresh illustration for the cover of each number, and we ain't agoing to give the public any rest at all. Sometimes we're going to have a delicate little landscape like this, and sometimes we're going to have an indelicate little figure, or as much so as the law will allow."

The young man leaning against the mantelpiece blushed a sort of protest.

March smiled and said, dryly, "Those are the numbers that Mr. Fulkerson is going to edit himself."

"Exactly. And Mr. Beaton, here, is going to supply the floating females, gracefully airing themselves against a sunset or something of that kind." Beaton frowned in embarrassment, while Fulkerson went on philosophically; "It's astonishing how you fellows can keep it up at this stage of the proceedings; you can paint things that your harshest critic would be ashamed to describe accurately; you're as free as the theatre. But that's neither here nor there. What I'm after is the fact that we're going to have variety in our title-pages, and we are going to have novelty in the illustrations of the body of the book. March, here, if he had his own way, wouldn't have any illustrations at all."

"Not because I don't like them, Mr. Beacon," March interposed, "but because I like them too much. I find that I look at the pictures in an illustrated article, but I don't read the article very much, and I fancy that's the case with most other people. You've got to doing them so prettily that you take our eyes off the literature, if you don't take our minds off."

“Like the society beauties on the stage: people go in for the beauty so much that they don’t know what the play is. But the box-office gets there all the same, and that’s what Mr. Dryfoos wants.” Fulkerson looked up gayly at Mr. Dryfoos, who smiled deprecatingly.

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"It was different," March went on, "when the illustrations used to be bad. Then the text had some chance."

"Old legitimate drama days, when ugliness and genius combined to storm the galleries," said Fulkerson.

"We can still make them bad enough," said Beaton, ignoring Fulkerson in his remark to March.

Fulkerson took the reply upon himself. "Well, you needn't make 'em so bad as the old-style cuts; but you can make them unobtrusive, modestly retiring. We've got hold of a process something like that those French fellows gave Daudet thirty-five thousand dollars to write a novel to use with; kind of thing that begins at one side; or one corner, and spreads in a sort of dim religious style over the print till you can't tell which is which. Then we've got a notion that where the pictures don't behave quite so sociably, they can be dropped into the text, like a little casual remark, don't you know, or a comment that has some connection, or maybe none at all, with what's going on in the story. Something like this." Fulkerson took away one knee from the table long enough to open the drawer, and pull from it a book that he shoved toward Beaton. "That's a Spanish book I happened to see at Brentano's, and I froze to it on account of the pictures. I guess they're pretty good."

"Do you expect to get such drawings in this country?" asked Beaton, after a glance at the book. "Such character—such drama? You won't."

"Well, I'm not so sure," said Fulkerson, "come to get our amateurs warmed up to the work. But what I want is to get the physical effect, so to speak—get that sized picture into our page, and set the fashion of it. I shouldn't care if the illustration was sometimes confined to an initial letter and a tail-piece."

"Couldn't be done here. We haven't the touch. We're good in some things, but this isn't in our way," said Beaton, stubbornly. "I can't think of a man who could do it; that is, among those that would."

"Well, think of some woman, then," said Fulkerson, easily. "I've got a notion that the women could help us out on this thing, come to get 'em interested. There ain't anything so popular as female fiction; why not try female art?"

"The females themselves have been supposed to have been trying it for a good while," March suggested; and Mr. Dryfoos laughed nervously; Beaton remained solemnly silent.

"Yes, I know," Fulkerson assented. "But I don't mean that kind exactly. What we want to do is to work the 'ewig Weibliche' in this concern. We want to make a magazine that will go for the women's fancy every time. I don't mean with recipes for cooking and

fashions and personal gossip about authors and society, but real high-tone literature that will show women triumphing in all the stories, or else suffering tremendously. We've got to recognize that women form three-fourths of the reading public in this country, and go for their tastes and their sensibilities and their sex-piety along the whole line. They do like to think that women can do things better than men; and if we can let it leak out and get around in the papers that the managers of 'Every Other Week' couldn't stir a peg in the line of the illustrations they wanted till they got a lot of God-gifted girls to help them, it 'll make the fortune of the thing. See?"

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He looked sunnily round at the other men, and March said: "You ought to be in charge of a Siamese white elephant, Fulkerson. It's a disgrace to be connected with you."

"It seems to me," said Becton, "that you'd better get a God-gifted girl for your art editor."

Fulkerson leaned alertly forward, and touched him on the shoulder, with a compassionate smile. "My dear boy, they haven't got the genius of organization. It takes a very masculine man for that—a man who combines the most subtle and refined sympathies with the most forceful purposes and the most ferruginous will-power. Which his name is Angus Beaton, and here he sets!"

The others laughed with Fulkerson at his gross burlesque of flattery, and Becton frowned sheepishly. "I suppose you understand this man's style," he growled toward March.

"He does, my son," said Fulkerson. "He knows that I cannot tell a lie." He pulled out his watch, and then got suddenly upon his feet.

"It's quarter of twelve, and I've got an appointment." Beaton rose too, and Fulkerson put the two books in his lax hands. "Take these along, Michelangelo Da Vinci, my friend, and put your multitudinous mind on them for about an hour, and let us hear from you tomorrow. We hang upon your decision."

"There's no deciding to be done," said Beaton. "You can't combine the two styles. They'd kill each other."

"A Dan'el, a Dan'el come to judgment! I knew you could help us out! Take 'em along, and tell us which will go the furthest with the 'ewig Weibliche.' Dryfoos, I want a word with you." He led the way into the front room, flirting an airy farewell to Beaton with his hand as he went.

VII.

March and Beaton remained alone together for a moment, and March said: "I hope you will think it worth while to take hold with us, Mr. Beaton. Mr. Fulkerson puts it in his own way, of course; but we really want to make a nice thing of the magazine." He had that timidity of the elder in the presence of the younger man which the younger, preoccupied with his own timidity in the presence of the elder, cannot imagine. Besides, March was aware of the gulf that divided him as a literary man from Beaton as an artist, and he only ventured to feel his way toward sympathy with him. "We want to make it good; we want to make it high. Fulkerson is right about aiming to please the women, but of course he caricatures the way of going about it."

For answer, Beaton flung out, "I can't go in for a thing I don't understand the plan of."

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March took it for granted that he had wounded some exposed sensibility, of Beaton's. He continued still more deferentially: "Mr. Fulkerson's notion—I must say the notion is his, evolved from his syndicate experience—is that we shall do best in fiction to confine our selves to short stories, and make each number complete in itself. He found that the most successful things he could furnish his newspapers were short stories; we Americans are supposed to excel in writing them; and most people begin with them in fiction; and it's Mr. Fulkerson's idea to work unknown talent, as he says, and so he thinks he can not only get them easily, but can gradually form a school of short-story writers. I can't say I follow him altogether, but I respect his experience. We shall not despise translations of short stories, but otherwise the matter will all be original, and, of course, it won't all be short stories. We shall use sketches of travel, and essays, and little dramatic studies, and bits of biography and history; but all very light, and always short enough to be completed in a single number. Mr. Fulkerson believes in pictures, and most of the things would be capable of illustration."

"I see," said Beaton.

"I don't know but this is the whole affair," said March, beginning to stiffen a little at the young man's reticence.

"I understand. Thank you for taking the trouble to explain. Good-morning." Beaton bowed himself off, without offering to shake hands.

Fulkerson came in after a while from the outer office, and Mr. Dryfoos followed him. "Well, what do you think of our art editor?"

"Is he our art editor?" asked March. "I wasn't quite certain when he left."

"Did he take the books?"

"Yes, he took the books."

"I guess he's all right, then." Fulkerson added, in concession to the umbrage he detected in March.

"Beaton has his times of being the greatest ass in the solar system, but he usually takes it out in personal conduct. When it comes to work, he's a regular horse."

"He appears to have compromised for the present by being a perfect mule," said March.

"Well, he's in a transition state," Fulkerson allowed. "He's the man for us. He really understands what we want. You'll see; he'll catch on. That lurid glare of his will wear off in the course of time. He's really a good fellow when you take him off his guard; and he's full of ideas. He's spread out over a good deal of ground at present, and so he's pretty thin; but come to gather him up into a lump, there's a good deal of substance to

him. Yes, there is. He's a first-rate critic, and he's a nice fellow with the other artists. They laugh at his universality, but they all like him. He's the best kind of a teacher when he condescends to it; and he's just the man to deal with our volunteer work. Yes, sir, he's a prize. Well, I must go now."

Fulkerson went out of the street door, and then came quickly back. "By-the-bye, March, I saw that old dynamiter of yours round at Beaton's room yesterday."

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"What old dynamiter of mine?"

"That old one-handed Dutchman—friend of your youth—the one we saw at Maroni's—"

"Oh-Lindau!" said March, with a vague pang of self reproach for having thought of Lindau so little after the first flood of his tender feeling toward him was past.

"Yes, our versatile friend was modelling him as Judas Iscariot. Lindau makes a first-rate Judas, and Beaton has got a big thing in that head if he works the religious people right. But what I was thinking of was this—it struck me just as I was going out of the door: Didn't you tell me Lindau knew forty or fifty, different languages?"

"Four or five, yes."

"Well, we won't quarrel about the number. The question is, Why not work him in the field of foreign literature? You can't go over all their reviews and magazines, and he could do the smelling for you, if you could trust his nose. Would he know a good thing?"

"I think he would," said March, on whom the scope of Fulkerson's suggestion gradually opened. "He used to have good taste, and he must know the ground. Why, it's a capital idea, Fulkerson! Lindau wrote very fair English, and he could translate, with a little revision."

"And he would probably work cheap. Well, hadn't you better see him about it? I guess it 'll be quite a windfall for him."

"Yes, it will. I'll look him up. Thank you for the suggestion, Fulkerson."

"Oh, don't mention it! I don't mind doing 'Every Other Week' a good turn now and then when it comes in my way." Fulkerson went out again, and this time March was finally left with Mr. Dryfoos.

"Mrs. March was very sorry not to be at home when your sisters called the other day. She wished me to ask if they had any afternoon in particular. There was none on your mother's card."

"No, sir," said the young man, with a flush of embarrassment that seemed habitual with him. "She has no day. She's at home almost every day. She hardly ever goes out."

"Might we come some evening?" March asked. "We should be very glad to do that, if she would excuse the informality. Then I could come with Mrs. March."

"Mother isn't very formal," said the young man. "She would be very glad to see you."

"Then we'll come some night this week, if you will let us. When do you expect your father back?"

"Not much before Christmas. He's trying to settle up some things at Moffitt."

"And what do you think of our art editor?" asked March, with a smile, for the change of subject.

"Oh, I don't know much about such things," said the young man, with another of his embarrassed flushes. "Mr. Fulkerson seems to feel sure that he is the one for us."

"Mr. Fulkerson seemed to think that I was the one for you, too," said March; and he laughed. "That's what makes me doubt his infallibility. But he couldn't do worse with Mr. Beaton."

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Mr. Dryfoos reddened and looked down, as if unable or unwilling to cope with the difficulty of making a polite protest against March's self-depreciation. He said, after a moment: "It's new business to all of us except Mr. Fulkerson. But I think it will succeed. I think we can do some good in it."

March asked rather absently, "Some good?" Then he added: "Oh yes; I think we can. What do you mean by good? Improve the public taste? Elevate the standard of literature? Give young authors and artists a chance?"

This was the only good that had ever been in March's mind, except the good that was to come in a material way from his success, to himself and to his family.

"I don't know," said the young man; and he looked down in a shamefaced fashion. He lifted his head and looked into March's face. "I suppose I was thinking that some time we might help along. If we were to have those sketches of yours about life in every part of New York—"

March's authorial vanity was tickled. "Fulkerson has been talking to you about them? He seemed to think they would be a card. He believes that there's no subject so fascinating to the general average of people throughout the country as life in New York City; and he liked my notion of doing these things." March hoped that Dryfoos would answer that Fulkerson was perfectly enthusiastic about his notion; but he did not need this stimulus, and, at any rate, he went on without it. "The fact is, it's something that struck my fancy the moment I came here; I found myself intensely interested in the place, and I began to make notes, consciously and unconsciously, at once. Yes, I believe I can get something quite attractive out of it. I don't in the least know what it will be yet, except that it will be very desultory; and I couldn't at all say when I can get at it. If we postpone the first number till February I might get a little paper into that. Yes, I think it might be a good thing for us," March said, with modest self-appreciation.

"If you can make the comfortable people understand how the uncomfortable people live, it will be a very good thing, Mr. March. Sometimes it seems to me that the only trouble is that we don't know one another well enough; and that the first thing is to do this." The young fellow spoke with the seriousness in which the beauty of his face resided. Whenever he laughed his face looked weak, even silly. It seemed to be a sense of this that made him hang his head or turn it away at such times.

"That's true," said March, from the surface only. "And then, those phases of low life are immensely picturesque. Of course, we must try to get the contrasts of luxury for the sake of the full effect. That won't be so easy. You can't penetrate to the dinner-party of a millionaire under the wing of a detective as you could to a carouse in Mulberry Street, or to his children's nursery with a philanthropist as you can to a street-boy's lodging-house." March laughed, and again the young man turned his head away. "Still, something can be done in that way by tact and patience."

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VII.

That evening March went with his wife to return the call of the Dryfoos ladies. On their way up-town in the Elevated he told her of his talk with young Dryfoos. "I confess I was a little ashamed before him afterward for having looked at the matter so entirely from the aesthetic point of view. But of course, you know, if I went to work at those things with an ethical intention explicitly in mind, I should spoil them."

