

Their Silver Wedding Journey — Volume 1 eBook

Their Silver Wedding Journey — Volume 1 by William Dean Howells

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Page 1

By William Dean Howells

Part I.

[*Note:* Several chapter heading numerals are out of order or missing in this 1899 edition, however the text is all present in the three volumes. D.W.]

I.

“You need the rest,” said the Business End; “and your wife wants you to go, as well as your doctor. Besides, it’s your Sabbatical year, and you, could send back a lot of stuff for the magazine.”

“Is that your notion of a Sabbatical year?” asked the editor.

“No; I throw that out as a bait to your conscience. You needn’t write a line while you’re gone. I wish you wouldn’t for your own sake; although every number that hasn’t got you in it is a back number for me.”

“That’s very nice of you, Fulkerson,” said the editor. “I suppose you realize that it’s nine years since we took ‘Every Other Week’ from Dryfoos?”

“Well, that makes it all the more Sabbatical,” said Fulkerson. “The two extra years that you’ve put in here, over and above the old style Sabbatical seven, are just so much more to your credit. It was your right to go, two years ago, and now it’s your duty. Couldn’t you look at it in that light?”

“I dare say Mrs. March could,” the editor assented. “I don’t believe she could be brought to regard it as a pleasure on any other terms.”

“Of course not,” said Fulkerson. “If you won’t take a year, take three months, and call it a Sabbatical summer; but go, anyway. You can make up half a dozen numbers ahead, and Tom, here, knows your ways so well that you needn’t think about ‘Every Other Week’ from the time you start till the time you try to bribe the customs inspector when you get back. I can take a hack at the editing myself, if Tom’s inspiration gives out, and put a little of my advertising fire into the thing.” He laid his hand on the shoulder of the young fellow who stood smiling by, and pushed and shook him in the liking there was between them. “Now you go, March! Mrs. Fulkerson feels just as I do about it; we had our outing last year, and we want Mrs. March and you to have yours. You let me go down and engage your passage, and—”

“No, no!” the editor rebelled. “I’ll think about it;” but as he turned to the work he was so fond of and so weary of, he tried not to think of the question again, till he closed his

desk in the afternoon, and started to walk home; the doctor had said he ought to walk, and he did so, though he longed to ride, and looked wistfully at the passing cars.

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He knew he was in a rut, as his wife often said; but if it was a rut, it was a support too; it kept him from wobbling: She always talked as if the flowery fields of youth lay on either side of the dusty road he had been going so long, and he had but to step aside from it, to be among the butterflies and buttercups again; he sometimes indulged this illusion, himself, in a certain ironical spirit which caressed while it mocked the notion. They had a tacit agreement that their youth, if they were ever to find it again, was to be looked for in Europe, where they met when they were young, and they had never been quite without the hope of going back there, some day, for a long sojourn. They had not seen the time when they could do so; they were dreamers, but, as they recognized, even dreaming is not free from care; and in his dream March had been obliged to work pretty steadily, if not too intensely. He had been forced to forego the distinctly literary ambition with which he had started in life because he had their common living to make, and he could not make it by writing graceful verse, or even graceful prose. He had been many years in a sufficiently distasteful business, and he had lost any thought of leaving it when it left him, perhaps because his hold on it had always been rather lax, and he had not been able to conceal that he disliked it. At any rate, he was supplanted in his insurance agency at Boston by a subordinate in his office, and though he was at the same time offered a place of nominal credit in the employ of the company, he was able to decline it in grace of a chance which united the charm of congenial work with the solid advantage of a better salary than he had been getting for work he hated. It was an incredible chance, but it was rendered appreciably real by the necessity it involved that they should leave Boston, where they had lived all their married life, where Mrs. March as well as their children was born, and where all their tender and familiar ties were, and come to New York, where the literary enterprise which formed his chance was to be founded.

It was then a magazine of a new sort, which his business partner had imagined in such leisure as the management of a newspaper syndicate afforded him, and had always thought of getting March to edit. The magazine which is also a book has since been realized elsewhere on more or less prosperous terms, but not for any long period, and 'Every Other Week' was apparently—the only periodical of the kind conditioned for survival. It was at first backed by unlimited capital, and it had the instant favor of a popular mood, which has since changed, but which did not change so soon that the magazine had not time to establish itself in a wide acceptance. It was now no longer a novelty, it was no longer in the maiden blush of its first success, but it had entered upon its second youth with the reasonable hope of many years of prosperity before it. In fact it was a very comfortable living for all concerned, and

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the Marches had the conditions, almost dismayingly perfect, in which they had often promised themselves to go and be young again in Europe, when they rebelled at finding themselves elderly in America. Their daughter was married, and so very much to her mother's mind that she did not worry about her, even though she lived so far away as Chicago, still a wild frontier town to her Boston imagination; and their son, as soon as he left college, had taken hold on 'Every Other Week', under his father's instruction, with a zeal and intelligence which won him Fulkerson's praise as a chip of the old block. These two liked each other, and worked into each other's hands as cordially and aptly as Fulkerson and March had ever done. It amused the father to see his son offering Fulkerson the same deference which the Business End paid to seniority in March himself; but in fact, Fulkerson's forehead was getting, as he said, more intellectual every day; and the years were pushing them all along together.

Still, March had kept on in the old rut, and one day he fell down in it. He had a long sickness, and when he was well of it, he was so slow in getting his grip of work again that he was sometimes deeply discouraged. His wife shared his depression, whether he showed or whether he hid it, and when the doctor advised his going abroad, she abetted the doctor with all the strength of a woman's hygienic intuitions. March himself willingly consented, at first; but as soon as he got strength for his work, he began to temporize and to demur. He said that he believed it would do him just as much good to go to Saratoga, where they always had such a good time, as to go to Carlsbad; and Mrs. March had been obliged several times to leave him to his own undoing; she always took him more vigorously in hand afterwards.

II.

When he got home from the 'Every Other Week' office, the afternoon of that talk with the Business End, he wanted to laugh with his wife at Fulkerson's notion of a Sabbatical year. She did not think it was so very droll; she even urged it seriously against him, as if she had now the authority of Holy Writ for forcing him abroad; she found no relish of absurdity in the idea that it was his duty to take this rest which had been his right before.

He abandoned himself to a fancy which had been working to the surface of his thought. "We could call it our Silver Wedding Journey, and go round to all the old places, and see them in the reflected light of the past."

"Oh, we could!" she responded, passionately; and he had now the delicate responsibility of persuading her that he was joking.



He could think of nothing better than a return to Fulkerson's absurdity. "It would be our Silver Wedding Journey just as it would be my Sabbatical year—a good deal after date. But I suppose that would make it all the more silvery."

She faltered in her elation. "Didn't you say a Sabbatical year yourself?" she demanded.



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“Fulkerson said it; but it was a figurative expression.”

“And I suppose the Silver Wedding Journey was a figurative expression too!”

“It was a notion that tempted me; I thought you would enjoy it. Don’t you suppose I should be glad too, if we could go over, and find ourselves just as we were when we first met there?”

“No; I don’t believe now that you care anything about it.”

“Well, it couldn’t be done, anyway; so that doesn’t matter.”

“It could be done, if you were a mind to think so. And it would be the greatest inspiration to you. You are always longing for some chance to do original work, to get away from your editing, but you’ve let the time slip by without really trying to do anything; I don’t call those little studies of yours in the magazine anything; and now you won’t take the chance that’s almost forcing itself upon you. You could write an original book of the nicest kind; mix up travel and fiction; get some love in.”

“Oh, that’s the stalest kind of thing!”

“Well, but you could see it from a perfectly new point of view. You could look at it as a sort of dispassionate witness, and treat it humorously—of course it is ridiculous—and do something entirely fresh.”

“It wouldn’t work. It would be carrying water on both shoulders. The fiction would kill the travel, the travel would kill the fiction; the love and the humor wouldn’t mingle any more than oil and vinegar.”

“Well, and what is better than a salad?”

“But this would be all salad-dressing, and nothing to put it on.” She was silent, and he yielded to another fancy. “We might imagine coming upon our former selves over there, and travelling round with them—a wedding journey ‘en partie carree’.”

“Something like that. I call it a very poetical idea,” she said with a sort of provisionality, as if distrusting another ambush.

“It isn’t so bad,” he admitted. “How young we were, in those days!”

“Too young to know what a good time we were having,” she said, relaxing her doubt for the retrospect. “I don’t feel as if I really saw Europe, then; I was too inexperienced, too ignorant, too simple. I would like to go, just to make sure that I had been.” He was smiling again in the way he had when anything occurred to him that amused him, and she demanded, “What is it?”



“Nothing. I was wishing we could go in the consciousness of people who actually hadn’t been before—carry them all through Europe, and let them see it in the old, simple-hearted American way.”

She shook her head. “You couldn’t! They’ve all been!”

“All but about sixty or seventy millions,” said March.

“Well, those are just the millions you don’t know, and couldn’t imagine.”

“I’m not so sure of that.”

“And even if you could imagine them, you couldn’t make them interesting. All the interesting ones have been, anyway.”



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“Some of the uninteresting ones too. I used, to meet some of that sort over there. I believe I would rather chance it for my pleasure with those that hadn’t been.”

“Then why not do it? I know you could get something out of it.”

“It might be a good thing,” he mused, “to take a couple who had passed their whole life here in New York, too poor and too busy ever to go; and had a perfect famine for Europe all the time. I could have them spend their Sunday afternoons going aboard the different boats, and looking up their accommodations. I could have them sail, in imagination, and discover an imaginary Europe, and give their grotesque misconceptions of it from travels and novels against a background of purely American experience. We needn’t go abroad to manage that. I think it would be rather nice.”

“I don’t think it would be nice in the least,” said Mrs. March, “and if you don’t want to talk seriously, I would rather not talk at all.”

“Well, then, let’s talk about our Silver Wedding Journey.”

“I see. You merely want to tease and I am not in the humor for it.”

She said this in a great many different ways, and then she was really silent. He perceived that she was hurt; and he tried to win her back to good-humor. He asked her if she would not like to go over to Hoboken and look at one of the Hanseatic League steamers, some day; and she refused. When he sent the next day and got a permit to see the boat; she consented to go.

III.

He was one of those men who live from the inside outward; he often took a hint for his actions from his fancies; and now because he had fancied some people going to look at steamers on Sundays, he chose the next Sunday himself for their visit to the Hanseatic boat at Hoboken. To be sure it was a leisure day with him, but he might have taken the afternoon of any other day, for that matter, and it was really that invisible thread of association which drew him.

The Colmannia had been in long enough to have made her toilet for the outward voyage, and was looking her best. She was tipped and edged with shining brass, without and within, and was red-carpeted and white-painted as only a ship knows how to be. A little uniformed steward ran before the visitors, and showed them through the dim white corridors into typical state-rooms on the different decks; and then let them verify their first impression of the grandeur of the dining-saloon, and the luxury of the ladies’ parlor and music-room. March made his wife observe that the tables and sofas and easy-chairs, which seemed so carelessly scattered about, were all suggestively screwed fast to the floor against rough weather; and he amused himself with the heavy



German browns and greens and coppers in the decorations, which he said must have been studied in color from sausage, beer, and spinach, to the effect of those large march-panes in the roof. She laughed with him at the tastelessness of the race which they were destined to marvel at more and more; but she made him own that the stewardesses whom they saw were charmingly like serving-maids in the 'Fliegende Blatter'; when they went ashore she challenged his silence for some assent to her own conclusion that the Colmannia was perfect.



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“She has only one fault,” he assented. “She’s a ship.”

“Yes,” said his wife, “and I shall want to look at the Norumbia before I decide.”

Then he saw that it was only a question which steamer they should take, and not whether they should take any. He explained, at first gently and afterwards savagely, that their visit to the Colmannia was quite enough for him, and that the vessel was not built that he would be willing to cross the Atlantic in.

When a man has gone so far as that he has committed himself to the opposite course in almost so many words; and March was neither surprised nor abashed when he discovered himself, before they reached home, offering his wife many reasons why they should go to Europe. She answered to all, No, he had made her realize the horror of it so much that she was glad to give it up. She gave it up, with the best feeling; all that she would ask of him was that he should never mention Europe to her again. She could imagine how much he disliked to go, if such a ship as the Colmannia did not make him want to go.

At the bottom of his heart he knew that he had not used her very well. He had kindled her fancy with those notions of a Sabbatical year and a Silver Wedding Journey, and when she was willing to renounce both he had persisted in taking her to see the ship, only to tell her afterwards that he would not go abroad on any account. It was by a psychological juggle which some men will understand that he allowed himself the next day to get the sailings of the Norumbia from the steamship office; he also got a plan of the ship showing the most available staterooms, so that they might be able to choose between her and the Colmannia from all the facts.

IV.

From this time their decision to go was none the less explicit because so perfectly tacit.

They began to amass maps and guides. She got a Baedeker for Austria and he got a Bradshaw for the continent, which was never of the least use there, but was for the present a mine of unavailable information. He got a phrase-book, too, and tried to rub up his German. He used to read German, when he was a boy, with a young enthusiasm for its romantic poetry, and now, for the sake of Schiller and Uhland and Heine, he held imaginary conversations with a barber, a bootmaker, and a banker, and tried to taste the joy which he had not known in the language of those poets for a whole generation. He perceived, of course, that unless the barber, the bootmaker, and the banker answered him in terms which the author of the phrase-book directed them to use, he should not get on with them beyond his first question; but he did not allow this to spoil his pleasure in it. In fact, it was with a tender emotion that he realized how little

the world, which had changed in everything else so greatly, had changed in its ideal of a phrase-book.



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Mrs. March postponed the study of her Baedeker to the time and place for it; and addressed herself to the immediate business of ascertaining the respective merits of the Colmannia and Norumbia. She carried on her researches solely among persons of her own sex; its experiences were alone of that positive character which brings conviction, and she valued them equally at first or second hand. She heard of ladies who would not cross in any boat but the Colmannia, and who waited for months to get a room on her; she talked with ladies who said that nothing would induce them to cross in her. There were ladies who said she had twice the motion that the Norumbia had, and the vibration from her twin screws was frightful; it always was, on those twin-screw boats, and it did not affect their testimony with Mrs. March that the Norumbia was a twin-screw boat too. It was repeated to her in the third or fourth degree of hear-say that the discipline on the Colmannia was as perfect as that on the Cunarders; ladies whose friends had tried every line assured her that the table of the Norumbia was almost as good as the table of the French boats. To the best of the belief of lady witnesses still living who had friends on board, the Colmannia had once got aground, and the Norumbia had once had her bridge carried off by a tidal wave; or it might be the Colmannia; they promised to ask and let her know. Their lightest word availed with her against the most solemn assurances of their husbands, fathers, or brothers, who might be all very well on land, but in navigation were not to be trusted; they would say anything from a reckless and culpable optimism. She obliged March all the same to ask among them, but she recognized their guilty insincerity when he came home saying that one man had told him you could have played croquet on the deck of the Colmannia the whole way over when he crossed, and another that he never saw the racks on in three passages he had made in the Norumbia.

The weight of evidence was, he thought, in favor of the Norumbia, but when they went another Sunday to Hoboken, and saw the ship, Mrs. March liked her so much less than the Colmannia that she could hardly wait for Monday to come; she felt sure all the good rooms on the Colmannia would be gone before they could engage one.

From a consensus of the nerves of all the ladies left in town so late in the season, she knew that the only place on any steamer where your room ought to be was probably just where they could not get it. If you went too high, you felt the rolling terribly, and people tramping up and down on the promenade under your window kept you awake the whole night; if you went too low, you felt the engine thump, thump, thump in your head the whole way over. If you went too far forward, you got the pitching; if you went aft, on the kitchen side, you got the smell of the cooking. The only place, really, was just back of the dining-saloon on the south side of the ship; it was smooth there, and it was quiet, and you had the sun in your window all the way over. He asked her if he must take their room there or nowhere, and she answered that he must do his best, but that she would not be satisfied with any other place.



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In his despair he went down to the steamer office, and took a room which one of the clerks said was the best. When he got home, it appeared from reference to the ship's plan that it was the very room his wife had wanted from the beginning, and she praised him as if he had used a wisdom beyond his sex in getting it.

He was in the enjoyment of his unmerited honor when a belated lady came with her husband for an evening call, before going into the country. At sight of the plans of steamers on the Marches' table, she expressed the greatest wonder and delight that they were going to Europe. They had supposed everybody knew it, by this time, but she said she had not heard a word of it; and she went on with some felicitations which March found rather unduly filial. In getting a little past the prime of life he did not like to be used with too great consideration of his years, and he did not think that he and his wife were so old that they need be treated as if they were going on a golden wedding journey, and heaped with all sorts of impertinent prophecies of their enjoying it so much and being so much the better for the little outing! Under his breath, he confounded this lady for her impudence; but he schooled himself to let her rejoice at their going on a Hanseatic boat, because the Germans were always so careful of you. She made her husband agree with her, and it came out that he had crossed several times on both the Colmannia and the Norumbia. He volunteered to say that the Colmannia, was a capital sea-boat; she did not have her nose under water all the time; she was steady as a rock; and the captain and the kitchen were simply out of sight; some people did call her unlucky.

"Unlucky?" Mrs. March echoed, faintly. "Why do they call her unlucky?"

"Oh, I don't know. People will say anything about any boat. You know she broke her shaft, once, and once she got caught in the ice."

Mrs. March joined him in deriding the superstition of people, and she parted gayly with this over-good young couple. As soon as they were gone, March knew that she would say: "You must change that ticket, my dear. We will go in the Norumbia."

"Suppose I can't get as good a room on the Norumbia?"

"Then we must stay."

In the morning after a night so bad that it was worse than no night at all, she said she would go to the steamship office with him and question them up about the Colmannia. The people there had never heard she was called an unlucky boat; they knew of nothing disastrous in her history. They were so frank and so full in their denials, and so kindly patient of Mrs. March's anxieties, that he saw every word was carrying conviction of their insincerity to her. At the end she asked what rooms were left on the Norumbia, and the clerk whom they had fallen to looked through his passenger list with a shaking head. He was afraid there was nothing they would like.

“But we would take anything,” she entreated, and March smiled to think of his innocence in supposing for a moment that she had ever dreamed of not going.