"Of course," said his wife. She had always heard him say something of this kind about such things.

He went on: "But I suppose that's just the point that such a nature as young Dryfoos's can't get hold of, or keep hold of. We're a queer lot, down there, Isabel—perfect menagerie. If it hadn't been that Fulkerson got us together, and really seems to know what he did it for, I should say he was the oddest stick among us. But when I think of myself and my own crankiness for the literary department; and young Dryfoos, who ought really to be in the pulpit, or a monastery, or something, for publisher; and that young Beaton, who probably hasn't a moral fibre in his composition, for the art man, I don't know but we could give Fulkerson odds and still beat him in oddity."

His wife heaved a deep sigh of apprehension, of renunciation, of monition. "Well, I'm glad you can feel so light about it, Basil."

"Light? I feel gay! With Fulkerson at the helm, I tell you the rocks and the lee shore had better keep out of the way." He laughed with pleasure in his metaphor. "Just when you think Fulkerson has taken leave of his senses he says or does something that shows he is on the most intimate and inalienable terms with them all the time. You know how I've been worrying over those foreign periodicals, and trying to get some translations from them for the first number? Well, Fulkerson has brought his centipedal mind to bear on the subject, and he's suggested that old German friend of mine I was telling you of—the one I met in the restaurant—the friend of my youth."

"Do you think he could do it?" asked Mrs. March, sceptically.

"He's a perfect Babel of strange tongues; and he's the very man for the work, and I was ashamed I hadn't thought of him myself, for I suspect he needs the work."

"Well, be careful how you get mixed up with him, then, Basil," said his wife, who had the natural misgiving concerning the friends of her husband's youth that all wives have. "You know the Germans are so unscrupulously dependent. You don't know anything about him now."



"I'm not afraid of Lindau," said March. "He was the best and kindest man I ever saw, the most high-minded, the most generous. He lost a hand in the war that helped to save us and keep us possible, and that stump of his is character enough for me."

"Oh, you don't think I could have meant anything against him!" said Mrs. March, with the tender fervor that every woman who lived in the time of the war must feel for those who suffered in it. "All that I meant was that I hoped you would not get mixed up with him too much. You're so apt to be carried away by your impulses."

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"They didn't carry me very far away in the direction of poor old Lindau, I'm ashamed to think," said March. "I meant all sorts of fine things by him after I met him; and then I forgot him, and I had to be reminded of him by Fulkerson."

She did not answer him, and he fell into a remorseful reverie, in which he rehabilitated Lindau anew, and provided handsomely for his old age. He got him buried with military honors, and had a shaft raised over him, with a medallion likeness by Beaton and an epitaph by himself, by the time they reached Forty-second Street; there was no time to write Lindau's life, however briefly, before the train stopped.

They had to walk up four blocks and then half a block across before they came to the indistinctive brownstone house where the Dryfooses lived. It was larger than some in the same block, but the next neighborhood of a huge apartment-house dwarfed it again. March thought he recognized the very flat in which he had disciplined the surly janitor, but he did not tell his wife; he made her notice the transition character of the street, which had been mostly built up in apartment-houses, with here and there a single dwelling dropped far down beneath and beside them, to that jag-toothed effect on the sky-line so often observable in such New York streets. "I don't know exactly what the old gentleman bought here for," he said, as they waited on the steps after ringing, "unless he expects to turn it into flats by-and-by. Otherwise, I don't believe he'll get his money back."

An Irish serving-man, with a certain surprise that delayed him, said the ladies were at home, and let the Marches in, and then carried their cards up-stairs. The drawing-room, where he said they could sit down while he went on this errand, was delicately, decorated in white and gold, and furnished with a sort of extravagant good taste; there was nothing to object to in the satin furniture, the pale, soft, rich carpet, the pictures, and the bronze and china bric-a-brac, except that their costliness was too evident; everything in the room meant money too plainly, and too much of it. The Marches recognized this in the hoarse whispers which people cannot get their voices above when they try to talk away the interval of waiting in such circumstances; they conjectured from what they had heard of the Dryfooses that this tasteful luxury in no wise expressed their civilization. "Though when you come to that," said March, "I don't know that Mrs. Green's gimcrackery expresses ours."

"Well, Basil, I didn't take the gimcrackery. That was your—"

The rustle of skirts on the stairs without arrested Mrs. March in the well-merited punishment which she never failed to inflict upon her husband when the question of the gimcrackery—they always called it that—came up. She rose at the entrance of a bright-looking, pretty-looking, mature, youngish lady, in black silk of a neutral implication, who put out her hand to her, and said,

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with a very cheery, very ladylike accent, “Mrs. March?” and then added to both of them, while she shook hands with March, and before they could get the name out of their mouths: “No, not Miss Dryfoos! Neither of them; nor Mrs. Dryfoos. Mrs. Mandel. The ladies will be down in a moment. Won’t you throw off your sacque, Mrs. March? I’m afraid it’s rather warm here, coming from the outside.”

“I will throw it back, if you’ll allow me,” said Mrs. March, with a sort of provisionality, as if, pending some uncertainty as to Mrs. Mandel’s quality and authority, she did not feel herself justified in going further.

But if she did not know about Mrs. Mandel, Mrs. Mandel seemed to know about her. “Oh, well, do!” she said, with a sort of recognition of the propriety of her caution. “I hope you are feeling a little at home in New York. We heard so much of your trouble in getting a flat, from Mr. Fulkerson.”

“Well, a true Bostonian doesn’t give up quite so soon,” said Mrs. March.

“But I will say New York doesn’t seem so far away, now we’re here.”

“I’m sure you’ll like it. Every one does.” Mrs. Mandel added to March, “It’s very sharp out, isn’t it?”

“Rather sharp. But after our Boston winters I don’t know but I ought to repudiate the word.”

“Ah, wait till you have been here through March!” said Mrs. Mandel. She began with him, but skillfully transferred the close of her remark, and the little smile of menace that went with it, to his wife.

“Yes,” said Mrs. March, “or April, either: Talk about our east winds!”

“Oh, I’m sure they can’t be worse than our winds,” Mrs. Mandel returned, caressingly.

“If we escape New York pneumonia,” March laughed, “it will only be to fall a prey to New York malaria as soon as the frost is out of the ground.”

“Oh, but you know,” said Mrs. Mandel, “I think our malaria has really been slandered a little. It’s more a matter of drainage—of plumbing. I don’t believe it would be possible for malaria to get into this house, we’ve had it gone over so thoroughly.”

Mrs. March said, while she tried to divine Mrs. Mandel’s position from this statement, “It’s certainly the first duty.”

“If Mrs. March could have had her way, we should have had the drainage of our whole ward put in order,” said her husband, “before we ventured to take a furnished apartment for the winter.”

Mrs. Mandel looked discreetly at Mrs. March for permission to laugh at this, but at the same moment both ladies became preoccupied with a second rustling on the stairs.

Two tall, well-dressed young girls came in, and Mrs. Mandel introduced, “Miss Dryfoos, Mrs. March; and Miss Mela Dryfoos, Mr. March,” she added, and the girls shook hands in their several ways with the Marches.

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Miss Dryfoos had keen black eyes, and her hair was intensely black. Her face, but for the slight inward curve of the nose, was regular, and the smallness of her nose and of her mouth did not weaken her face, but gave it a curious effect of fierceness, of challenge. She had a large black fan in her hand, which she waved in talking, with a slow, watchful nervousness. Her sister was blonde, and had a profile like her brother's; but her chin was not so salient, and the weak look of the mouth was not corrected by the spirituality or the fervor of his eyes, though hers were of the same mottled blue. She dropped into the low seat beside Mrs. Mandel, and intertwined her fingers with those of the hand which Mrs. Mandel let her have. She smiled upon the Marches, while Miss Dryfoos watched them intensely, with her eyes first on one and then on the other, as if she did not mean to let any expression of theirs escape her.

"My mother will be down in a minute," she said to Mrs. March.

"I hope we're not disturbing her. It is so good of you to let us come in the evening," Mrs. March replied.

"Oh, not at all," said the girl. "We receive in the evening."

"When we do receive," Miss Mela put in. "We don't always get the chance to." She began a laugh, which she checked at a smile from Mrs. Mandel, which no one could have seen to be reproving.

Miss Dryfoos looked down at her fan, and looked up defiantly at Mrs. March. "I suppose you have hardly got settled. We were afraid we would disturb you when we called."

"Oh no! We were very sorry to miss your visit. We are quite settled in our new quarters. Of course, it's all very different from Boston."

"I hope it's more of a sociable place there," Miss Mela broke in again. "I never saw such an unsociable place as New York. We've been in this house three months, and I don't believe that if we stayed three years any of the neighbors would call."

"I fancy proximity doesn't count for much in New York," March suggested.

Mrs. Mandel said: "That's what I tell Miss Mela. But she is a very social nature, and can't reconcile herself to the fact."

"No, I can't," the girl pouted. "I think it was twice as much fun in Moffitt. I wish I was there now."

"Yes," said March, "I think there's a great deal more enjoyment in those smaller places. There's not so much going on in the way of public amusements, and so people make more of one another. There are not so many concerts, theatres, operas—"

“Oh, they’ve got a splendid opera-house in Moffitt. It’s just grand,” said Miss Mela.

“Have you been to the opera here, this winter?” Mrs. March asked of the elder girl.

She was glaring with a frown at her sister, and detached her eyes from her with an effort. “What did you say?” she demanded, with an absent bluntness. “Oh yes. Yes! We went once. Father took a box at the Metropolitan.”

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"Then you got a good dose of Wagner, I suppose?" said March.

"What?" asked the girl.

"I don't think Miss Dryfoos is very fond of Wagner's music," Mrs. Mandel said. "I believe you are all great Wagnerites in Boston?"

"I'm a very bad Bostonian, Mrs. Mandel. I suspect myself of preferring Verdi," March answered.

Miss Dryfoos looked down at her fan again, and said, "I like 'Trovatore' the best."

"It's an opera I never get tired of," said March, and Mrs. March and Mrs. Mandel exchanged a smile of compassion for his simplicity. He detected it, and added: "But I dare say I shall come down with the Wagner fever in time. I've been exposed to some malignant cases of it."

"That night we were there," said Miss Mela, "they had to turn the gas down all through one part of it, and the papers said the ladies were awful mad because they couldn't show their diamonds. I don't wonder, if they all had to pay as much for their boxes as we did. We had to pay sixty dollars." She looked at the Marches for their sensation at this expense.

March said: "Well, I think I shall take my box by the month, then. It must come cheaper, wholesale."

"Oh no, it don't," said the girl, glad to inform him. "The people that own their boxes, and that had to give fifteen or twenty thousand dollars apiece for them, have to pay sixty dollars a night whenever there's a performance, whether they go or not."

"Then I should go every night," March said.

"Most of the ladies were low neck—"

March interposed, "Well, I shouldn't go low-neck."

The girl broke into a fondly approving laugh at his drolling. "Oh, I guess you love to train! Us girls wanted to go low neck, too; but father said we shouldn't, and mother said if we did she wouldn't come to the front of the box once. Well, she didn't, anyway. We might just as well 'a' gone low neck. She stayed back the whole time, and when they had that dance—the ballet, you know—she just shut her eyes. Well, Conrad didn't like that part much, either; but us girls and Mrs. Mandel, we brazened it out right in the front of the box. We were about the only ones there that went high neck. Conrad had to wear a swallow-tail; but father hadn't any, and he had to patch out with a white cravat. You couldn't see what he had on in the back o' the box, anyway."



Mrs. March looked at Miss Dryfoos, who was waving her fan more and more slowly up and down, and who, when she felt herself looked at, returned Mrs. March's smile, which she meant to be ingratiating and perhaps sympathetic, with a flash that made her start, and then ran her fierce eyes over March's face. "Here comes mother," she said, with a sort of breathlessness, as if speaking her thought aloud, and through the open door the Marches could see the old lady on the stairs.

She paused half-way down, and turning, called up: "Coonrod! Coonrod! You bring my shawl down with you."

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Her daughter Mela called out to her, “Now, mother, Christine ’ll give it to you for not sending Mike.”

“Well, I don’t know where he is, Mely, child,” the mother answered back. “He ain’t never around when he’s wanted, and when he ain’t, it seems like a body couldn’t git shet of him, nohow.”

“Well, you ought to ring for him!” cried Miss Mela, enjoying the joke.

Her mother came in with a slow step; her head shook slightly as she looked about the room, perhaps from nervousness, perhaps from a touch of palsy. In either case the fact had a pathos which Mrs. March confessed in the affection with which she took her hard, dry, large, old hand when she was introduced to her, and in the sincerity which she put into the hope that she was well.

“I’m just middlin’,” Mrs. Dryfoos replied. “I ain’t never so well, nowadays. I tell fawther I don’t believe it agrees with me very well here, but he says I’ll git used to it. He’s away now, out at Moffitt,” she said to March, and wavered on foot a moment before she sank into a chair. She was a tall woman, who had been a beautiful girl, and her gray hair had a memory of bloneness in it like Lindau’s, March noticed. She wore a simple silk gown, of a Quakerly gray, and she held a handkerchief folded square, as it had come from the laundress. Something like the Sabbath quiet of a little wooden meeting-house in thick Western woods expressed itself to him from her presence.