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"We merely want the best," he put in. "One flight up, no noise or dust, with sun in all the windows, and a place for fire on rainy days."

They must be used to a good deal of American joking which they do not understand, in the foreign steamship offices. The clerk turned unsmilingly to one of his superiors and asked him some question in German which March could not catch, perhaps because it formed no part of a conversation with a barber, a bootmaker or a banker. A brief drama followed, and then the clerk pointed to a room on the plan of the *Norumbia* and said it had just been given up, and they could have it if they decided to take it at once.

They looked, and it was in the very place of their room on the *Colmannia*; it was within one of being the same number. It was so providential, if it was providential at all, that they were both humbly silent a moment; even Mrs. March was silent. In this supreme moment she would not prompt her husband by a word, a glance, and it was from his own free will that he said, "We will take it."

He thought it was his free will, but perhaps one's will is never free; and this may have been an instance of pure determinism from all the events before it. No event that followed affected it, though the day after they had taken their passage on the *Norumbia* he heard that she had once been in the worst sort of storm in the month of August. He felt obliged to impart the fact to his wife, but she said that it proved nothing for or against the ship, and confounded him more by her reason than by all her previous unreason. Reason is what a man is never prepared for in women; perhaps because he finds it so seldom in men.

V.

During nearly the whole month that now passed before the date of sailing it seemed to March that in some familiar aspects New York had never been so interesting. He had not easily reconciled himself to the place after his many years of Boston; but he had got used to the ugly grandeur, to the noise and the rush, and he had divined more and more the careless good-nature and friendly indifference of the vast, sprawling, ungainly metropolis. There were happy moments when he felt a poetry unintentional and unconscious in it, and he thought there was no point more favorable for the sense of this than Stuyvesant Square, where they had a flat. Their windows looked down into its tree-tops, and across them to the truncated towers of St. George's, and to the plain red-brick, white-trimmed front of the Friends' Meeting House; he came and went between his dwelling and his office through the two places that form the square, and after dinner his wife and he had a habit of finding seats by one of the fountains in Livingston Place, among the fathers and mothers of the hybrid East Side children swarming there at play. The elders read their English or Italian or German or Yiddish journals, or gossiped, or merely sat still and stared away the day's fatigue; while the little ones raced in and out among them, crying and laughing, quarrelling and kissing. Sometimes a mother darted

forward and caught her child from the brink of the basin; another taught hers to walk, holding it tightly up behind by its short skirts; another publicly nursed her baby to sleep.

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While they still dreamed, but never thought, of going to Europe, the Marches often said how European all this was; if these women had brought their knitting or sewing it would have been quite European; but as soon as they had decided to go, it all began to seem poignantly American. In like manner, before the conditions of their exile changed, and they still pined for the Old World, they contrived a very agreeable illusion of it by dining now and then at an Austrian restaurant in Union Square; but later when they began to be homesick for the American scenes they had not yet left, they had a keener retrospective joy in the strictly New York sunset they were bowed out into.

The sunsets were uncommonly characteristic that May in Union Square. They were the color of the red stripes in the American flag, and when they were seen through the delirious architecture of the Broadway side, or down the perspective of the cross-streets, where the elevated trains silhouetted themselves against their pink, they imparted a feeling of pervasive Americanism in which all impression of alien savors and civilities was lost. One evening a fire flamed up in Hoboken, and burned for hours against the west, in the lurid crimson tones of a conflagration as memorably and appealingly native as the colors of the sunset.

The weather for nearly the whole month was of a mood familiar enough in our early summer, and it was this which gave the sunsets their vitreous pink. A thrilling coolness followed a first blaze of heat, and in the long respite the thoughts almost went back to winter flannels. But at last a hot wave was telegraphed from the West, and the week before the Norumbia sailed was an anguish of burning days and breathless nights, which fused all regrets and reluctances in the hope of escape, and made the exiles of two continents long for the sea, with no care for either shore.

VI.

Their steamer was to sail early; they were up at dawn because they had scarcely lain down, and March crept out into the square for a last breath of its morning air before breakfast. He was now eager to be gone; he had broken with habit, and he wished to put all traces of the past out of sight. But this was curiously like all other early mornings in his consciousness, and he could not alienate himself from the wonted environment. He stood talking on every-day terms of idle speculation with the familiar policeman, about a stray parrot in the top of one of the trees, where it screamed and clawed at the dead branch to which it clung. Then he went carelessly indoors again as if he were secure of reading the reporter's story of it in that next day's paper which he should not see.

The sense of an inseverable continuity persisted through the breakfast, which was like other breakfasts in the place they would be leaving in summer shrouds just as they always left it at the end of June. The illusion was even heightened by the fact that their son was to be in the apartment all summer, and it would not be so much shut up as

usual. The heavy trunks had been sent to the ship by express the afternoon before, and they had only themselves and their stateroom baggage to transport to Hoboken; they came down to a carriage sent from a neighboring livery-stable, and exchanged good-mornings with a driver they knew by name.



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March had often fancied it a chief advantage of living in New York that you could drive to the steamer and start for Europe as if you were starting for Albany; he was in the enjoyment of this advantage now, but somehow it was not the consolation he had expected. He knew, of course, that if they had been coming from Boston, for instance, to sail in the *Norumbia*, they would probably have gone on board the night before, and sweltered through its heat among the strange smells and noises of the dock and wharf, instead of breakfasting at their own table, and smoothly bowling down the asphalt on to the ferryboat, and so to the very foot of the gangway at the ship's side, all in the cool of the early morning. But though he had now the cool of the early morning on these conditions, there was by no means enough of it.

The sun was already burning the life out of the air, with the threat of another day of the terrible heat that had prevailed for a week past; and that last breakfast at home had not been gay, though it had been lively, in a fashion, through Mrs. March's efforts to convince her son that she did not want him to come and see them off. Of, her daughter's coming all the way from Chicago there was no question, and she reasoned that if he did not come to say good-by on board it would be the same as if they were not going.

"Don't you want to go?" March asked with an obscure resentment.

"I don't want to seem to go," she said, with the calm of those who have logic on their side.

As she drove away with her husband she was not so sure of her satisfaction in the feint she had arranged, though when she saw the ghastly partings of people on board, she was glad she had not allowed her son to come. She kept saying this to herself, and when they climbed to the ship from the wharf, and found themselves in the crowd that choked the saloons and promenades and passages and stairways and landings, she said it more than once to her husband.

She heard weary elders pattering empty politenesses of farewell with friends who had come to see them off, as they stood withdrawn in such refuges as the ship's architecture afforded, or submitted to be pushed and twirled about by the surging throng when they got in its way. She pitied these in their affliction, which she perceived that they could not lighten or shorten, but she had no patience with the young girls, who broke into shrieks of nervous laughter at the coming of certain young men, and kept laughing and beckoning till they made the young men see them; and then stretched their hands to them and stood screaming and shouting to them across the intervening heads and shoulders. Some girls, of those whom no one had come to bid good-by, made themselves merry, or at least noisy, by rushing off to the dining-room and looking at the cards on the bouquets heaping the tables, to find whether any one had sent them flowers. Others whom young men had brought bunches of violets



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hid their noses in them, and dropped their fans and handkerchiefs and card-cases, and thanked the young men for picking them up. Others, had got places in the music-room, and sat there with open boxes of long-stemmed roses in their laps, and talked up into the faces of the men, with becoming lifts and slants of their eyes and chins. In the midst of the turmoil children struggled against people's feet and knees, and bewildered mothers flew at the ship's officers and battered them with questions alien to their respective functions as they amiably stifled about in their thick uniforms.

Sailors, slung over the ship's side on swinging seats, were placidly smearing it with paint at that last moment; the bulwarks were thickly set with the heads and arms of passengers who were making signs to friends on shore, or calling messages to them that lost themselves in louder noises midway. Some of the women in the steerage were crying; they were probably not going to Europe for pleasure like the first-cabin passengers, or even for their health; on the wharf below March saw the face of one young girl twisted with weeping, and he wished he had not seen it. He turned from it, and looked into the eyes of his son, who was laughing at his shoulder. He said that he had to come down with a good-by letter from his sister, which he made an excuse for following them; but he had always meant to see them off, he owned. The letter had just come with a special delivery stamp, and it warned them that she had sent another good-by letter with some flowers on board. Mrs. March scolded at them both, but with tears in her eyes, and in the renewed stress of parting which he thought he had put from him, March went on taking note, as with alien senses, of the scene before him, while they all talked on together, and repeated the nothings they had said already.

A rank odor of beet-root sugar rose from the far-branching sheds where some freight steamers of the line lay, and seemed to mingle chemically with the noise which came up from the wharf next to the Norumbia. The mass of spectators deepened and dimmed away into the shadow of the roofs, and along their front came files of carriages and trucks and carts, and discharged the arriving passengers and their baggage, and were lost in the crowd, which they penetrated like slow currents, becoming clogged and arrested from time to time, and then beginning to move again.

The passengers incessantly mounted by the canvas-draped galleries leading, fore and aft, into the ship. Bareheaded, blue-jacketed, brass-buttoned stewards dodged skillfully in and out among them with their hand-bags, holdalls, hat-boxes, and state-room trunks, and ran before them into the different depths and heights where they hid these burdens, and then ran back for more. Some of the passengers followed them and made sure that their things were put in the right places; most of them remained wedged among the earlier comers, or pushed aimlessly in and out of the doors of the promenades.

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The baggage for the hold continually rose in huge blocks from the wharf, with a loud clucking of the tackle, and sank into the open maw of the ship, momentarily gathering herself for her long race seaward, with harsh hissings and rattlings and gurglings. There was no apparent reason why it should all or any of it end, but there came a moment when there began to be warnings that were almost threats of the end. The ship's whistle sounded, as if marking a certain interval; and Mrs. March humbly entreated, sternly commanded, her son to go ashore, or else be carried to Europe. They disputed whether that was the last signal or not; she was sure it was, and she appealed to March, who was moved against his reason. He affected to talk calmly with his son, and gave him some last charges about 'Every Other Week'.

Some people now interrupted their leave-taking; but the arriving passengers only arrived more rapidly at the gang-ways; the bulks of baggage swung more swiftly into the air. A bell rang, and there rose women's cries, "Oh, that is the shore-bell!" and men's protests, "It is only the first bell!" More and more began to descend the gangways, fore and aft, and soon outnumbered those who were coming aboard.

March tried not to be nervous about his son's lingering; he was ashamed of his anxiety; but he said in a low voice, "Better be off, Tom."

His mother now said she did not care if Tom were really carried to Europe; and at last he said, Well, he guessed he must go ashore, as if there had been no question of that before; and then she clung to him and would not let him go; but she acquired merit with herself at last by pushing him into the gangway with her own hands: he nodded and waved his hat from its foot, and mixed with the crowd.

Presently there was hardly any one coming aboard, and the sailors began to undo the lashings of the gangways from the ship's side; files of men on the wharf laid hold of their rails; the stewards guarding their approach looked up for the signal to come aboard; and in vivid pantomime forbade some belated leavetakers to ascend. These stood aside, exchanging bows and grins with the friends whom they could not reach; they all tried to make one another hear some last words. The moment came when the saloon gangway was detached; then it was pulled ashore, and the section of the bulwarks opening to it was locked, not to be unlocked on this side of the world. An indefinable impulse communicated itself to the steamer: while it still seemed motionless it moved. The thick spread of faces on the wharf, which had looked at times like some sort of strange flowers in a level field, broke into a universal tremor, and the air above them was filled with hats and handkerchiefs, as if with the flight of birds rising from the field.

The Marches tried to make out their son's face; they believed that they did; but they decided that they had not seen him, and his mother said that she was glad; it would only have made it harder to bear, though she was glad he had come over to say good-by it had seemed so unnatural that he should not, when everybody else was saying good-by.



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On the wharf color was now taking the place of form; the scene ceased to have the effect of an instantaneous photograph; it was like an impressionistic study. As the ship swung free of the shed and got into the stream, the shore lost reality. Up to a certain moment, all was still New York, all was even Hoboken; then amidst the grotesque and monstrous shows of the architecture on either shore March felt himself at sea and on the way to Europe.

The fact was accented by the trouble people were already making with the deck-steward about their steamer chairs, which they all wanted put in the best places, and March, with a certain heart-ache, was involuntarily verifying the instant in which he ceased to be of his native shores, while still in full sight of them, when he suddenly reverted to them, and as it were landed on them again in an incident that held him breathless. A man, bareheaded, and with his arms flung wildly abroad, came flying down the promenade from the steerage. "Capitan! Capitan! There is a woman!" he shouted in nondescript English. "She must go hout! She must go hout!" Some vital fact imparted itself to the ship's command and seemed to penetrate to the ship's heart; she stopped, as if with a sort of majestic relenting. A tug panted to her side, and lifted a ladder to it; the bareheaded man, and a woman gripping a baby in her arms, sprawled safely down its rungs to the deck of the tug, and the steamer moved seaward again.

"What is it? Oh, what is it?" his wife demanded of March's share of their common ignorance. A young fellow passing stopped, as if arrested by the tragic note in her voice, and explained that the woman had left three little children locked up in her tenement while she came to bid some friends on board good-by.

He passed on, and Mrs. March said, "What a charming face he had!" even before she began to wreak upon that wretched mother the overwrought sympathy which makes good women desire the punishment of people who have escaped danger. She would not hear any excuse for her. "Her children oughtn't to have been out of her mind for an instant."

"Don't you want to send back a line to ours by the pilot?" March asked.

She started from him. "Oh, was I really beginning to forget them?"

In the saloon where people were scattered about writing pilot's letters she made him join her in an impassioned epistle of farewell, which once more left none of the nothings unsaid that they had many times reiterated. She would not let him put the stamp on, for fear it would not stick, and she had an agonizing moment of doubt whether it ought not to be a German stamp; she was not pacified till the steward in charge of the mail decided.

"I shouldn't have forgiven myself," March said, "if we hadn't let Tom know that twenty minutes after he left us we were still alive and well."

“It’s to Bella, too,” she reasoned.



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He found her making their state-room look homelike with their familiar things when he came with their daughter's steamer letter and the flowers and fruit she had sent. She said, Very well, they would all keep, and went on with her unpacking. He asked her if she did not think these home things made it rather ghastly, and she said if he kept on in that way she should certainly go back on the pilot-boat. He perceived that her nerves were spent. He had resisted the impulse to an ill-timed joke about the life-preservers under their berths when the sound of the breakfast-horn, wavering first in the distance, found its way nearer and clearer down their corridor.

VII.

In one of the many visits to the steamship office which his wife's anxieties obliged him to make, March had discussed the question of seats in the dining-saloon. At first he had his ambition for the captain's table, but they convinced him more easily than he afterwards convinced Mrs. March that the captain's table had become a superstition of the past, and conferred no special honor. It proved in the event that the captain of the *Norumbia* had the good feeling to dine in a lower saloon among the passengers who paid least for their rooms. But while the Marches were still in their ignorance of this, they decided to get what adventure they could out of letting the head steward put them where he liked, and they came in to breakfast with a careless curiosity to see what he had done for them.

There seemed scarcely a vacant place in the huge saloon; through the oval openings in the centre they looked down into the lower saloon and up into the music-room, as thickly thronged with breakfasters. The tables were brightened with the bouquets and the floral designs of ships, anchors, harps, and doves sent to the lady passengers, and at one time the Marches thought they were going to be put before a steam-yacht realized to the last detail in blue and white violets. The ports of the saloon were open, and showed the level sea; the ship rode with no motion except the tremor from her screws. The sound of talking and laughing rose with the clatter of knives and forks and the clash of crockery; the homely smell of the coffee and steak and fish mixed with the spice of the roses and carnations; the stewards ran hither and thither, and a young foolish joy of travel welled up in the elderly hearts of the pair. When the head steward turned out the swivel-chairs where they were to sit they both made an inclination toward the people already at table, as if it had been a company at some far-forgotten table d'hote in the later sixties. The head steward seemed to understand as well as speak English, but the table-stewards had only an effect of English, which they eked out with "Bleace!" for all occasions of inquiry, apology, or reassurance, as the equivalent of their native "Bitte!" Otherwise there was no reason to suppose that they did not speak German, which was the language of a good half of the passengers. The stewards looked English, however, in conformity to what seems the ideal of every kind of foreign seafaring people, and that went a good way toward making them intelligible.



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March, to whom his wife mainly left their obeisance, made it so tentative that if it should meet no response he could feel that it had been nothing more than a forward stoop, such as was natural in sitting down. He need not really have taken this precaution; those whose eyes he caught more or less nodded in return.

A nice-looking boy of thirteen or fourteen, who had the place on the left of the lady in the sofa seat under the port, bowed with almost magisterial gravity, and made the lady on the sofa smile, as if she were his mother and understood him. March decided that she had been some time a widow; and he easily divined that the young couple on her right had been so little time husband and wife that they would rather not have it known. Next them was a young lady whom he did not at first think so good-looking as she proved later to be, though she had at once a pretty nose, with a slight upward slant at the point, long eyes under fallen lashes, a straight forehead, not too high, and a mouth which perhaps the exigencies of breakfasting did not allow all its characteristic charm. She had what Mrs. March thought interesting hair, of a dull black, roughly rolled away from her forehead and temples in a fashion not particularly becoming to her, and she had the air of not looking so well as she might if she had chosen. The elderly man on her right, it was easy to see, was her father; they had a family likeness, though his fair hair, now ashen with age, was so different from hers. He wore his beard cut in the fashion of the Second Empire, with a Louis Napoleonic mustache, imperial, and chin tuft; his neat head was cropt close; and there was something Gallic in its effect and something remotely military: he had blue eyes, really less severe than he meant, though he frowned a good deal, and managed them with glances of a staccato quickness, as if challenging a potential disagreement with his opinions.

The gentleman on his right, who sat at the head of the table, was of the humorous, subironical American expression, and a smile at the corner of his kindly mouth, under an iron-gray full beard cut short, at once questioned and tolerated the new-comers as he glanced at them. He responded to March's bow almost as decidedly as the nice boy, whose mother he confronted at the other end of the table, and with his comely bulk formed an interesting contrast to her vivid slightness. She was brilliantly dark, behind the gleam of the gold-rimmed glasses perched on her pretty nose.