“Laws, mother!” said Miss Mela; “what you got that old thing on for? If I’d ‘a’ known you’d ‘a’ come down in that!”

“Coonrod said it was all right, Mely,” said her mother.

Miss Mela explained to the Marches: “Mother was raised among the Dunkards, and she thinks it’s wicked to wear anything but a gray silk even for dress-up.”

“You hain’t never heard o’ the Dunkards, I reckon,” the old woman said to Mrs. March. “Some folks calls ’em the Beardy Men, because they don’t never shave; and they wash feet like they do in the Testament. My uncle was one. He raised me.”

“I guess pretty much everybody’s a Beardy Man nowadays, if he ain’t a Dunkard!”

Miss Mela looked round for applause of her sally, but March was saying to his wife: “It’s a Pennsylvania German sect, I believe—something like the Quakers. I used to see them when I was a boy.”

“Aren’t they something like the Mennists?” asked Mrs. Mandel.

“They’re good people,” said the old woman, “and the world ’d be a heap better off if there was more like ’em.”

Her son came in and laid a soft shawl over her shoulders before he shook hands with the visitors. “I am glad you found your way here,” he said to them.

Christine, who had been bending forward over her fan, now lifted herself up with a sigh and leaned back in her chair.

“I’m sorry my father isn’t here,” said the young man to Mrs. March. “He’s never met you yet?”

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"No; and I should like to see him. We hear a great deal about your father, you know, from Mr. Fulkerson."

"Oh, I hope you don't believe everything Mr. Fulkerson says about people," Mela cried. "He's the greatest person for carrying on when he gets going I ever saw. It makes Christine just as mad when him and mother gets to talking about religion; she says she knows he don't care anything more about it than the man in the moon. I reckon he don't try it on much with father."

"Your fawther ain't ever been a perfessor," her mother interposed; "but he's always been a good church-goin' man."

"Not since we come to New York," retorted the girl.

"He's been all broke up since he come to New York," said the old woman, with an aggrieved look.

Mrs. Mandel attempted a diversion. "Have you heard any of our great New York preachers yet, Mrs. March?"

"No, I haven't," Mrs. March admitted; and she tried to imply by her candid tone that she intended to begin hearing them the very next Sunday.

"There are a great many things here," said Conrad, "to take your thoughts off the preaching that you hear in most of the churches. I think the city itself is preaching the best sermon all the time."

"I don't know that I understand you," said March.

Mela answered for him. "Oh, Conrad has got a lot of notions that nobody can understand. You ought to see the church he goes to when he does go. I'd about as lief go to a Catholic church myself; I don't see a bit o' difference. He's the greatest crony with one of their preachers; he dresses just like a priest, and he says he is a priest." She laughed for enjoyment of the fact, and her brother cast down his eyes.

Mrs. March, in her turn, tried to take from it the personal tone which the talk was always assuming. "Have you been to the fall exhibition?" she asked Christine; and the girl drew herself up out of the abstraction she seemed sunk in.

"The exhibition?" She looked at Mrs. Mandel.

"The pictures of the Academy, you know," Mrs. Mandel explained. "Where I wanted you to go the day you had your dress tried on."

"No; we haven't been yet. Is it good?" She had turned to Mrs. March again.

"I believe the fall exhibitions are never so good as the spring ones. But there are some good pictures."

"I don't believe I care much about pictures," said Christine. "I don't understand them."

"Ah, that's no excuse for not caring about them," said March, lightly. "The painters themselves don't, half the time."

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The girl looked at him with that glance at once defiant and appealing, insolent and anxious, which he had noticed before, especially when she stole it toward himself and his wife during her sister's babble. In the light of Fulkerson's history of the family, its origin and its ambition, he interpreted it to mean a sense of her sister's folly and an ignorant will to override his opinion of anything incongruous in themselves and their surroundings. He said to himself that she was deathly proud—too proud to try to palliate anything, but capable of anything that would put others under her feet. Her eyes seemed hopelessly to question his wife's social quality, and he fancied, with not unkindly interest, the inexperienced girl's doubt whether to treat them with much or little respect. He lost himself in fancies about her and her ideals, necessarily sordid, of her possibilities of suffering, of the triumphs and disappointments before her. Her sister would accept both with a lightness that would keep no trace of either; but in her they would sink lastingly deep. He came out of his reverie to find Mrs. Dryfoos saying to him, in her hoarse voice:

"I think it's a shame, some of the pictur's a body sees in the winders. They say there's a law ag'inst them things; and if there is, I don't understand why the police don't take up them that paints 'em. I hear 182 tell, since I been here, that there's women that goes to have pictur's took from them that way by men painters." The point seemed aimed at March, as if he were personally responsible for the scandal, and it fell with a silencing effect for the moment. Nobody seemed willing to take it up, and Mrs. Dryfoos went on, with an old woman's severity: "I say they ought to be all tarred and feathered and rode on a rail. They'd be drummed out of town in Moffitt."

Miss Mela said, with a crowing laugh: "I should think they would! And they wouldn't anybody go low neck to the opera-house there, either—not low neck the way they do here, anyway."

"And that pack of worthless hussies," her mother resumed, "that come out on the stage, and begun to kick"

"Laws, mother!" the girl shouted, "I thought you said you had your eyes shut!"

All but these two simpler creatures were abashed at the indecorum of suggesting in words the commonplaces of the theatre and of art.

"Well, I did, Mely, as soon as I could believe my eyes. I don't know what they're doin' in all their churches, to let such things go on," said the old woman. "It's a sin and a shame, I think. Don't you, Coonrod?"

A ring at the door cut short whatever answer he was about to deliver.

"If it's going to be company, Coonrod," said his mother, making an effort to rise, "I reckon I better go up-stairs."

“It’s Mr. Fulkerson, I guess,” said Conrad. “He thought he might come”; and at the mention of this light spirit Mrs. Dryfoos sank contentedly back in her chair, and a relaxation of their painful tension seemed to pass through the whole company. Conrad went to the door himself (the serving-man tentatively, appeared some minutes later) and let in Fulkerson’s cheerful voice before his cheerful person.

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"Ah, how dye do, Conrad? Brought our friend, Mr. Beaton, with me," those within heard him say; and then, after a sound of putting off overcoats, they saw him fill the doorway, with his feet set square and his arms akimbo.

IX.

"Ah! hello! hello!" Fulkerson said, in recognition of the Marches. "Regular gathering of the clans. How are you, Mrs. Dryfoos? How do you do, Mrs. Mandel, Miss Christine, Mela, Aunt Hitty, and all the folks? How you wuz?" He shook hands gayly all round, and took a chair next the old lady, whose hand he kept in his own, and left Conrad to introduce Beaton. But he would not let the shadow of Beaton's solemnity fall upon the company. He began to joke with Mrs. Dryfoos, and to match rheumatisms with her, and he included all the ladies in the range of appropriate pleasantries. "I've brought Mr. Beaton along to-night, and I want you to make him feel at home, like you do me, Mrs. Dryfoos. He hasn't got any rheumatism to speak of; but his parents live in Syracuse, and he's a kind of an orphan, and we've just adopted him down at the office. When you going to bring the young ladies down there, Mrs. Mandel, for a champagne lunch? I will have some hydro-Mela, and Christine it, heigh? How's that for a little starter? We dropped in at your place a moment, Mrs. March, and gave the young folks a few pointers about their studies. My goodness! it does me good to see a boy like that of yours; business, from the word go; and your girl just scoops my youthful affections. She's a beauty, and I guess she's good, too. Well, well, what a world it is! Miss Christine, won't you show Mr. Beaton that seal ring of yours? He knows about such things, and I brought him here to see it as much as anything. It's an intaglio I brought from the other side," he explained to Mrs. March, "and I guess you'll like to look at it. Tried to give it to the Dryfoos family, and when I couldn't, I sold it to 'em. Bound to see it on Miss Christine's hand somehow! Hold on! Let him see it where it belongs, first!"

He arrested the girl in the motion she made to take off the ring, and let her have the pleasure of showing her hand to the company with the ring on it. Then he left her to hear the painter's words about it, which he continued to deliver dissyllabically as he stood with her under a gas-jet, twisting his elastic figure and bending his head over the ring.

"Well, Mely, child," Fulkerson went on, with an open travesty of her mother's habitual address, "and how are you getting along? Mrs. Mandel hold you up to the proprieties pretty strictly? Well, that's right. You know you'd be roaming all over the pasture if she didn't."

The girl gurgled out her pleasure in his funning, and everybody took him. on his own ground of privileged character. He brought them all together in their friendliness for himself, and before the evening was over he had inspired Mrs. Mandel to have them

served with coffee, and had made both the girls feel that they had figured brilliantly in society, and that two young men had been devoted to them.

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"Oh, I think he's just as lovely as he can live!" said Mela, as she stood a moment with her sister on the scene of her triumph, where the others had left them after the departure of their guests.

"Who?" asked Christine, deeply. As she glanced down at her ring, her eyes burned with a softened fire.

She had allowed Beaton to change it himself from the finger where she had worn it to the finger on which he said she ought to wear it. She did not know whether it was right to let him, but she was glad she had done it.

"Who? Mr. Fulkerson, goosie-poosie! Not that old stuckup Mr. Beaton of yours!"

"He is proud," assented Christine, with a throb of exultation.

Beaton and Fulkerson went to the Elevated station with the Marches; but the painter said he was going to walk home, and Fulkerson let him go alone.

"One way is enough for me," he explained. "When I walk up, I don't walk down. Bye-bye, my son!" He began talking about Beaton to the Marches as they climbed the station stairs together. "That fellow puzzles me. I don't know anybody that I have such a desire to kick, and at the same time that I want to flatter up so much. Affect you that way?" he asked of March.

"Well, as far as the kicking goes, yes."

"And how is it with you, Mrs. March?"

"Oh, I want to flatter him up."

"No; really? Why? Hold on! I've got the change."

Fulkerson pushed March away from the ticket-office window; and made them his guests, with the inexorable American hospitality, for the ride down-town. "Three!" he said to the ticket-seller; and, when he had walked them before him out on the platform and dropped his tickets into the urn, he persisted in his inquiry, "Why?"

"Why, because you always want to flatter conceited people, don't you?" Mrs. March answered, with a laugh.

"Do you? Yes, I guess you do. You think Beaton is conceited?"

"Well, slightly, Mr. Fulkerson."



"I guess you're partly right," said Fulkerson, with a sigh, so unaccountable in its connection that they all laughed.

"An ideal 'busted'?" March suggested.

"No, not that, exactly," said Fulkerson. "But I had a notion maybe Beaton wasn't conceited all the time."

"Oh!" Mrs. March exulted, "nobody could be so conceited all the time as Mr. Beaton is most of the time. He must have moments of the direst modesty, when he'd be quite flattery-proof."

"Yes, that's what I mean. I guess that's what makes me want to kick him. He's left compliments on my hands that no decent man would."

"Oh! that's tragical," said March.

"Mr. Fulkerson," Mrs. March began, with change of subject in her voice, "who is Mrs. Mandel?"

"Who? What do you think of her?" he rejoined. "I'll tell you about her when we get in the cars. Look at that thing! Ain't it beautiful?"

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They leaned over the track and looked up at the next station, where the train, just starting, throbbed out the flame-shot steam into the white moonlight.

"The most beautiful thing in New York—the one always and certainly beautiful thing here," said March; and his wife sighed, "Yes, yes." She clung to him, and remained rapt by the sight till the train drew near, and then pulled him back in a panic.

"Well, there ain't really much to tell about her," Fulkerson resumed when they were seated in the car. "She's an invention of mine."

"Of yours?" cried Mrs. March.

"Of course!" exclaimed her husband.

"Yes—at least in her present capacity. She sent me a story for the syndicate, back in July some time, along about the time I first met old Dryfoos here. It was a little too long for my purpose, and I thought I could explain better how I wanted it cut in a call than I could in a letter. She gave a Brooklyn address, and I went to see her. I found her," said Fulkerson, with a vague defiance, "a perfect lady. She was living with an aunt over there; and she had seen better days, when she was a girl, and worse ones afterward. I don't mean to say her husband was a bad fellow; I guess he was pretty good; he was her music-teacher; she met him in Germany, and they got married there, and got through her property before they came over here. Well, she didn't strike me like a person that could make much headway in literature. Her story was well enough, but it hadn't much sand in it; kind of-well, academic, you know. I told her so, and she understood, and cried a little; but she did the best she could with the thing, and I took it and syndicated it. She kind of stuck in my mind, and the first time I went to see the Dryfooses they were stopping at a sort of family hotel then till they could find a house—" Fulkerson broke off altogether, and said, "I don't know as I know just how the Dryfooses struck you, Mrs. March?"

"Can't you imagine?" she answered, with a kindly, smile.

"Yes; but I don't believe I could guess how they would have struck you last summer when I first saw them. My! oh my! there was the native earth for you. Mely is a pretty wild colt now, but you ought to have seen her before she was broken to harness.

"And Christine? Ever see that black leopard they got up there in the Central Park? That was Christine. Well, I saw what they wanted. They all saw it—nobody is a fool in all directions, and the Dryfooses are in their right senses a good deal of the time. Well, to cut a long story short, I got Mrs. Mandel to take 'em in hand—the old lady as well as the girls. She was a born lady, and always lived like one till she saw Mandel; and that something academic that killed her for a writer was just the very thing for them. She

knows the world well enough to know just how much polish they can take on, and she don't try to put on a bit more. See?"