If the talk had been general before the Marches came, it did not at once renew itself in that form. Nothing was said while they were having their first struggle with the table-stewards, who repeated the order as if to show how fully they had misunderstood it. The gentleman at the head of the table intervened at last, and then, "I'm obliged to you," March said, for your German. I left mine in a phrase-book in my other coat pocket."

"Oh, I wasn't speaking German," said the other. "It was merely their kind of English."

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The company were in the excitement of a novel situation which disposes people to acquaintance, and this exchange of small pleasantries made every one laugh, except the father and daughter; but they had the effect of being tacitly amused.

The mother of the nice boy said to Mrs. March, "You may not get what you ordered, but it will be good."

"Even if you don't know what it is!" said the young bride, and then blushed, as if she had been too bold.

Mrs. March liked the blush and the young bride for it, and she asked, "Have you ever been on one of these German boats before? They seem very comfortable."

"Oh, dear, no! we've never been on any boat before." She made a little puffed mouth of deprecation, and added, simple-heartedly, "My husband was going out on business, and he thought he might as well take me along."

The husband seemed to feel himself brought in by this, and said he did not see why they should not make it a pleasure-trip, too. They put themselves in a position to be patronized by their deference, and in the pauses of his talk with the gentleman at the head of the table, March heard his wife abusing their inexperience to be unsparingly instructive about European travel. He wondered whether she would be afraid to own that it was nearly thirty years since she had crossed the ocean; though that might seem recent to people who had never crossed at all.

They listened with respect as she boasted in what an anguish of wisdom she had decided between the Colmannia and the Norumbia. The wife said she did not know there was such a difference in steamers, but when Mrs. March fervently assured her that there was all the difference in the world, she submitted and said she supposed she ought to be thankful that they, had hit upon the right one. They had telegraphed for berths and taken what was given them; their room seemed to be very nice.

"Oh," said Mrs. March, and her husband knew that she was saying it to reconcile them to the inevitable, "all the rooms on the Norumbia are nice. The only difference is that if they are on the south side you have the sun."

"I'm not sure which is the south side," said the bride. "We seem to have been going west ever since we started, and I feel as if we should reach home in the morning if we had a good night. Is the ocean always so smooth as this?"

"Oh, dear, no!" said Mrs. March. "It's never so smooth as this," and she began to be outrageously authoritative about the ocean weather. She ended by declaring that the June passages were always good, and that if the ship kept a southerly course they would have no fogs and no icebergs. She looked round, and caught her husband's



eye. “What is it? Have I been bragging? Well, you understand,” she added to the bride, “I’ve only been over once, a great while ago, and I don’t really know anything about it,” and they laughed together. “But I talked so much with people after we decided to go, that I feel as if I had been a hundred times.”



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"I know," said the other lady, with caressing intelligence. "That is just the way with—" She stopped, and looked at the young man whom the head steward was bringing up to take the vacant place next to March. He came forward, stuffing his cap into the pocket of his blue serge sack, and smiled down on the company with such happiness in his gay eyes that March wondered what chance at this late day could have given any human creature his content so absolute, and what calamity could be lurking round the corner to take it out of him. The new-comer looked at March as if he knew him, and March saw at a second glance that he was the young fellow who had told him about the mother put off after the start. He asked him whether there was any change in the weather yet outside, and he answered eagerly, as if the chance to put his happiness into the mere sound of words were a favor done him, that their ship had just spoken one of the big Hanseatic mailboats, and she had signalled back that she had met ice; so that they would probably keep a southerly course, and not have it cooler till they were off the Banks.

The mother of the boy said, "I thought we must be off the Banks when I came out of my room, but it was only the electric fan at the foot of the stairs."

"That was what I thought," said Mrs. March. "I almost sent my husband back for my shawl!" Both the ladies laughed and liked each other for their common experience.

The gentleman at the head of the table said, "They ought to have fans going there by that pillar, or else close the ports. They only let in heat."

They easily conformed to the American convention of jocosity in their talk; it perhaps no more represents the individual mood than the convention of dulness among other people; but it seemed to make the young man feel at home.

"Why, do you think it's uncomfortably warm?" he asked, from what March perceived to be a meteorology of his own. He laughed and added, "It is pretty summerlike," as if he had not thought of it before. He talked of the big mail-boat, and said he would like to cross on such a boat as that, and then he glanced at the possible advantage of having your own steam-yacht like the one which he said they had just passed, so near that you could see what a good time the people were having on board. He began to speak to the Marches; his talk spread to the young couple across the table; it visited the mother on the sofa in a remark which she might ignore without apparent rejection, and without really avoiding the boy, it glanced off toward the father and daughter, from whom it fell, to rest with the gentleman at the head of the table.

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It was not that the father and daughter had slighted his overture, if it was so much as that, but that they were tacitly preoccupied, or were of some philosophy concerning their fellow-breakfasters which did not suffer them, for the present, at least, to share in the common friendliness. This is an attitude sometimes produced in people by a sense of just, or even unjust, superiority; sometimes by serious trouble; sometimes by transient annoyance. The cause was not so deep-seated but Mrs. March, before she rose from her place, believed that she had detected a slant of the young lady's eyes, from under her lashes, toward the young man; and she leaped to a conclusion concerning them in a matter where all logical steps are impertinent. She did not announce her arrival at this point till the young man had overtaken her before she got out of the saloon, and presented the handkerchief she had dropped under the table.

He went away with her thanks, and then she said to her husband, "Well, he's perfectly charming, and I don't wonder she's taken with him; that kind of cold girl would be, though I'm not sure that she is cold. She's interesting, and you could see that he thought so, the more he looked at her; I could see him looking at her from the very first instant; he couldn't keep his eyes off her; she piqued his curiosity, and made him wonder about her."

"Now, look here, Isabel! This won't do. I can stand a good deal, but I sat between you and that young fellow, and you couldn't tell whether he was looking at that girl or not."

"I could! I could tell by the expression of her face."

"Oh, well! If it's gone as far as that with you, I give it up. When are you going to have them married?"

"Nonsense! I want you to find out who all those people are. How are you going to do it?"

"Perhaps the passenger list will say," he suggested.

VIII.

The list did not say of itself, but with the help of the head steward's diagram it said that the gentleman at the head of the table was Mr. R. M. Kenby; the father and the daughter were Mr. E. B. Triscoe and Miss Triscoe; the bridal pair were Mr. and Mrs. Leffers; the mother and her son were Mrs. Adding and Mr. Roswell Adding; the young man who came in last was Mr. L. J. Burnamy. March carried the list, with these names carefully checked and rearranged on a neat plan of the table, to his wife in her steamer chair, and left her to make out the history and the character of the people from it. In this sort of conjecture long experience had taught him his futility, and he strolled up and down and looked at the life about him with no wish to penetrate it deeply.



Long Island was now a low yellow line on the left. Some fishing-boats flickered off the shore; they met a few sail, and left more behind; but already, and so near one of the greatest ports of the world, the spacious solitude of the ocean was beginning. There was no swell; the sea lay quite flat, with a fine mesh of wrinkles on its surface, and the sun flamed down upon it from a sky without a cloud. With the light fair wind, there was no resistance in the sultry air, the thin, dun smoke from the smoke-stack fell about the decks like a stifling veil.



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The promenades, were as uncomfortably crowded as the sidewalk of Fourteenth Street on a summer's day, and showed much the social average of a New York shopping thoroughfare. Distinction is something that does not always reveal itself at first sight on land, and at sea it is still more retractive. A certain democracy of looks and clothes was the most notable thing to March in the apathetic groups and detached figures. His criticism disabled the saloon passengers of even so much personal appeal as he imagined in some of the second-cabin passengers whom he saw across their barrier; they had at least the pathos of their exclusion, and he could wonder if they felt it or envied him. At Hoboken he had seen certain people coming on board who looked like swells; but they had now either retired from the crowd, or they had already conformed to the prevailing type. It was very well as a type; he was of it himself; but he wished that beauty as well as distinction had not been so lost in it.

In fact, he no longer saw so much beauty anywhere as he once did. It might be that he saw life more truly than when he was young, and that his glasses were better than his eyes had been; but there were analogies that forbade his thinking so, and he sometimes had his misgivings that the trouble was with his glasses. He made what he could of a pretty girl who had the air of not meaning to lose a moment from flirtation, and was luring her fellow-passengers from under her sailor hat. She had already attached one of them; and she was hooking out for more. She kept moving herself from the waist up, as if she worked there on a pivot, showing now this side and now that side of her face, and visiting the admirer she had secured with a smile as from the lamp of a revolving light as she turned.

While he was dwelling upon this folly, with a sense of impersonal pleasure in it as complete through his years as if he were already a disembodied spirit, the pulse of the engines suddenly ceased, and he joined the general rush to the rail, with a fantastic expectation of seeing another distracted mother put off; but it was only the pilot leaving the ship. He was climbing down the ladder which hung over the boat, rising and sinking on the sea below, while the two men in her held her from the ship's side with their oars; in the offing lay the white steam-yacht which now replaces the picturesque pilot-sloop of other times. The *Norumbia's* screws turned again under half a head of steam; the pilot dropped from the last rung of the ladder into the boat, and caught the bundle of letters tossed after him. Then his men let go the line that was towing their craft, and the incident of the steamer's departure was finally closed. It had been dramatically heightened perhaps by her final impatience to be off at some added risks to the pilot and his men, but not painfully so, and March smiled to think how men whose lives are all of dangerous chances seem always to take as many of them as they can.