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"Yes, I can see," said Mrs. March.

"Well, she took hold at once, as ready as a hospital-trained nurse; and there ain't anything readier on this planet. She runs the whole concern, socially and economically, takes all the care of housekeeping off the old lady's hands, and goes round with the girls. By-the-bye, I'm going to take my meals at your widow's, March, and Conrad's going to have his lunch there. I'm sick of browsing about."

"Mr. March's widow?" said his wife, looking at him with provisional severity.

"I have no widow, Isabel," he said, "and never expect to have, till I leave you in the enjoyment of my life-insurance. I suppose Fulkerson means the lady with the daughter who wanted to take us to board."

"Oh yes. How are they getting on, I do wonder?" Mrs. March asked of Fulkerson.

"Well, they've got one family to board; but it's a small one. I guess they'll pull through. They didn't want to take any day boarders at first, the widow said; I guess they have had to come to it."

"Poor things!" sighed Mrs. March. "I hope they'll go back to the country."

"Well, I don't know. When you've once tasted New York—You wouldn't go back to Boston, would you?"

"Instantly."

Fulkerson laughed out a tolerant incredulity.

X

Beaton lit his pipe when he found himself in his room, and sat down before the dull fire in his grate to think. It struck him there was a dull fire in his heart a great deal like it; and he worked out a fanciful analogy with the coals, still alive, and the ashes creeping over them, and the dead clay and cinders. He felt sick of himself, sick of his life and of all his works. He was angry with Fulkerson for having got him into that art department of his, for having bought him up; and he was bitter at fate because he had been obliged to use the money to pay some pressing debts, and had not been able to return the check his father had sent him. He pitied his poor old father; he ached with compassion for him; and he set his teeth and snarled with contempt through them for his own baseness. This was the kind of world it was; but he washed his hands of it. The fault was in human nature, and he reflected with pride that he had at least not invented human nature; he had not sunk so low as that yet. The notion amused him; he thought he might get a Satanic epigram out of it some way. But in the mean time that girl, that



wild animal, she kept visibly, tangibly before him; if he put out his hand he might touch hers, he might pass his arm round her waist. In Paris, in a set he knew there, what an effect she would be with that look of hers, and that beauty, all out of drawing! They would recognize the flame quality in her. He imagined a joke about her being a fiery spirit, or nymph, naiad, whatever, from one of her native gas-wells. He began to sketch on a bit of paper from the table at his elbow vague

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lines that veiled and revealed a level, dismal landscape, and a vast flame against an empty sky, and a shape out of the flame that took on a likeness and floated detached from it. The sketch ran up the left side of the sheet and stretched across it. Beaton laughed out. Pretty good to let Fulkerson have that for the cover of his first number! In black and red it would be effective; it would catch the eye from the news-stands. He made a motion to throw it on the fire, but held it back and slid it into the table-drawer, and smoked on. He saw the dummy with the other sketch in the open drawer which he had brought away from Fulkerson's in the morning and slipped in there, and he took it out and looked at it. He made some criticisms in line with his pencil on it, correcting the drawing here and there, and then he respected it a little more, though he still smiled at the feminine quality—a young lady quality.

In spite of his experience the night he called upon the Leightons, Beaton could not believe that Alma no longer cared for him. She played at having forgotten him admirably, but he knew that a few months before she had been very mindful of him. He knew he had neglected them since they came to New York, where he had led them to expect interest, if not attention; but he was used to neglecting people, and he was somewhat less used to being punished for it—punished and forgiven. He felt that Alma had punished him so thoroughly that she ought to have been satisfied with her work and to have forgiven him in her heart afterward. He bore no resentment after the first tingling moments were-past; he rather admired her for it; and he would have been ready to go back half an hour later and accept pardon and be on the footing of last summer again. Even now he debated with himself whether it was too late to call; but, decidedly, a quarter to ten seemed late. The next day he determined never to call upon the Leightons again; but he had no reason for this; it merely came into a transitory scheme of conduct, of retirement from the society of women altogether; and after dinner he went round to see them.

He asked for the ladies, and they all three received him, Alma not without a surprise that intimated itself to him, and her mother with no appreciable relenting; Miss Woodburn, with the needlework which she found easier to be voluble over than a book, expressed in her welcome a neutrality both cordial to Beaton and loyal to Alma.

“Is it snowing outdo's?” she asked, briskly, after the greetings were transacted. “Mah goodness!” she said, in answer to his apparent surprise at the question. “Ah mahght as well have stayed in the Soath, for all the winter Ah have seen in New York yet.”

“We don't often have snow much before New-Year's,” said Beaton.

“Miss Woodburn is wild for a real Northern winter,” Mrs. Leighton explained.

“The othah naght Ah woke up and looked oat of the window and saw all the roofs covered with snow, and it turned oat to be nothing but moonlaght. Ah was never so disappointed in mah lahfe,” said Miss Woodburn.

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"If you'll come to St. Barnaby next summer, you shall have all the winter you want," said Alma.

"I can't let you slander St. Barnaby in that way," said Beaton, with the air of wishing to be understood as meaning more than he said.

"Yes?" returned Alma, coolly. "I didn't know you were so fond of the climate."

"I never think of it as a climate. It's a landscape. It doesn't matter whether it's hot or cold."

"With the thermometer twenty below, you'd find that it mattered," Alma persisted.

"Is that the way you feel about St. Barnaby, too, Mrs. Leighton?" Beaton asked, with affected desolation.

"I shall be glad enough to go back in the summer," Mrs. Leighton conceded.

"And I should be glad to go now," said Beaton, looking at Alma. He had the dummy of 'Every Other Week' in his hand, and he saw Alma's eyes wandering toward it whenever he glanced at her. "I should be glad to go anywhere to get out of a job I've undertaken," he continued, to Mrs. Leighton. "They're going to start some sort of a new illustrated magazine, and they've got me in for their art department. I'm not fit for it; I'd like to run away. Don't you want to advise me a little, Mrs. Leighton? You know how much I value your taste, and I'd like to have you look at the design for the cover of the first number: they're going to have a different one for every number. I don't know whether you'll agree with me, but I think this is rather nice."

He faced the dummy round, and then laid it on the table before Mrs. Leighton, pushing some of her work aside to make room for it and standing over her while she bent forward to look at it.

Alma kept her place, away from the table.

"Mah goodness! Ho' exciting!" said Miss Woodburn. "May anybody look?"

"Everybody," said Beaton.

"Well, isn't it perfectly choming!" Miss Woodburn exclaimed. "Come and look at this, Miss Leighton," she called to Alma, who reluctantly approached.

"What lines are these?" Mrs. Leighton asked, pointing to Beaton's pencil scratches.

"They're suggestions of modifications," he replied.



"I don't think they improve it much. What do you think, Alma?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the girl, constraining her voice to an effect of indifference and glancing carelessly down at the sketch. "The design might be improved; but I don't think those suggestions would do it."

"They're mine," said Beaton, fixing his eyes upon her with a beautiful sad dreaminess that he knew he could put into them; he spoke with a dreamy remoteness of tone—his wind-harp stop, Wetmore called it.

"I supposed so," said Alma, calmly.

"Oh, mah goodness!" cried Miss Woodburn. "Is that the way you awtusts talk to each othah? Well, Ah'm glad Ah'm not an awtust—unless I could do all the talking."

"Artists cannot tell a fib," Alma said, "or even act one," and she laughed in Beaton's upturned face.

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He did not unbend his dreamy gaze. "You're quite right. The suggestions are stupid."

Alma turned to Miss Woodburn: "You hear? Even when we speak of our own work."

"Ah nevah hoad anything lahke it!"

"And the design itself?" Beaton persisted.

"Oh, I'm not an art editor," Alma answered, with a laugh of exultant evasion.

A tall, dark, grave-looking man of fifty, with a swarthy face and iron-gray mustache and imperial and goatee, entered the room. Beaton knew the type; he had been through Virginia sketching for one of the illustrated papers, and he had seen such men in Richmond. Miss Woodburn hardly needed to say, "May Ah introduce you to mah fathaw, Co'nel Woodburn, Mr. Beaton?"

The men shook hands, and Colonel Woodburn said, in that soft, gentle, slow Southern voice without our Northern contractions: "I am very glad to meet you, sir; happy to make yo' acquaintance. Do not move, madam," he said to Mrs. Leighton, who made a deprecatory motion to let him pass to the chair beyond her; "I can find my way." He bowed a bulk that did not lend itself readily to the devotion, and picked up the ball of yarn she had let drop out of her lap in half rising. "Yo' worsteds, madam."

"Yarn, yarn, Colonel Woodburn!" Alma shouted. "You're quite incorrigible. A spade is a spade!"

"But sometimes it is a trump, my dear young lady," said the Colonel, with unabated gallantry; "and when yo' mothah uses yarn, it is worsteds. But I respect worsteds even under the name of yarn: our ladies—my own mothah and sistahs—had to knit the socks we wore—all we could get in the woe."

"Yes, and aftah the woe," his daughter put in. "The knitting has not stopped yet in some places. Have you been much in the Soath, Mr. Beaton?"

Beaton explained just how much.

"Well, sir," said the Colonel, "then you have seen a country making gigantic struggles to retrieve its losses, sir. The South is advancing with enormous strides, sir."

"Too fast for some of us to keep up," said Miss Woodburn, in an audible aside. "The pace in Charlottesboag is pofectly killing, and we had to drop oat into a slow place like New York."

"The progress in the South is material now," said the Colonel; "and those of us whose interests are in another direction find ourselves—isolated —isolated, sir. The

intellectual centres are still in the No'th, sir; the great cities draw the mental activity of the country to them, sir. Necessarily New York is the metropolis."

"Oh, everything comes here," said Beaton, impatient of the elder's ponderosity. Another sort of man would have sympathized with the Southerner's willingness to talk of himself, and led him on to speak of his plans and ideals. But the sort of man that Beaton was could not do this; he put up the dummy into the wrapper he had let drop on the floor beside him, and tied it round with string while Colonel Woodburn was talking. He got to his feet with the words he spoke and offered Mrs. Leighton his hand.

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"Must you go?" she asked, in surprise.

"I am on my way to a reception," he said. She had noticed that he was in evening dress; and now she felt the vague hurt that people invited nowhere feel in the presence of those who are going somewhere. She did not feel it for herself, but for her daughter; and she knew Alma would not have let her feel it if she could have prevented it. But Alma had left the room for a moment, and she tacitly indulged this sense of injury in her behalf.

"Please say good-night to Miss Leighton for me," Beaton continued. He bowed to Miss Woodburn, "Goodnight, Miss Woodburn," and to her father, bluntly, "Goodnight."

"Good-night, sir," said the Colonel, with a sort of severe suavity.

"Oh, isn't he choming!" Miss Woodburn whispered to Mrs. Leighton when Beaton left the room.

Alma spoke to him in the hall without. "You knew that was my design, Mr. Beaton. Why did you bring it?"

"Why?" He looked at her in gloomy hesitation.

Then he said: "You know why. I wished to talk it over with you, to serve you, please you, get back your good opinion. But I've done neither the one nor the other; I've made a mess of the whole thing."

Alma interrupted him. "Has it been accepted?"

"It will be accepted, if you will let it."

"Let it?" she laughed. "I shall be delighted." She saw him swayed a little toward her. "It's a matter of business, isn't it?"

"Purely. Good-night."

When Alma returned to the room, Colonel Woodburn was saying to Mrs. Leighton: "I do not contend that it is impossible, madam, but it is very difficult in a thoroughly commercialized society, like yours, to have the feelings of a gentleman. How can a business man, whose prosperity, whose earthly salvation, necessarily lies in the adversity of some one else, be delicate and chivalrous, or even honest? If we could have had time to perfect our system at the South, to eliminate what was evil and develop what was good in it, we should have had a perfect system. But the virus of commercialism was in us, too; it forbade us to make the best of a divine institution, and tempted us to make the worst. Now the curse is on the whole country; the dollar is the

measure of every value, the stamp of every success. What does not sell is a failure; and what sells succeeds."

"The hobby is oat, mah deah," said Miss Woodburn, in an audible aside to Alma.

"Were you speaking of me, Colonel Woodburn?" Alma asked.

"Surely not, my dear young lady."

"But he's been saying that awtusts are just as greedy aboat money as anybody," said his daughter.

"The law of commercialism is on everything in a commercial society," the Colonel explained, softening the tone in which his convictions were presented. "The final reward of art is money, and not the pleasure of creating."

"Perhaps they would be willing to take it all oat in that if othah people would let them pay their bills in the pleasure of creating," his daughter teased.

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"They are helpless, like all the rest," said her father, with the same deference to her as to other women. "I do not blame them."

"Oh, mah goodness! Didn't you say, sir, that Mr. Beaton had bad manners?"

Alma relieved a confusion which he seemed to feel in reference to her. "Bad manners? He has no manners! That is, when he's himself. He has pretty good ones when he's somebody else."

Miss Woodburn began, "Oh, mah—" and then stopped herself. Alma's mother looked at her with distressed question, but the girl seemed perfectly cool and contented; and she gave her mind provisionally to a point suggested by Colonel Woodburn's talk.

"Still, I can't believe it was right to hold people in slavery, to whip them and sell them. It never did seem right to me," she added, in apology for her extreme sentiments to the gentleness of her adversary.