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He heard a girl's fresh voice saying at his shoulder, "Well, now we are off; and I suppose you're glad, papa!"

"I'm glad we're not taking the pilot on, at least," answered the elderly man whom the girl had spoken to; and March turned to see the father and daughter whose reticence at the breakfast table had interested him. He wondered that he had left her out of the account in estimating the beauty of the ship's passengers: he saw now that she was not only extremely pretty, but as she moved away she was very graceful; she even had distinction. He had fancied a tone of tolerance, and at the same time of reproach in her voice, when she spoke, and a tone of defiance and not very successful denial in her father's; and he went back with these impressions to his wife, whom he thought he ought to tell why the ship had stopped.

She had not noticed the ship's stopping, in her study of the passenger list, and she did not care for the pilot's leaving; but she seemed to think his having overheard those words of the father and daughter an event of prime importance. With a woman's willingness to adapt the means to the end she suggested that he should follow them up and try to overhear something more; she only partially realized the infamy of her suggestion when he laughed in scornful refusal.

"Of course I don't want you to eavesdrop, but I do want you to find out about them. And about Mr. Burnamy, too. I can wait, about the others, or manage for myself, but these are driving me to distraction. Now, will you?"

He said he would do anything he could with honor, and at one of the earliest turns he made on the other side of the ship he was smilingly halted by Mr. Burnamy, who asked to be excused, and then asked if he were not Mr. March of 'Every Other Week'; he had seen the name on the passenger list, and felt sure it must be the editor's. He seemed so trustfully to expect March to remember his own name as that of a writer from whom he had accepted a short poem, yet unprinted, that the editor feigned to do so until he really did dimly recall it. He even recalled the short poem, and some civil words he said about it caused Burnamy to overrun in confidences that at once touched and amused him.

IX.

Burnamy, it seemed, had taken passage on the Norumbia because he found, when he arrived in New York the day before, that she was the first boat out. His train was so much behind time that when he reached the office of the Hanseatic League it was nominally shut, but he pushed in by sufferance of the janitor, and found a berth, which had just been given up, in one of the saloon-deck rooms. It was that or nothing; and he felt rich enough to pay for it himself if the Bird of Prey, who had cabled him to come out to Carlsbad as his secretary, would not stand the difference between the price and that

of the lower-deck six-in-a-room berth which he would have taken if he had been allowed a choice.



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With the three hundred dollars he had got for his book, less the price of his passage, changed into German bank-notes and gold pieces, and safely buttoned in the breast pocket of his waistcoat, he felt as safe from pillage as from poverty when he came out from buying his ticket; he covertly pressed his arm against his breast from time to time, for the joy of feeling his money there and not from any fear of finding it gone. He wanted to sing, he wanted to dance; he could not believe it was he, as he rode up the lonely length of Broadway in the cable-car, between the wild, irregular walls of the canyon which the cable-cars have all to themselves at the end of a summer afternoon.

He went and dined, and he thought he dined well, at a Spanish-American restaurant, for fifty cents, with a half-bottle of California claret included. When he came back to Broadway he was aware that it was stiflingly hot in the pinkish twilight, but he took a cable-car again in lack of other pastime, and the motion served the purpose of a breeze, which he made the most of by keeping his hat off. It did not really matter to him whether it was hot or cool; he was imparadised in weather which had nothing to do with the temperature. Partly because he was born to such weather, in the gayety of soul which amused some people with him, and partly because the world was behaving as he had always expected, he was opulently content with the present moment. But he thought very tolerantly of the future, and he confirmed himself in the decision he had already made, to stick to Chicago when he came back to America. New York was very well, and he had no sentiment about Chicago; but he had got a foothold there; he had done better with an Eastern publisher, he believed, by hailing from the West, and he did not believe it would hurt him with the Eastern public to keep on hailing from the West.

He was glad of a chance to see Europe, but he did not mean to come home so dazzled as to see nothing else against the American sky. He fancied, for he really knew nothing, that it was the light of Europe, not its glare that he wanted, and he wanted it chiefly on his material, so as to see it more and more objectively. It was his power of detachment from this that had enabled him to do his sketches in the paper with such charm as to lure a cash proposition from a publisher when he put them together for a book, but he believed that his business faculty had much to do with his success; and he was as proud of that as of the book itself. Perhaps he was not so very proud of the book; he was at least not vain of it; he could, detach himself from his art as well as his material.

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Like all literary temperaments he was of a certain hardness, in spite of the susceptibilities that could be used to give coloring to his work. He knew this well enough, but he believed that there were depths of unprofessional tenderness in his nature. He was good to his mother, and he sent her money, and wrote to her in the little Indiana town where he had left her when he came to Chicago. After he got that invitation from the Bird of Prey, he explored his heart for some affection that he had not felt for him before, and he found a wish that his employer should not know it was he who had invented that nickname for him. He promptly avowed this in the newspaper office which formed one of the eyries of the Bird of Prey, and made the fellows promise not to give him away. He failed to move their imagination when he brought up as a reason for softening toward him that he was from Burnamy's own part of Indiana, and was a benefactor of Tippecanoe University, from which Burnamy was graduated. But they, relished the cynicism of his attempt; and they were glad of his good luck, which he was getting square and not rhomboid, as most people seem to get their luck. They liked him, and some of them liked him for his clean young life as well as for his cleverness. His life was known to be as clean as a girl's, and he looked like a girl with his sweet eyes, though he had rather more chin than most girls.

The conductor came to reverse his seat, and Burnamy told him he guessed he would ride back with him as far as the cars to the Hoboken Ferry, if the conductor would put him off at the right place. It was nearly nine o'clock, and he thought he might as well be going over to the ship, where he had decided to pass the night. After he found her, and went on board, he was glad he had not gone sooner. A queasy odor of drainage stole up from the waters of the dock, and mixed with the rank, gross sweetness of the bags of beet-root sugar from the freight-steamers; there was a coming and going of carts and trucks on the wharf, and on the ship a rattling of chains and a clucking of pulleys, with sudden outbreaks and then sudden silences of trampling sea-boots. Burnamy looked into the dining-saloon and the music-room, with the notion of trying for some naps there; then he went to his state-room. His room-mate, whoever he was to be, had not come; and he kicked off his shoes and threw off his coat and tumbled into his berth.

He meant to rest awhile, and then get up and spend the night in receiving impressions. He could not think of any one who had done the facts of the eve of sailing on an Atlantic liner. He thought he would use the material first in a letter to the paper and afterwards in a poem; but he found himself unable to grasp the notion of its essential relation to the choice between chicken croquettes and sweetbreads as entrees of the restaurant dinner where he had been offered neither; he knew that he had begun to dream, and that he must get up. He was just going to get up, when he woke to a sense of freshness in the air, penetrating from the new day outside. He looked at his watch and found it was quarter past six; he glanced round the state-room and saw that he had passed the night alone in it. Then he splashed himself hastily at the basin next his berth, and jumped into his clothes, and went on deck, anxious to lose no feature or emotion of the ship's departure.



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When she was fairly off he returned to his room to change the thick coat he had put on at the instigation of the early morning air. His room-mate was still absent, but he was now represented by his state-room baggage, and Burnamy tried to infer him from it. He perceived a social quality in his dress-coat case, capacious gladstone, hat-box, rug, umbrella, and sole-leather steamer trunk which he could not attribute to his own equipment. The things were not so new as his; they had an effect of polite experience, with a foreign registry and customs label on them here and there. They had been chosen with both taste and knowledge, and Burnamy would have said that they were certainly English things, if it had not been for the initials U. S. A. which followed the name of E. B. Triscoe on the end of the steamer trunk showing itself under the foot of the lower berth.

The lower berth had fallen to Burnamy through the default of the passenger whose ticket he had got at the last hour; the clerk in the steamer office had been careful to impress him with this advantage, and he now imagined a trespass on his property. But he reassured himself by a glance at his ticket, and went out to watch the ship's passage down the stream and through the Narrows. After breakfast he came to his room again, to see what could be done from his valise to make him look better in the eyes of a girl whom he had seen across the table; of course he professed a much more general purpose. He blamed himself for not having got at least a pair of the white tennis-shoes which so many of the passengers were wearing; his russet shoes had turned shabby on his feet; but there was a pair of enamelled leather boots in his bag which he thought might do.

His room was in the group of cabins on the upper deck; he had already missed his way to it once by mistaking the corridor which it opened into; and he was not sure that he was not blundering again when he peered down the narrow passage where he supposed it was. A lady was standing at an open state-room door, resting her hands against the jambs and leaning forward with her head within and talking to some one there. Before he could draw back and try another corridor he heard her say: "Perhaps he's some young man, and wouldn't care."

Burnamy could not make out the answer that came from within. The lady spoke again in a tone of reluctant assent, "No, I don't suppose you could; but if he understood, perhaps he would offer."

She drew her head out of the room, stepping back a pace, and lingering a moment at the threshold. She looked round over her shoulder and discovered Burnamy, where he stood hesitating at the head of the passage. She ebbd before him, and then flowed round him in her instant escape; with some murmured incoherencies about speaking to her father, she vanished in a corridor on the other side of the ship, while he stood staring into the doorway of his room.



He had seen that she was the young lady for whom he had come to put on his enamelled shoes, and he saw that the person within was the elderly gentleman who had sat next her at breakfast. He begged his pardon, as he entered, and said he hoped he should not disturb him. "I'm afraid I left my things all over the place, when I got up this morning."



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The other entreated him not to mention it and went on taking from his hand-bag a variety of toilet appliances which the sight of made Burnamy vow to keep his own simple combs and brushes shut in his valise all the way over. "You slept on board, then," he suggested, arresting himself with a pair of low shoes in his hand; he decided to put them in a certain pocket of his steamer bag.

"Oh, yes," Burnamy laughed, nervously: "I came near oversleeping, and getting off to sea without knowing it; and I rushed out to save myself, and so—"

He began to gather up his belongings while he followed the movements of Mr. Triscoe with a wistful eye. He would have liked to offer his lower berth to this senior of his, when he saw him arranging to take possession of the upper; but he did not quite know how to manage it. He noticed that as the other moved about he limped slightly, unless it were rather a weary easing of his person from one limb to the other. He stooped to pull his trunk out from under the berth, and Burnamy sprang to help him.

"Let me get that out for you!" He caught it up and put it on the sofa under the port. "Is that where you want it?"

"Why, yes," the other assented. "You're very good," and as he took out his key to unlock the trunk he relented a little farther to the intimacies of the situation. "Have you arranged with the bath-steward yet? It's such a full boat."

"No, I haven't," said Burnamy, as if he had tried and failed; till then he had not known that there was a bath-steward. "Shall I get him for you?"

"No; no. Our bedroom-steward will send him, I dare say, thank you."

Mr. Triscoe had got his trunk open, and Burnamy had no longer an excuse for lingering. In his defeat concerning the bath-steward, as he felt it to be, he had not the courage, now, to offer the lower berth. He went away, forgetting to change his shoes; but he came back, and as soon as he got the enamelled shoes on, and shut the shabby russet pair in his bag, he said, abruptly: "Mr. Triscoe, I wish you'd take the lower berth. I got it at the eleventh hour by some fellow's giving it up, and it isn't as if I'd bargained for it a month ago."

The elder man gave him one of his staccato glances in which Burnamy fancied suspicion and even resentment. But he said, after the moment of reflection which he gave himself, "Why, thank you, if you don't mind, really."

"Not at all!" cried the young man. "I should like the upper berth better. We'll, have the steward change the sheets."



“Oh, I’ll see that he does that,” said Mr. Triscoe. “I couldn’t allow you to take any trouble about it.” He now looked as if he wished Burnamy would go, and leave him to his domestic arrangements.

X.



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In telling about himself Burnamy touched only upon the points which he believed would take his listener's intelligent fancy, and he stopped so long before he had tired him that March said he would like to introduce him to his wife. He saw in the agreeable young fellow an image of his own youth, with some differences which, he was willing to own, were to the young fellow's advantage. But they were both from the middle West; in their native accent and their local tradition they were the same; they were the same in their aspirations; they were of one blood in their literary impulse to externate their thoughts and emotions.

Burnamy answered, with a glance at his enamelled shoes, that he would be delighted, and when her husband brought him up to her, Mrs. March said she was always glad to meet the contributors to the magazine, and asked him whether he knew Mr. Kendricks, who was her favorite. Without giving him time to reply to a question that seemed to depress him, she said that she had a son who must be nearly his own age, and whom his father had left in charge of 'Every Other Week' for the few months they were to be gone; that they had a daughter married and living in Chicago. She made him sit down by her in March's chair, and before he left them March heard him magnanimously asking whether Mr. Kendricks was going to do something more for the magazine soon. He sauntered away and did not know how quickly Burnamy left this question to say, with the laugh and blush which became him in her eyes:

"Mrs. March, there is something I should like to tell you about, if you will let me."

"Why, certainly, Mr. Burnamy," she began, but she saw that he did not wish her to continue.

"Because," he went on, "it's a little matter that I shouldn't like to go wrong in."

He told her of his having overheard what Miss Triscoe had said to her father, and his belief that she was talking about the lower berth. He said he would have wished to offer it, of course, but now he was afraid they might think he had overheard them and felt obliged to do it.

"I see," said Mrs. March, and she added, thoughtfully, "She looks like rather a proud girl."

"Yes," the young fellow sighed.

"She is very charming," she continued, thoughtfully, but not so judicially.

"Well," Burnamy owned, "that is certainly one of the complications," and they laughed together.

She stopped herself after saying, "I see what you mean," and suggested, "I think I should be guided by circumstances. It needn't be done at once, I suppose."

“Well,” Burnamy began, and then he broke out, with a laugh of embarrassment, “I’ve done it already.”

“Oh! Then it wasn’t my advice, exactly, that you wanted.”

“No!”

“And how did he take it?”

“He said he should be glad to make the exchange if I really didn’t mind.” Burnamy had risen restlessly, and she did not ask him to stay. She merely said:



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“Oh, well, I’m glad it turned out so nicely.”

“I’m so glad you think it was the thing to do.” He managed to laugh again, but he could not hide from her that he was not feeling altogether satisfied. “Would you like me to send Mr. March, if I see him?” he asked, as if he did not know on what other terms to get away.

“Do, please!” she entreated, and it seemed to her that he had hardly left her when her husband came up. “Why, where in the world did he find you so soon?”

“Did you send him for me? I was just hanging round for him to go.” March sank into the chair at her side. “Well, is he going to marry her?”

“Oh, you may laugh! But there is something very exciting!” She told him what had happened, and of her belief that Burnamy’s handsome behavior had somehow not been met in kind.

March gave himself the pleasure of an immense laugh. “It seems to me that this Mr. Burnamy of yours wanted a little more gratitude than he was entitled to. Why shouldn’t he have offered him the lower berth? And why shouldn’t the old gentleman have taken it just as he did? Did you want him to make a counteroffer of his daughter’s hand? If he does, I hope Mr. Burnamy won’t come for your advice till after he’s accepted her.”

“He wasn’t very candid. I hoped you would speak about that. Don’t you think it was rather natural, though?”

“For him, very likely. But I think you would call it sinuous in some one you hadn’t taken a fancy to.”

“No, no. I wish to be just. I don’t see how he could have come straight at it. And he did own up at last.” She asked him what Burnamy had done for the magazine, and he could remember nothing but that one small poem, yet unprinted; he was rather vague about its value, but said it had temperament.

“He has temperament, too,” she commented, and she had made him tell her everything he knew, or could be forced to imagine about Burnamy, before she let the talk turn to other things.

The life of the promenade had already settled into seafaring form; the steamer chairs were full, and people were reading or dozing in them with an effect of long habit. Those who would be walking up and down had begun their walks; some had begun going in and out of the smoking-room; ladies who were easily affected by the motion were lying down in the music-room. Groups of both sexes were standing at intervals along the rail, and the promenaders were obliged to double on a briefer course or work slowly round them. Shuffleboard parties at one point and ring-toss parties at another were forming



among the young people. It was as lively and it was as dull as it would be two thousand miles at sea. It was not the least cooler, yet; but if you sat still you did not suffer.

In the prompt monotony the time was already passing swiftly. The deck-steward seemed hardly to have been round with tea and bouillon, and he had not yet gathered up all the empty cups, when the horn for lunch sounded. It was the youngest of the table-stewards who gave the summons to meals; and whenever the pretty boy appeared with his bugle, funny passengers gathered round him to make him laugh, and stop him from winding it. His part of the joke was to fulfill his duty with gravity, and only to give way to a smile of triumph as he walked off.



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XI.

At lunch, in the faded excitement of their first meeting, the people at the Marches' table did not renew the premature intimacy of their breakfast talk. Mrs. March went to lie down in her berth afterwards, and March went on deck without her. He began to walk to and from the barrier between the first and second cabin promenades; lingering near it, and musing pensively, for some of the people beyond it looked as intelligent and as socially acceptable, even to their clothes, as their pecuniary betters of the saloon.

There were two women, a mother and daughter, whom he fancied to be teachers, by their looks, going out for a little rest, or perhaps for a little further study to fit them more perfectly for their work. They gazed wistfully across at him whenever he came up to the barrier; and he feigned a conversation with them and tried to convince them that the stamp of inferiority which their poverty put upon them was just, or if not just, then inevitable. He argued with them that the sort of barrier which here prevented their being friends with him, if they wished it, ran invisibly through society everywhere but he felt ashamed before their kind, patient, intelligent faces, and found himself wishing to excuse the fact he was defending. Was it any worse, he asked them, than their not being invited to the entertainments of people in upper Fifth Avenue? He made them own that if they were let across that barrier the whole second cabin would have a logical right to follow; and they were silenced. But they continued to gape at him with their sincere, gentle eyes whenever he returned to the barrier in his walk, till he could bear it no longer, and strolled off toward the steerage.