"I quite agree with you, madam," said the Colonel. "Those were the abuses of the institution. But if we had not been vitiated on the one hand and threatened on the other by the spirit of commercialism from the North—and from Europe, too—those abuses could have been eliminated, and the institution developed in the direction of the mild patriarchalism of the divine intention." The Colonel hitched his chair, which figured a hobby careering upon its hind legs, a little toward Mrs. Leighton and the girls approached their heads and began to whisper; they fell deferentially silent when the Colonel paused in his argument, and went on again when he went on.

At last they heard Mrs. Leighton saying, "And have you heard from the publishers about your book yet?"

Then Miss Woodburn cut in, before her father could answer: "The coase of commercialism is on that, too. They are trahing to fahnd oat whethah it will pay."

"And they are right-quite right," said the Colonel. "There is no longer any other criterion; and even a work that attacks the system must be submitted to the tests of the system."

"The system won't accept destruction on any othah tomes," said Miss Woodburn, demurely.

XI.

At the reception, where two men in livery stood aside to let him pass up the outside steps of the house, and two more helped him off with his overcoat indoors, and a fifth miscalled his name into the drawing-room, the Syracuse stone-cutter's son met the niece of Mrs. Horn, and began at once to tell her about his evening at the Dryfooses'.

He was in very good spirits, for so far as he could have been elated or depressed by his parting with Alma Leighton he had been elated; she had not treated his impudence with the contempt that he felt it deserved; she must still be fond of him; and the warm sense of this, by operation of an obscure but well-recognized law of the masculine being, disposed him to be rather fond of Miss Vance. She was a slender girl, whose semi-aesthetic dress flowed about her with an accentuation

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of her long forms, and redeemed them from censure by the very frankness with which it confessed them; nobody could have said that Margaret Vance was too tall. Her pretty little head, which she had an effect of choosing to have little in the same spirit of judicious defiance, had a good deal of reading in it; she was proud to know literary and artistic fashions as well as society fashions. She liked being singled out by an exterior distinction so obvious as Beaton's, and she listened with sympathetic interest to his account of those people. He gave their natural history reality by drawing upon his own; he reconstructed their plebeian past from the experiences of his childhood and his youth of the pre-Parisian period; and he had a pang of suicidal joy in insulting their ignorance of the world.

"What different kinds of people you meet!" said the girl at last, with an envious sigh. Her reading had enlarged the bounds of her imagination, if not her knowledge; the novels nowadays dealt so much with very common people, and made them seem so very much more worth while than the people one met.

She said something like this to Beaton. He answered: "You can meet the people I'm talking of very easily, if you want to take the trouble. It's what they came to New York for. I fancy it's the great ambition of their lives to be met."

"Oh yes," said Miss Vance, fashionably, and looked down; then she looked up and said, intellectually: "Don't you think it's a great pity? How much better for them to have stayed where they were and what they were!"

"Then you could never have had any chance of meeting them," said Beaton. "I don't suppose you intend to go out to the gas country?"

"No," said Miss Vance, amused. "Not that I shouldn't like to go."

"What a daring spirit! You ought to be on the staff of 'Every Other Week,'" said Beaton.

"The staff-Every Other Week? What is it?"

"The missing link; the long-felt want of a tie between the Arts and the Dollars." Beaton gave her a very picturesque, a very dramatic sketch of the theory, the purpose, and the personnel of the new enterprise.

Miss Vance understood too little about business of any kind to know how it differed from other enterprises of its sort. She thought it was delightful; she thought Beaton must be glad to be part of it, though he had represented himself so bored, so injured, by Fulkerson's insisting upon having him. "And is it a secret? Is it a thing not to be spoken of?"

“‘Tutt’ altro’! Fulkerson will be enraptured to have it spoken of in society. He would pay any reasonable bill for the advertisement.”

“What a delightful creature! Tell him it shall all be spent in charity.”

“He would like that. He would get two paragraphs out of the fact, and your name would go into the ‘Literary Notes’ of all the newspapers.”

“Oh, but I shouldn’t want my name used!” cried the girl, half horrified into fancying the situation real.

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"Then you'd better not say anything about 'Every Other Week'. Fulkerson is preternaturally unscrupulous."

March began to think so too, at times. He was perpetually suggesting changes in the make-up of the first number, with a view to its greater vividness of effect. One day he came and said: "This thing isn't going to have any sort of get up and howl about it, unless you have a paper in the first number going for Bevans's novels. Better get Maxwell to do it."

"Why, I thought you liked Bevans's novels?"

"So I did; but where the good of 'Every Other Week' is concerned I am a Roman father. The popular gag is to abuse Bevans, and Maxwell is the man to do it. There hasn't been a new magazine started for the last three years that hasn't had an article from Maxwell in its first number cutting Bevans all to pieces. If people don't see it, they'll think 'Every Other Week' is some old thing."

March did not know whether Fulkerson was joking or not. He suggested, "Perhaps they'll think it's an old thing if they do see it."

"Well, get somebody else, then; or else get Maxwell to write under an assumed name. Or—I forgot! He'll be anonymous under our system, anyway. Now there ain't a more popular racket for us to work in that first number than a good, swinging attack on Bevans. People read his books and quarrel over 'em, and the critics are all against him, and a regular flaying, with salt and vinegar rubbed in afterward, will tell more with people who like good old-fashioned fiction than anything else. I like Bevans's things, but, dad burn it! when it comes to that first number, I'd offer up anybody."

"What an immoral little wretch you are, Fulkerson!" said March, with a laugh.

Fulkerson appeared not to be very strenuous about the attack on the novelist. "Say!" he called out, gayly, "what should you think of a paper defending the late lamented system of slavery?"

"What do you mean, Fulkerson?" asked March, with a puzzled smile.

Fulkerson braced his knees against his desk, and pushed himself back, but kept his balance to the eye by canting his hat sharply forward. "There's an old cock over there at the widow's that's written a book to prove that slavery was and is the only solution of the labor problem. He's a Southerner."

"I should imagine," March assented.

"He's got it on the brain that if the South could have been let alone by the commercial spirit and the pseudophilanthropy of the North, it would have worked out slavery into a

perfectly ideal condition for the laborer, in which he would have been insured against want, and protected in all his personal rights by the state. He read the introduction to me last night. I didn't catch on to all the points—his daughter's an awfully pretty girl, and I was carrying that fact in my mind all the time, too, you know—but that's about the gist of it."

"Seems to regard it as a lost opportunity?" said March.

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"Exactly! What a mighty catchy title, Neigh? Look well on the title-page."

"Well written?"

"I reckon so; I don't know. The Colonel read it mighty eloquently."

"It mightn't be such bad business," said March, in a muse. "Could you get me a sight of it without committing yourself?"

"If the Colonel hasn't sent it off to another publisher this morning. He just got it back with thanks yesterday. He likes to keep it travelling."

"Well, try it. I've a notion it might be a curious thing."

"Look here, March," said Fulkerson, with the effect of taking a fresh hold; "I wish you could let me have one of those New York things of yours for the first number. After all, that's going to be the great card."

"I couldn't, Fulkerson; I couldn't, really. I want to philosophize the material, and I'm too new to it all yet. I don't want to do merely superficial sketches."

"Of course! Of course! I understand that. Well, I don't want to hurry you. Seen that old fellow of yours yet? I think we ought to have that translation in the first number; don't you? We want to give 'em a notion of what we're going to do in that line."

"Yes," said March; "and I was going out to look up Lindau this morning. I've inquired at Maroni's, and he hasn't been there for several days. I've some idea perhaps he's sick. But they gave me his address, and I'm going to see."

"Well, that's right. We want the first number to be the keynote in every way."

March shook his head. "You can't make it so. The first number is bound to be a failure always, as far as the representative character goes. It's invariably the case. Look at the first numbers of all the things you've seen started. They're experimental, almost amateurish, and necessarily so, not only because the men that are making them up are comparatively inexperienced like ourselves, but because the material sent them to deal with is more or less consciously tentative. People send their adventurous things to a new periodical because the whole thing is an adventure. I've noticed that quality in all the volunteer contributions; it's in the articles that have been done to order even. No; I've about made up my mind that if we can get one good striking paper into the first number that will take people's minds off the others, we shall be doing all we can possible hope for. I should like," March added, less seriously, "to make up three numbers ahead, and publish the third one first."

Fulkerson dropped forward and struck his fist on the desk. “It’s a first-rate idea. Why not do it?”

March laughed. “Fulkerson, I don’t believe there’s any quackish thing you wouldn’t do in this cause. From time to time I’m thoroughly ashamed of being connected with such a charlatan.”

Fulkerson struck his hat sharply backward. “Ah, dad burn it! To give that thing the right kind of start I’d walk up and down Broadway between two boards, with the title-page of Every Other Week facsimiled on one and my name and address on the—”

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He jumped to his feet and shouted, "March, I'll do it!"

"What?"

"I'll hire a lot of fellows to make mud-turtles of themselves, and I'll have a lot of big facsimiles of the title-page, and I'll paint the town red!"

March looked aghast at him. "Oh, come, now, Fulkerson!"

"I mean it. I was in London when a new man had taken hold of the old Cornhill, and they were trying to boom it, and they had a procession of these mudturtles that reached from Charing Cross to Temple Bar. Cornhill Magazine. Sixpence. Not a dull page in it.' I said to myself then that it was the livest thing I ever saw. I respected the man that did that thing from the bottom of my heart. I wonder I ever forgot it. But it shows what a shaky thing the human mind is at its best."

"You infamous mountebank!", said March, with great amusement at Fulkerson's access; "you call that congeries of advertising instinct of yours the human mind at its best? Come, don't be so diffident, Fulkerson. Well, I'm off to find Lindau, and when I come back I hope Mr. Dryfoos will have you under control. I don't suppose you'll be quite sane again till after the first number is out. Perhaps public opinion will sober you then."

"Confound it, March! How do you think they will take it? I swear I'm getting so nervous I don't know half the time which end of me is up. I believe if we don't get that thing out by the first of February it 'll be the death of me."

"Couldn't wait till Washington's Birthday? I was thinking it would give the day a kind of distinction, and strike the public imagination, if—"

"No, I'll be dogged if I could!" Fulkerson lapsed more and more into the parlance of his early life in this season of strong excitement. "I believe if Beaton lags any on the art leg I'll kill him."

"Well, I shouldn't mind your killing Beaton," said March, tranquilly, as he went out.

He went over to Third Avenue and took the Elevated down to Chatham Square. He found the variety of people in the car as unfailingly entertaining as ever. He rather preferred the East Side to the West Side lines, because they offered more nationalities, conditions, and characters to his inspection. They draw not only from the up-town American region, but from all the vast hive of populations swarming between them and the East River. He had found that, according to the hour, American husbands going to and from business, and American wives going to and from shopping, prevailed on the Sixth Avenue road, and that the most picturesque admixture to these familiar aspects of human nature were the brilliant eyes and complexions of the American Hebrews, who otherwise contributed to the effect of well-clad comfort and citizen-self-satisfaction of the

crowd. Now and then he had found himself in a car mostly filled with Neapolitans from the constructions far up the line, where he had read how they are worked and fed and housed

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like beasts; and listening to the jargon of their unintelligible dialect, he had occasion for pensive question within himself as to what notion these poor animals formed of a free republic from their experience of life under its conditions; and whether they found them practically very different from those of the immemorial brigandage and enforced complicity with rapine under which they had been born. But, after all, this was an infrequent effect, however massive, of travel on the West Side, whereas the East offered him continual entertainment in like sort. The sort was never quite so squalid. For short distances the lowest poverty, the hardest pressed labor, must walk; but March never entered a car without encountering some interesting shape of shabby adversity, which was almost always adversity of foreign birth. New York is still popularly supposed to be in the control of the Irish, but March noticed in these East Side travels of his what must strike every observer returning to the city after a prolonged absence: the numerical subordination of the dominant race. If they do not outvote them, the people of Germanic, of Slavonic, of Pelasgic, of Mongolian stock outnumber the prepotent Celts; and March seldom found his speculation centred upon one of these. The small eyes, the high cheeks, the broad noses, the puff lips, the bare, cue-filleted skulls, of Russians, Poles, Czechs, Chinese; the furtive glitter of Italians; the blonde dulness of Germans; the cold quiet of Scandinavians—fire under ice—were aspects that he identified, and that gave him abundant suggestion for the personal histories he constructed, and for the more public-spirited reveries in which he dealt with the future economy of our heterogeneous commonwealth. It must be owned that he did not take much trouble about this; what these poor people were thinking, hoping, fearing, enjoying, suffering; just where and how they lived; who and what they individually were—these were the matters of his waking dreams as he stared hard at them, while the train raced farther into the gay ugliness—the shapeless, graceful, reckless picturesqueness of the Bowery.

There were certain signs, certain facades, certain audacities of the prevailing hideousness that always amused him in that uproar to the eye which the strident forms and colors made. He was interested in the insolence with which the railway had drawn its erasing line across the Corinthian front of an old theatre, almost grazing its fluted pillars, and flouting its dishonored pediment. The colossal effigies of the fat women and the tuft-headed Circassian girls of cheap museums; the vistas of shabby cross streets; the survival of an old hip-roofed house here and there at their angles; the Swiss chalet, histrionic decorativeness of the stations in prospect or retrospect; the vagaries of the lines that narrowed together or stretched apart according to the width of the avenue, but always in wanton disregard of the life that dwelt, and bought

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and sold, and rejoiced or sorrowed, and clattered or crawled, around, below, above—were features of the frantic panorama that perpetually touched his sense of humor and moved his sympathy. Accident and then exigency seemed the forces at work to this extraordinary effect; the play of energies as free and planless as those that force the forest from the soil to the sky; and then the fierce struggle for survival, with the stronger life persisting over the deformity, the mutilation, the destruction, the decay of the weaker. The whole at moments seemed to him lawless, godless; the absence of intelligent, comprehensive purpose in the huge disorder, and the violent struggle to subordinate the result to the greater good, penetrated with its dumb appeal the consciousness of a man who had always been too self-enwrapped to perceive the chaos to which the individual selfishness must always lead.

But there was still nothing definite, nothing better than a vague discomfort, however poignant, in his half recognition of such facts; and he descended the station stairs at Chatham Square with a sense of the neglected opportunities of painters in that locality. He said to himself that if one of those fellows were to see in Naples that turmoil of cars, trucks, and teams of every sort, intershot with foot-passengers going and coming to and from the crowded pavements, under the web of the railroad tracks overhead, and amid the spectacular approach of the streets that open into the square, he would have it down in his sketch-book at once. He decided simultaneously that his own local studies must be illustrated, and that he must come with the artist and show him just which bits to do, not knowing that the two arts can never approach the same material from the same point. He thought he would particularly like his illustrator to render the Dickensy, cockneyish quality of the, shabby-genteel ballad-seller of whom he stopped to ask his way to the street where Lindau lived, and whom he instantly perceived to be, with his stock in trade, the sufficient object of an entire study by himself. He had his ballads strung singly upon a cord against the house wall, and held down in piles on the pavement with stones and blocks of wood. Their control in this way intimated a volatility which was not perceptible in their sentiment. They were mostly tragical or doleful: some of them dealt with the wrongs of the working-man; others appealed to a gay experience of the high seas; but vastly the greater part to memories and associations of an Irish origin; some still uttered the poetry of plantation life in the artless accents of the end—man. Where they trusted themselves, with syntax that yielded promptly to any exigency of rhythmic art, to the ordinary American speech, it was to strike directly for the affections, to celebrate the domestic ties, and, above all, to embalm the memories of angel and martyr mothers whose dissipated sons deplored their sufferings too late. March thought this not at all a bad thing

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in them; he smiled in patronage of their simple pathos; he paid the tribute of a laugh when the poet turned, as he sometimes did, from his conception of angel and martyr motherhood, and portrayed the mother in her more familiar phases of virtue and duty, with the retributive shingle or slipper in her hand. He bought a pocketful of this literature, popular in a sense which the most successful book can never be, and enlisted the ballad vendor so deeply in the effort to direct him to Lindau's dwelling by the best way that he neglected another customer, till a sarcasm on his absent-mindedness stung him to retort, "I'm a-trying to answer a gentleman a civil question; that's where the absent-minded comes in."

It seemed for some reason to be a day of leisure with the Chinese dwellers in Mott Street, which March had been advised to take first. They stood about the tops of basement stairs, and walked two and two along the dirty pavement, with their little hands tucked into their sleeves across their breasts, aloof in immaculate cleanliness from the filth around them, and scrutinizing the scene with that cynical sneer of faint surprise to which all aspects of our civilization seem to move their superiority. Their numbers gave character to the street, and rendered not them, but what was foreign to them, strange there; so that March had a sense of missionary quality in the old Catholic church, built long before their incursion was dreamed of. It seemed to have come to them there, and he fancied in the statued saint that looked down from its facade something not so much tolerant as tolerated, something propitiatory, almost deprecatory. It was a fancy, of course; the street was sufficiently peopled with Christian children, at any rate, swarming and shrieking at their games; and presently a Christian mother appeared, pushed along by two policemen on a handcart, with a gelatinous tremor over the paving and a gelatinous jouncing at the curbstones. She lay with her face to the sky, sending up an inarticulate lamentation; but the indifference of the officers forbade the notion of tragedy in her case. She was perhaps a local celebrity; the children left off their games, and ran gayly trooping after her; even the young fellow and young girl exchanging playful blows in a robust flirtation at the corner of a liquor store suspended their scuffle with a pleased interest as she passed. March understood the unwillingness of the poor to leave the worst conditions in the city for comfort and plenty in the country when he reflected upon this dramatic incident, one of many no doubt which daily occur to entertain them in such streets. A small town could rarely offer anything comparable to it, and the country never. He said that if life appeared so hopeless to him as it must to the dwellers in that neighborhood he should not himself be willing to quit its distractions, its alleviations, for the vague promise of unknown good in the distance somewhere.

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But what charm could such a man as Lindau find in such a place? It could not be that he lived there because he was too poor to live elsewhere: with a shutting of the heart, March refused to believe this as he looked round on the abounding evidences of misery, and guiltily remembered his neglect of his old friend. Lindau could probably find as cheap a lodging in some decenter part of the town; and, in fact, there was some amelioration of the prevailing squalor in the quieter street which he turned into from Mott.

A woman with a tied-up face of toothache opened the door for him when he pulled, with a shiver of foreboding, the bell-knob, from which a yard of rusty crape dangled. But it was not Lindau who was dead, for the woman said he was at home, and sent March stumbling up the four or five dark flights of stairs that led to his tenement. It was quite at the top of the house, and when March obeyed the German-English "Komm!" that followed his knock, he found himself in a kitchen where a meagre breakfast was scattered in stale fragments on the table before the stove. The place was bare and cold; a half-empty beer bottle scarcely gave it a convivial air. On the left from this kitchen was a room with a bed in it, which seemed also to be a cobbler's shop: on the right, through a door that stood ajar, came the German-English voice again, saying this time, "Hier!"

XII.

March pushed the door open into a room like that on the left, but with a writing-desk instead of a cobbler's bench, and a bed, where Lindau sat propped up; with a coat over his shoulders and a skull-cap on his head, reading a book, from which he lifted his eyes to stare blankly over his spectacles at March. His hairy old breast showed through the night-shirt, which gaped apart; the stump of his left arm lay upon the book to keep it open.

"Ah, my tear yo'ng friendt! Passil! Marge! Iss it you?" he called out, joyously, the next moment.

"Why, are you sick, Lindau?" March anxiously scanned his face in taking his hand.

Lindau laughed. "No; I'm all righdt. Only a liddle lazy, and a liddle eggonomigal. Idt's jeaper to stay in pedt sometimes as to geep a fire a-goin' all the time. Don't wandt to gome too hardt on the 'brafer Mann', you know:

"Braver Mann, er schafft mir zu essen."

You remember? Heine? You readt Heine still? Who is your favorite boet now, Passil? You write some boetry yourself yet? No? Well, I am glad to zee you. Brush those baperss off of that jair. Well, idt is goodt for zore eyess. How didt you findt where I lif?

“They told me at Maroni’s,” said March. He tried to keep his eyes on Lindau’s face, and not see the discomfort of the room, but he was aware of the shabby and frowsy bedding, the odor of stale smoke, and the pipes and tobacco shreds mixed with the books and manuscripts strewn over the leaf of the writing-desk. He laid down on the mass the pile of foreign magazines he had brought under his arm. “They gave me another address first.”

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"Yes. I have chust come here," said Lindau. "Idt is not very coy, Neigh?"

"It might be gayer," March admitted, with a smile. "Still," he added, soberly, "a good many people seem to live in this part of the town. Apparently they die here, too, Lindau. There is crape on your outside door. I didn't know but it was for you."

"Nodt this time," said Lindau, in the same humor. "Berhaps some other time. We geep the ondertakers bratty puzy down here."

"Well," said March, "undertakers must live, even if the rest of us have to die to let them." Lindau laughed, and March went on: "But I'm glad it isn't your funeral, Lindau. And you say you're not sick, and so I don't see why we shouldn't come to business."

"Pusiness?" Lindau lifted his eyebrows. "You come on pusiness?"

"And pleasure combined," said March, and he went on to explain the service he desired at Lindau's hands.

The old man listened with serious attention, and with assenting nods that culminated in a spoken expression of his willingness to undertake the translations. March waited with a sort of mechanical expectation of his gratitude for the work put in his way, but nothing of the kind came from Lindau, and March was left to say, "Well, everything is understood, then; and I don't know that I need add that if you ever want any little advance on the work—"

"I will ask you," said Lindau, quietly, "and I thank you for that. But I can wait; I ton't needt any money just at bresent." As if he saw some appeal for greater frankness in March's eye, he went on: "I tidn't come here begause I was too boor to lif anywhere else, and I ton't stay in pedt begause I couldn't haf a fire to geep warm if I wanted it. I'm nodt zo padt off as Marmontel when he went to Paris. I'm a liddle loaxurious, that is all. If I stay in pedt it's zo I can fling money away on somethings else. Heigh?"

"But what are you living here for, Lindau?" March smiled at the irony lurking in Lindau's words.

"Well, you zee, I foundt I was begoming a liddle too moch of an aristograt. I hadt a room oap in Creenvidge Willage, among dose pig pugs over on the West Side, and I foundt"—Lindau's voice lost its jesting quality, and his face darkened—"that I was beginning to forget the boor!"

"I should have thought," said March, with impartial interest, "that you might have seen poverty enough, now and then, in Greenwich Village to remind you of its existence."

"Nodt like here," said Lindau. "Andt you must zee it all the dtime—zee it, hear it, smell it, dtaste it—or you forget it. That is what I come here for. I was begoming a ploated



aristocrat. I thought I was not like these people down here, when I come down once to look around; I thought I must be something else, and so I said I better take myself in time, and I come here among my brothers—the beeches and the thieves!” A noise made itself heard in the next room, as if the door were furtively opened, and a faint sound of tiptoeing and of hands clawing on a table.

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"Thiefs!" Lindau repeated, with a shout. "Liddle thieves, that gabture your breakfast. Ah! ha! ha!" A wild scurrying of feet, joyous cries and tittering, and a slamming door followed upon his explosion, and he resumed in the silence: "Idt is the children cot pack from school. They come and steal what I leaf there on my duple. Idt's one of our liddle chokes; we onderstand one another; that's all righdt. Once the gobbler in the other room there he used to chase 'em; he couldn't onderstand their liddle tricks. Now dot goppler's teadt, and he ton't chase 'em any more. He was a Bohemian. Gindt of grazy, I cuess."

"Well, it's a sociable existence," March suggested. "But perhaps if you let them have the things without stealing—"

"Oh no, no! Most nodt mage them too gonceitedt. They mostn't go and feel themselves petter than those boor millionairss that hadt to steal their money."

March smiled indulgently at his old friend's violence. "Oh, there are fagots and fagots, you know, Lindau; perhaps not all the millionaires are so guilty."

"Let us speak German!" cried Lindau, in his own tongue, pushing his book aside, and thrusting his skullcap back from his forehead. "How much money can a man honestly earn without wronging or oppressing some other man?"

"Well, if you'll let me answer in English," said March, "I should say about five thousand dollars a year. I name that figure because it's my experience that I never could earn more; but the experience of other men may be different, and if they tell me they can earn ten, or twenty, or fifty thousand a year, I'm not prepared to say they can't do it."

Lindau hardly waited for his answer. "Not the most gifted man that ever lived, in the practice of any art or science, and paid at the highest rate that exceptional genius could justly demand from those who have worked for their money, could ever earn a million dollars. It is the landlords and the merchant princes, the railroad kings and the coal barons (the oppressors to whom you instinctively give the titles of tyrants)—it is these that make the millions, but no man earns them. What artist, what physician, what scientist, what poet was ever a millionaire?"

"I can only think of the poet Rogers," said March, amused by Lindau's tirade. "But he was as exceptional as the other Rogers, the martyr, who died with warm feet." Lindau had apparently not understood his joke, and he went on, with the American ease of mind about everything: "But you must allow, Lindau, that some of those fellows don't do so badly with their guilty gains. Some of them give work to armies of poor people—"

Lindau furiously interrupted: "Yes, when they have gathered their millions together from the hunger and cold and nakedness and ruin and despair of hundreds of thousands of other men, they 'give work' to the poor! They give work! They allow their helpless

brothers to earn enough to keep life in them! They give work! Who is it gives toil, and where will your rich men be when once the poor shall refuse to give toil? Why, you have come to give me work!"

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March laughed outright. "Well, I'm not a millionaire, anyway, Lindau, and I hope you won't make an example of me by refusing to give toil. I dare say the millionaires deserve it, but I'd rather they wouldn't suffer in my person."

"No," returned the old man, mildly relaxing the fierce glare he had bent upon March. "No man deserves to suffer at the hands of another. I lose myself when I think of the injustice in the world. But I must not forget that I am like the worst of them."

"You might go up Fifth Avenue and live among the rich awhile, when you're in danger of that," suggested March. "At any rate," he added, by an impulse which he knew he could not justify to his wife, "I wish you'd come some day and lunch with their emissary. I've been telling Mrs. March about you, and I want her and the children to see you. Come over with these things and report." He put his hand on the magazines as he rose.

"I will come," said Lindau, gently.

"Shall I give you your book?" asked March.

"No; I giddt oap bretty soon."

"And—and—can you dress yourself?"

"I vhistle, 'and one of those liddle fellowss comess. We haf to dake gare of one another in a blace like this. Idt iss nodt like the worldt," said Lindau, gloomily.

March thought he ought to cheer him up. "Oh, it isn't such a bad world, Lindau! After all, the average of millionaires is small in it." He added, "And I don't believe there's an American living that could look at that arm of yours and not wish to lend you a hand for the one you gave us all." March felt this to be a fine turn, and his voice trembled slightly in saying it.

Lindau smiled grimly. "You think zo? I wouldn't moch like to drost 'em. I've driedt idt too often." He began to speak German again fiercely: "Besides, they owe me nothing. Do you think I knowingly gave my hand to save this oligarchy of traders and tricksters, this aristocracy of railroad wreckers and stock gamblers and mine-slave drivers and mill-serf owners? No; I gave it to the slave; the slave—ha! ha! ha!—whom I helped to unshackle to the common liberty of hunger and cold. And you think I would be the beneficiary of such a state of things?"

"I'm sorry to hear you talk so, Lindau," said March; "very sorry." He stopped with a look of pain, and rose to go. Lindau suddenly broke into a laugh and into English.

"Oh, well, it is only dalk, Passil, and it toes me goodt. My parg is worse than my pidte, I cuess. I pring these things roundt bretty soon. Good-bye, Passil, my tear poy. Auf wiedersehen!"

XIII.

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March went away thinking of what Lindau had said, but not for the impersonal significance of his words so much as for the light they cast upon Lindau himself. He thought the words violent enough, but in connection with what he remembered of the cheery, poetic, hopeful idealist, they were even more curious than lamentable. In his own life of comfortable reverie he had never heard any one talk so before, but he had read something of the kind now and then in blatant labor newspapers which he had accidentally fallen in with, and once at a strikers' meeting he had heard rich people denounced with the same frenzy. He had made his own reflections upon the tastelessness of the rhetoric, and the obvious buncombe of the motive, and he had not taken the matter seriously.

He could not doubt Lindau's sincerity, and he wondered how he came to that way of thinking. From his experience of himself he accounted for a prevailing literary quality in it; he decided it to be from Lindau's reading and feeling rather than his reflection. That was the notion he formed of some things he had met with in Ruskin to much the same effect; he regarded them with amusement as the chimeras of a rhetorician run away with by his phrases.

But as to Lindau, the chief thing in his mind was a conception of the droll irony of a situation in which so fervid a hater of millionaires should be working, indirectly at least, for the prosperity of a man like Dryfoos, who, as March understood, had got his money together out of every gambler's chance in speculation, and all a schemer's thrift from the error and need of others. The situation was not more incongruous, however, than all the rest of the 'Every Other Week' affair. It seemed to him that there were no crazy fortuities that had not tended to its existence, and as time went on, and the day drew near for the issue of the first number, the sense of this intensified till the whole lost at moments the quality of a waking fact, and came to be rather a fantastic fiction of sleep.

Yet the heterogeneous forces did co-operate to a reality which March could not deny, at least in their presence, and the first number was representative of all their nebulous intentions in a tangible form. As a result, it was so respectable that March began to respect these intentions, began to respect himself for combining and embodying them in the volume which appealed to him with a novel fascination, when the first advance copy was laid upon his desk. Every detail of it was tiresomely familiar already, but the whole had a fresh interest now. He now saw how extremely fit and effective Miss Leighton's decorative design for the cover was, printed in black and brick-red on the delicate gray tone of the paper. It was at once attractive and refined, and he credited Beaton with quite all he merited in working it over to the actual shape. The touch and the taste of the art editor were present throughout the number. As Fulkerson said, Beaton had caught on with the delicacy

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of a humming-bird and the tenacity of a bulldog to the virtues of their illustrative process, and had worked it for all it was worth. There were seven papers in the number, and a poem on the last page of the cover, and he had found some graphic comment for each. It was a larger proportion than would afterward be allowed, but for once in a way it was allowed. Fulkerson said they could not expect to get their money back on that first number, anyway. Seven of the illustrations were Beaton's; two or three he got from practised hands; the rest were the work of unknown people which he had suggested, and then related and adapted with unfailing ingenuity to the different papers. He handled the illustrations with such sympathy as not to destroy their individual quality, and that indefinable charm which comes from good amateur work in whatever art. He rescued them from their weaknesses and errors, while he left in them the evidence of the pleasure with which a clever young man, or a sensitive girl, or a refined woman had done them. Inevitably from his manipulation, however, the art of the number acquired homogeneity, and there was nothing casual in its appearance. The result, March eagerly owned, was better than the literary result, and he foresaw that the number would be sold and praised chiefly for its pictures. Yet he was not ashamed of the literature, and he indulged his admiration of it the more freely because he had not only not written it, but in a way had not edited it. To be sure, he had chosen all the material, but he had not voluntarily put it all together for that number; it had largely put itself together, as every number of every magazine does, and as it seems more and more to do, in the experience of every editor. There had to be, of course, a story, and then a sketch of travel. There was a literary essay and a social essay; there was a dramatic trifle, very gay, very light; there was a dashing criticism on the new pictures, the new plays, the new books, the new fashions; and then there was the translation of a bit of vivid Russian realism, which the editor owed to Lindau's exploration of the foreign periodicals left with him; Lindau was himself a romanticist of the Victor Hugo sort, but he said this fragment of Dostoyevski was good of its kind. The poem was a bit of society verse, with a backward look into simpler and wholesomer experiences.

Fulkerson was extremely proud of the number; but he said it was too good—too good from every point of view. The cover was too good, and the paper was too good, and that device of rough edges, which got over the objection to uncut leaves while it secured their aesthetic effect, was a thing that he trembled for, though he rejoiced in it as a stroke of the highest genius. It had come from Beaton at the last moment, as a compromise, when the problem of the vulgar croppiness of cut leaves and the unpopularity of uncut leaves seemed to have no solution but suicide. Fulkerson was still morally crawling round on his hands

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and knees, as he said, in abject gratitude at Beaton's feet, though he had his qualms, his questions; and he declared that Beaton was the most inspired ass since Balaam's. "We're all asses, of course," he admitted, in semi-apology to March; "but we're no such asses as Beaton." He said that if the tasteful decorativeness of the thing did not kill it with the public outright, its literary excellence would give it the finishing stroke. Perhaps that might be overlooked in the impression of novelty which a first number would give, but it must never happen again. He implored March to promise that it should never happen again; he said their only hope was in the immediate cheapening of the whole affair. It was bad enough to give the public too much quantity for their money, but to throw in such quality as that was simply ruinous; it must be stopped. These were the expressions of his intimate moods; every front that he presented to the public wore a glow of lofty, of devout exultation. His pride in the number gushed out in fresh bursts of rhetoric to every one whom he could get to talk with him about it. He worked the personal kindness of the press to the utmost. He did not mind making himself ridiculous or becoming a joke in the good cause, as he called it. He joined in the applause when a humorist at the club feigned to drop dead from his chair at Fulkerson's introduction of the topic, and he went on talking that first number into the surviving spectators. He stood treat upon all occasions, and he lunched attaches of the press at all hours. He especially befriended the correspondents of the newspapers of other cities, for, as he explained to March, those fellows could give him any amount of advertising simply as literary gossip. Many of the fellows were ladies who could not be so summarily asked out to lunch, but Fulkerson's ingenuity was equal to every exigency, and he contrived somehow to make each of these feel that she had been possessed of exclusive information. There was a moment when March conjectured a willingness in Fulkerson to work Mrs. March into the advertising department, by means of a tea to these ladies and their friends which she should administer in his apartment, but he did not encourage Fulkerson to be explicit, and the moment passed. Afterward, when he told his wife about it, he was astonished to find that she would not have minded doing it for Fulkerson, and he experienced another proof of the bluntness of the feminine instincts in some directions, and of the personal favor which Fulkerson seemed to enjoy with the whole sex. This alone was enough to account for the willingness of these correspondents to write about the first number, but March accused him of sending it to their addresses with boxes of Jacqueminot roses and Huyler candy.

Fulkerson let him enjoy his joke. He said that he would do that or anything else for the good cause, short of marrying the whole circle of female correspondents.

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March was inclined to hope that if the first number had been made too good for the country at large, the more enlightened taste of metropolitan journalism would invite a compensating favor for it in New York. But first Fulkerson and then the event proved him wrong. In spite of the quality of the magazine, and in spite of the kindness which so many newspaper men felt for Fulkerson, the notices in the New York papers seemed grudging and provisional to the ardor of the editor. A merit in the work was acknowledged, and certain defects in it for which March had trembled were ignored; but the critics astonished him by selecting for censure points which he was either proud of or had never noticed; which being now brought to his notice he still could not feel were faults. He owned to Fulkerson that if they had said so and so against it, he could have agreed with them, but that to say thus and so was preposterous; and that if the advertising had not been adjusted with such generous recognition of the claims of the different papers, he should have known the counting-room was at the bottom of it. As it was, he could only attribute it to perversity or stupidity. It was certainly stupid to condemn a magazine novelty like 'Every Other Week' for being novel; and to augur that if it failed, it would fail through its departure from the lines on which all the other prosperous magazines had been built, was in the last degree perverse, and it looked malicious. The fact that it was neither exactly a book nor a magazine ought to be for it and not against it, since it would invade no other field; it would prosper on no ground but its own.

XIV.

The more March thought of the injustice of the New York press (which had not, however, attacked the literary quality of the number) the more bitterly he resented it; and his wife's indignation superheated his own. 'Every Other Week' had become a very personal affair with the whole family; the children shared their parents' disgust; Belle was outspoken in her denunciations of a venal press. Mrs. March saw nothing but ruin ahead, and began tacitly to plan a retreat to Boston, and an establishment retrenched to the basis of two thousand a year. She shed some secret tears in anticipation of the privations which this must involve; but when Fulkerson came to see March rather late the night of the publication day, she nobly told him that if the worst came to the worst she could only have the kindest feeling toward him, and should not regard him as in the slightest degree responsible.

"Oh, hold on, hold on!" he protested. "You don't think we've made a failure, do you?"

"Why, of course," she faltered, while March remained gloomily silent.

"Well, I guess we'll wait for the official count, first. Even New York hasn't gone against us, and I guess there's a majority coming down to Harlem River that could sweep everything before it, anyway."

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"What do you mean, Fulkerson?" March demanded, sternly.

"Oh, nothing! Only, the 'News Company' has ordered ten thousand now; and you know we had to give them the first twenty on commission."

"What do you mean?" March repeated; his wife held her breath.

"I mean that the first number is a booming success already, and that it's going to a hundred thousand before it stops. That unanimity and variety of censure in the morning papers, combined with the attractiveness of the thing itself, has cleared every stand in the city, and now if the favor of the country press doesn't turn the tide against us, our fortune's made." The Marches remained dumb. "Why, look here! Didn't I tell you those criticisms would be the making of us, when they first began to turn you blue this morning, March?"

"He came home to lunch perfectly sick," said Mrs. Marcli; "and I wouldn't let him go back again."

"Didn't I tell you so?" Fulkerson persisted.

March could not remember that he had, or that he had been anything but incoherently and hysterically jocose over the papers, but he said, "Yes, yes—I think so."

"I knew it from the start," said Fulkerson. "The only other person who took those criticisms in the right spirit was Mother Dryfoos—I've just been bolstering up the Dryfoos family. She had them read to her by Mrs. Mandel, and she understood them to be all the most flattering prophecies of success. Well, I didn't read between the lines to that extent, quite; but I saw that they were going to help us, if there was anything in us, more than anything that could have been done. And there was something in us! I tell you, March, that seven-shooting self-cocking donkey of a Beaton has given us the greatest start! He's caught on like a mouse. He's made the thing awfully chic; it's jimmy; there's lots of dog about it. He's managed that process so that the illustrations look as expensive as first-class wood-cuts, and they're cheaper than chromos. He's put style into the whole thing."

"Oh yes," said March, with eager meekness, "it's Beaton that's done it."

Fulkerson read jealousy of Beaton in Mrs. March's face. "Beaton has given us the start because his work appeals to the eye. There's no denying that the pictures have sold this first number; but I expect the literature of this first number to sell the pictures of the second. I've been reading it all over, nearly, since I found how the cat was jumping; I was anxious about it, and I tell you, old man, it's good. Yes, sir! I was afraid maybe you had got it too good, with that Boston refinement of yours; but I reckon you haven't. I'll

risk it. I don't see how you got so much variety into so few things, and all of them palpitant, all of 'em on the keen jump with actuality."

The mixture of American slang with the jargon of European criticism in Fulkerson's talk made March smile, but his wife did not seem to notice it in her exultation. "That is just what I say," she broke in. "It's perfectly wonderful. I never was anxious about it a moment, except, as you say, Mr. Fulkerson, I was afraid it might be too good."

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They went on in an antiphony of praise till March said: "Really, I don't see what's left me but to strike for higher wages. I perceive that I'm indispensable."

"Why, old man, you're coming in on the divvy, you know," said Fulkerson.

They both laughed, and when Fulkerson was gone, Mrs. March asked her husband what a divvy was.

"It's a chicken before it's hatched."

"No! Truly?"

He explained, and she began to spend the divvy.

At Mrs. Leighton's Fulkerson gave Alma all the honor of the success; he told her mother that the girl's design for the cover had sold every number, and Mrs. Leighton believed him.

"Well, Ah think Ah maght have some of the glory," Miss Woodburn pouted. "Where am Ah comin' in?"

"You're coming in on the cover of the next number," said Fulkerson. "We're going to have your face there; Miss Leighton's going to sketch it in." He said this reckless of the fact that he had already shown them the design of the second number, which was Beaton's weird bit of gas-country landscape.

"Ah don't see why you don't wrahte the fiction for your magazine, Mr. Fulkerson," said the girl.

This served to remind Fulkerson of something. He turned to her father. "I'll tell you what, Colonel Woodburn, I want Mr. March to see some chapters of that book of yours. I've been talking to him about it."

"I do not think it would add to the popularity of your periodical, sir," said the Colonel, with a stately pleasure in being asked. "My views of a civilization based upon responsible slavery would hardly be acceptable to your commercialized society."

"Well, not as a practical thing, of course," Fulkerson admitted. "But as something retrospective, speculative, I believe it would make a hit. There's so much going on now about social questions; I guess people would like to read it."

"I do not know that my work is intended to amuse people," said the Colonel, with some state.

“Mah goodness! Ah only wish it was, then,” said his daughter; and she added: “Yes, Mr. Fulkerson, the Colonel will be very glad to submit po’tions of his woak to yo’ edito’. We want to have some of the honaw. Perhaps we can say we helped to stop yo’ magazine, if we didn’t help to stawt it.”

They all laughed at her boldness, and Fulkerson said: “It ’ll take a good deal more than that to stop ‘Every Other Week’. The Colonel’s whole book couldn’t do it.” Then he looked unhappy, for Colonel Woodburn did not seem to enjoy his reassuring words; but Miss Woodburn came to his rescue. “You maght illustrate it with the po’trait of the awthoris daughtaw, if it’s too late for the covah.”

“Going to have that in every number, Miss Woodburn!” he cried.

“Oh, mah goodness!” she said, with mock humility.

Alma sat looking at her piquant head, black, unconsciously outlined against the lamp, as she sat working by the table. “Just keep still a moment!”

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She got her sketch-block and pencils, and began to draw; Fulkerson tilted himself forward and looked over her shoulder; he smiled outwardly; inwardly he was divided between admiration of Miss Woodburn's arch beauty and appreciation of the skill which reproduced it; at the same time he was trying to remember whether March had authorized him to go so far as to ask for a sight of Colonel Woodburn's manuscript. He felt that he had trenched upon March's province, and he framed one apology to the editor for bringing him the manuscript, and another to the author for bringing it back.

"Most Ah hold raght still like it was a photograph?" asked Miss Woodburn. "Can Ah toak?"

"Talk all you want," said Alma, squinting her eyes. "And you needn't be either adamantine, nor yet—wooden."

"Oh, ho' very good of you! Well, if Ah can toak—go on, Mr. Fulkerson!"

"Me talk? I can't breathe till this thing is done!" sighed Fulkerson; at that point of his mental drama the Colonel was behaving rustily about the return of his manuscript, and he felt that he was looking his last on Miss Woodburn's profile.

"Is she getting it raght?" asked the girl.

"I don't know which is which," said Fulkerson.

"Oh, Ah hope Ah shall! Ah don't want to go round feelin' like a sheet of papah half the time."

"You could rattle on, just the same," suggested Alma.

"Oh, now! Jost listen to that, Mr. Fulkerson. Do you call that any way to toak to people?"

"You might know which you were by the color," Fulkerson began, and then he broke off from the personal consideration with a business inspiration, and smacked himself on the knee, "We could print it in color!"

Mrs. Leighton gathered up her sewing and held it with both hands in her lap, while she came round, and looked critically at the sketch and the model over her glasses. "It's very good, Alma," she said.

Colonel Woodburn remained restively on his side of the table. "Of course, Mr. Fulkerson, you were jesting, sir, when you spoke of printing a sketch of my daughter."

"Why, I don't know—If you object—?"

"I do, sir—decidedly," said the Colonel.

"Then that settles it, of course,—I only meant—"

"Indeed it doesn't!" cried the girl. "Who's to know who it's from? Ah'm jost set on havin' it printed! Ah'm going to appear as the head of Slavery—in opposition to the head of Liberty."

"There'll be a revolution inside of forty-eight hours, and we'll have the Colonel's system going wherever a copy of 'Every Other Week' circulates," said Fulkerson.

"This sketch belongs to me," Alma interposed. "I'm not going to let it be printed."

"Oh, mah goodness!" said Miss Woodburn, laughing good-humoredly. "That's becose you were brought up to hate slavery."

"I should like Mr. Beaton to see it," said Mrs. Leighton, in a sort of absent tone. She added, to Fulkerson: "I rather expected he might be in to-night."

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"Well, if he comes we'll leave it to Beaton," Fulkerson said, with relief in the solution, and an anxious glance at the Colonel, across the table, to see how he took that form of the joke. Miss Woodburn intercepted his glance and laughed, and Fulkerson laughed, too, but rather forlornly.

Alma set her lips primly and turned her head first on one side and then on the other to look at the sketch. "I don't think we'll leave it to Mr. Beaton, even if he comes."

"We left the other design for the cover to Beaton," Fulkerson insinuated. "I guess you needn't be afraid of him."

"Is it a question of my being afraid?" Alma asked; she seemed coolly intent on her drawing.

"Miss Leighton thinks he ought to be afraid of her," Miss Woodburn explained.

"It's a question of his courage, then?" said Alma.

"Well, I don't think there are many young ladies that Beaton's afraid of," said Fulkerson, giving himself the respite of this purely random remark, while he interrogated the faces of Mrs. Leighton and Colonel Woodburn for some light upon the tendency of their daughters' words.

He was not helped by Mrs. Leighton's saying, with a certain anxiety, "I don't know what you mean, Mr. Fulkerson."

"Well, you're as much in the dark as I am myself, then," said Fulkerson. "I suppose I meant that Beaton is rather—a—favorite, you know. The women like him."

Mrs. Leighton sighed, and Colonel Woodburn rose and left the room.

In the silence that followed, Fulkerson looked from one lady to the other with dismay. "I seem to have put my foot in it, somehow," he suggested, and Miss Woodburn gave a cry of laughter.

"Poo' Mr. Fulkerson! Poo' Mr. Fulkerson! Papa thoat you wanted him to go."

"Wanted him to go?" repeated Fulkerson.

"We always mention Mr. Beaton when we want to get rid of papa."

"Well, it seems to me that I have noticed that he didn't take much interest in Beaton, as a general topic. But I don't know that I ever saw it drive him out of the room before!"

“Well, he isn’t always so bad,” said Miss Woodburn. “But it was a case of hate at first sight, and it seems to be growin’ on papa.”

“Well, I can understand that,” said Fulkerson. “The impulse to destroy Beaton is something that everybody has to struggle against at the start.”

“I must say, Mr. Fulkerson,” said Mrs. Leighton, in the tremor through which she nerved herself to differ openly with any one she liked, “I never had to struggle with anything of the kind, in regard to Mr. Beaton. He has always been most respectful and—and—considerate, with me, whatever he has been with others.”

“Well, of course, Mrs. Leighton!” Fulkerson came back in a soothing tone. “But you see you’re the rule that proves the exception. I was speaking of the way men felt about Beaton. It’s different with ladies; I just said so.”

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"Is it always different?" Alma asked, lifting her head and her hand from her drawing, and staring at it absently.

Fulkerson pushed both his hands through his whiskers. "Look here! Look here!" he said. "Won't somebody start some other subject? We haven't had the weather up yet, have we? Or the opera? What is the matter with a few remarks about politics?"

"Why, Ah thoat you lahked to toak about the staff of yo' magazine," said Miss Woodburn.

"Oh, I do!" said Fulkerson. "But not always about the same member of it. He gets monotonous, when he doesn't get complicated. I've just come round from the Marches'," he added, to Mrs. Leighton.

"I suppose they've got thoroughly settled in their apartment by this time." Mrs. Leighton said something like this whenever the Marches were mentioned. At the bottom of her heart she had not forgiven them for not taking her rooms; she had liked their looks so much; and she was always hoping that they were uncomfortable or dissatisfied; she could not help wanting them punished a little.

"Well, yes; as much as they ever will be," Fulkerson answered. "The Boston style is pretty different, you know; and the Marches are old-fashioned folks, and I reckon they never went in much for bric-a-brac. They've put away nine or ten barrels of dragon candlesticks, but they keep finding new ones."

"Their landlady has just joined our class," said Alma. "Isn't her name Green? She happened to see my copy of 'Every Other Week', and said she knew the editor; and told me."

"Well, it's a little world," said Fulkerson. "You seem to be touching elbows with everybody. Just think of your having had our head translator for a model."

"Ah think that your whole publication revolves around the Leighton family," said Miss Woodburn.

"That's pretty much so," Fulkerson admitted. "Anyhow, the publisher seems disposed to do so."

"Are you the publisher? I thought it was Mr. Dryfoos," said Alma.

"It is."

"Oh!"

The tone and the word gave Fulkerson a discomfort which he promptly confessed. "Missed again."

The girls laughed, and he regained something of his lost spirits, and smiled upon their gayety, which lasted beyond any apparent reason for it.

Miss Woodburn asked, "And is Mr. Dryfoos senio' anything like ouah Mr. Dryfoos?"

"Not the least."

"But he's jost as exemplary?"

"Yes; in his way."

"Well, Ah wish Ah could see all those pinks of puffection togethah, once."

"Why, look here! I've been thinking I'd celebrate a little, when the old gentleman gets back. Have a little supper—something of that kind. How would you like to let me have your parlors for it, Mrs. Leighton? You ladies could stand on the stairs, and have a peep at us, in the bunch."

"Oh, mah! What a privilege! And will Miss Alma be there, with the othah contributors? Ah shall jost expah of envy!"

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"She won't be there in person," said Fulkerson, "but she'll be represented by the head of the art department."

"Mah goodness! And who'll the head of the publishing department represent?"

"He can represent you," said Alma.

"Well, Ah want to be represented, someho'."

"We'll have the banquet the night before you appear on the cover of our fourth number," said Fulkerson.

"Ah thoat that was doubly fo'bidden," said Miss Woodburn. "By the stern parent and the envious awtust."

"We'll get Beaton to get round them, somehow. I guess we can trust him to manage that."

Mrs. Leighton sighed her resentment of the implication.

"I always feel that Mr. Beaton doesn't do himself justice," she began.

Fulkerson could not forego the chance of a joke. "Well, maybe he would rather temper justice with mercy in a case like his." This made both the younger ladies laugh. "I judge this is my chance to get off with my life," he added, and he rose as he spoke. "Mrs. Leighton, I am about the only man of my sex who doesn't thirst for Beaton's blood most of the time. But I know him and I don't. He's more kinds of a good fellow than people generally understand. He doesn't wear his heart upon his sleeve-not his ulster sleeve, anyway. You can always count me on your side when it's a question of finding Beaton not guilty if he'll leave the State."

Alma set her drawing against the wall, in rising to say goodnight to Fulkerson. He bent over on his stick to look at it. "Well, it's beautiful," he sighed, with unconscious sincerity.

Alma made him a courtesy of mock modesty. "Thanks to Miss Woodburn!"

"Oh no! All she had to do was simply to stay put."

"Don't you think Ah might have improved it if Ah had, looked better?" the girl asked, gravely.

"Oh, you couldn't!" said Fulkerson, and he went off triumphant in their applause and their cries of "Which? which?"

Mrs. Leighton sank deep into an accusing gloom when at last she found herself alone with her daughter. "I don't know what you are thinking about, Alma Leighton. If you don't like Mr. Beaton—"

"I don't."

"You don't? You know better than that. You know that, you did care for him."

"Oh! that's a very different thing. That's a thing that can be got over."

"Got over!" repeated Mrs. Leighton, aghast.

"Of course, it can! Don't be romantic, mamma. People get over dozens of such fancies. They even marry for love two or three times."

"Never!" cried her mother, doing her best to feel shocked; and at last looking it.

Her looking it had no effect upon Alma. "You can easily get over caring for people; but you can't get over liking them—if you like them because they are sweet and good. That's what lasts. I was a simple goose, and he imposed upon me because he was a sophisticated goose. Now the case is reversed."

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"He does care for you, now. You can see it. Why do you encourage him to come here?"

"I don't," said Alma. "I will tell him to keep away if you like. But whether he comes or goes, it will be the same."

"Not to him, Alma! He is in love with you!"

"He has never said so."

"And you would really let him say so, when you intend to refuse him?"

"I can't very well refuse him till he does say so."

This was undeniable. Mrs. Leighton could only demand, in an awful tone, "May I ask why—if you cared for him; and I know you care for him still you will refuse him?"

Alma laughed. "Because—because I'm wedded to my Art, and I'm not going to commit bigamy, whatever I do."

"Alma!"

"Well, then, because I don't like him—that is, I don't believe in him, and don't trust him. He's fascinating, but he's false and he's fickle. He can't help it, I dare say."

"And you are perfectly hard. Is it possible that you were actually pleased to have Mr. Fulkerson tease you about Mr. Dryfoos?"

"Oh, good-night, now, mamma! This is becoming personal"

PG EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Artists never do anything like other people
Ballast of her instinctive despondency
Clinging persistence of such natures
Dividend: It's a chicken before it's hatched
Gayety, which lasted beyond any apparent reason for it
Hopeful recklessness
How much can a man honestly earn without wronging or oppressing
I cannot endure this—this hopefulness of yours
If you dread harm enough it is less likely to happen
It must be your despair that helps you to bear up
Marry for love two or three times
No man deserves to suffer at the hands of another



Patience with mediocrity putting on the style of genius
Person talks about taking lessons, as if they could learn it
Say when he is gone that the woman gets along better without him
Shouldn't ca' fo' the disgrace of bein' poo'—its inconvenience
Timidity of the elder in the presence of the younger man