There was more reason why the passengers there should be penned into a little space of their own in the sort of pit made by the narrowing deck at the bow. They seemed to be all foreigners, and if any had made their fortunes in our country they were hiding their prosperity in the return to their own. They could hardly have come to us more shabby and squalid than they were going away; but he thought their average less apathetic than that of the saloon passengers, as he leaned over the rail and looked down at them. Some one had brought out an electric battery, and the lumpish boys and slattern girls were shouting and laughing as they writhed with the current. A young mother seated flat on the deck, with her bare feet stuck out, inattentively nursed her babe, while she laughed and shouted with the rest; a man with his head tied in a shawl walked about the pen and smiled grotesquely with the well side of his toothache-swollen face. The owner of the battery carried it away, and a group of little children, with blue eyes and yellow hair, gathered in the space he had left, and looked up at a passenger near March who was eating some plums and cherries which he had brought from the luncheon table. He began to throw the fruit down to them, and the children scrambled for it.



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An elderly man, with a thin, grave, aquiline face, said, "I shouldn't want a child of mine down there."

"No," March responded, "it isn't quite what one would choose for one's own. It's astonishing, though, how we reconcile ourselves to it in the case of others."

"I suppose it's something we'll have to get used to on the other side," suggested the stranger.

"Well," answered March, "you have some opportunities to get used to it on this side, if you happen to live in New York," and he went on to speak of the raggedness which often penetrated the frontier of comfort where he lived in Stuyvesant Square, and which seemed as glad of alms in food or money as this poverty of the steerage.

The other listened restively like a man whose ideals are disturbed. "I don't believe I should like to live in New York, much," he said, and March fancied that he wished to be asked where he did live. It appeared that he lived in Ohio, and he named his town; he did not brag of it, but he said it suited him. He added that he had never expected to go to Europe, but that he had begun to run down lately, and his doctor thought he had better go out and try Carlsbad.

March said, to invite his further confidence, that this was exactly his own case. The Ohio man met the overture from a common invalidism as if it detracted from his own distinction; and he turned to speak of the difficulty, he had in arranging his affairs for leaving home. His heart opened a little with the word, and he said how comfortable he and his wife were in their house, and how much they both hated to shut it up. When March offered him his card, he said he had none of his own with him, but that his name was Eltwin. He betrayed a simple wish to have March realize the local importance he had left behind him; and it was not hard to comply; March saw a Grand Army button in the lapel of his coat, and he knew that he was in the presence of a veteran.

He tried to guess his rank; in telling his wife about him, when he went down to find her just before dinner, but he ended with a certain sense of affliction. "There are too many elderly invalids on this ship. I knock against people of my own age everywhere. Why aren't your youthful lovers more in evidence, my dear? I don't believe they are lovers, and I begin to doubt if they're young even."

"It wasn't very satisfactory at lunch, certainly," she owned. "But I know it will be different at dinner." She was putting herself together after a nap that had made up for the lost sleep of the night before. "I want you to look very nice, dear. Shall you dress for dinner?" she asked her husband's image in the state-room glass which she was preoccupied with.

"I shall dress in my pea-jacket and sea-boots," it answered.



“I have heard that they always dress for dinner on the big Cunard and White Star boats, when it’s good weather,” she went on, placidly. “I shouldn’t want those people to think you were not up in the convenances.”



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They both knew that she meant the reticent father and daughter, and March flung out, "I shouldn't want them to think you weren't. There's such a thing as overdoing."

She attacked him at another point. "What has annoyed you? What else have you been doing?"

"Nothing. I've been reading most of the afternoon."

"The Maiden Knight?"

This was the book which nearly everybody had brought on board. It was just out, and had caught an instant favor, which swelled later to a tidal wave. It depicted a heroic girl in every trying circumstance of mediaeval life, and gratified the perennial passion of both sexes for historical romance, while it flattered woman's instinct of superiority by the celebration of her unintermitted triumphs, ending in a preposterous and wholly superfluous self-sacrifice.

March laughed for pleasure in her guess, and she pursued, "I suppose you didn't waste time looking if anybody had brought the last copy of 'Every Other Week'?"

"Yes, I did; and I found the one you had left in your steamer chair—for advertising purposes, probably."

"Mr. Burnamy has another," she said. "I saw it sticking out of his pocket this morning."

"Oh, yes. He told me he had got it on the train from Chicago to see if it had his poem in it. He's an ingenuous soul—in some ways."

"Well, that is the very reason why you ought to find out whether the men are going to dress, and let him know. He would never think of it himself."

"Neither would I," said her husband.

"Very well, if you wish to spoil his chance at the outset," she sighed.

She did not quite know whether to be glad or not that the men were all in sacks and cutaways at dinner; it saved her, from shame for her husband and Mr. Burnamy; but it put her in the wrong. Every one talked; even the father and daughter talked with each other, and at one moment Mrs. March could not be quite sure that the daughter had not looked at her when she spoke. She could not be mistaken in the remark which the father addressed to Burnamy, though it led to nothing.



XII.

The dinner was uncommonly good, as the first dinner out is apt to be; and it went gayly on from soup to fruit, which was of the American abundance and variety, and as yet not of the veteran freshness imparted by the ice-closet. Everybody was eating it, when by a common consciousness they were aware of alien witnesses. They looked up as by a single impulse, and saw at the port the gaunt face of a steerage passenger staring down upon their luxury; he held on his arm a child that shared his regard with yet hungrier eyes. A boy's nose showed itself as if tiptoed to the height of the man's elbow; a young girl peered over his other arm.

The passengers glanced at one another; the two table-stewards, with their napkins in their hands, smiled vaguely, and made some indefinite movements.



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The bachelor at the head of the table broke the spell. "I'm glad it didn't begin with the Little Neck clams!"

"Probably they only let those people come for the dessert," March suggested.

The widow now followed the direction of the other eyes; and looked up over her shoulder; she gave a little cry, and shrank down. The young bride made her petted mouth, in appeal to the company; her husband looked severe, as if he were going to do something, but refrained, not to make a scene. The reticent father threw one of his staccato glances at the port, and Mrs. March was sure that she saw the daughter steal a look at Burnamy.

The young fellow laughed. "I don't suppose there's anything to be done about it, unless we pass out a plate."

Mr. Kenby shook his head. "It wouldn't do. We might send for the captain. Or the chief steward."

The faces at the port vanished. At other ports profiles passed and repassed, as if the steerage passengers had their promenade under them, but they paused no more.

The Marches went up to their steamer chairs, and from her exasperated nerves Mrs. March denounced the arrangement of the ship which had made such a cruel thing possible.

"Oh," he mocked, "they had probably had a good substantial meal of their own, and the scene of our banquet was of the quality of a picture, a purely aesthetic treat. But supposing it wasn't, we're doing something like it every day and every moment of our lives. The Norumbia is a piece of the whole world's civilization set afloat, and passing from shore to shore with unchanged classes, and conditions. A ship's merely a small stage, where we're brought to close quarters with the daily drama of humanity."

"Well, then," she protested, "I don't like being brought to close quarters with the daily drama of humanity, as you call it. And I don't believe that the large English ships are built so that the steerage passengers can stare in at the saloon windows while one is eating; and I'm sorry we came on the Norumbia."

"Ah, you think the Norumbia doesn't hide anything," he began, and he was going to speak of the men in the furnace pits of the steamer, how they fed the fires in a welding heat, and as if they had perished in it crept out on the forecastle like blanched phantasms of toil; but she interposed in time.

"If there's anything worse, for pity's sake don't tell me," she entreated, and he forebore.



He sat thinking how once the world had not seemed to have even death in it, and then how as he had grown older death had come into it more and more, and suffering was lurking everywhere, and could hardly be kept out of sight. He wondered if that young Burnamy now saw the world as he used to see it, a place for making verse and making love, and full of beauty of all kinds waiting to be fitted with phrases. He had lived a happy life; Burnamy would be lucky if he should live one half as happy; and yet if he could show him his whole happy life, just as it had truly been, must not the young man shrink from such a picture of his future?



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“Say something,” said his wife. “What are you thinking about?”

“Oh, Burnamy,” he answered, honestly enough.

“I was thinking about the children,” she said. “I am glad Bella didn’t try to come from Chicago to see us off; it would have been too silly; she is getting to be very sensible. I hope Tom won’t take the covers off the furniture when he has the fellows in to see him.”

“Well, I want him to get all the comfort he can out of the place, even if the moths eat up every stick of furniture.”

“Yes, so do I. And of course you’re wishing that you were there with him!” March laughed guiltily. “Well, perhaps it was a crazy thing for us to start off alone for Europe, at our age.”

“Nothing of the kind,” he retorted in the necessity he perceived for staying her drooping spirits. “I wouldn’t be anywhere else on any account. Isn’t it perfectly delicious? It puts me in mind of that night on the Lake Ontario boat, when we were starting for Montreal. There was the same sort of red sunset, and the air wasn’t a bit softer than this.”

He spoke of a night on their wedding-journey when they were still new enough from Europe to be comparing everything at home with things there.

“Well, perhaps we shall get into the spirit of it again,” she said, and they talked a long time of the past.

All the mechanical noises were muffled in the dull air, and the wash of the ship’s course through the waveless sea made itself pleasantly heard. In the offing a steamer homeward bound swam smoothly by, so close that her lights outlined her to the eye; she sent up some signal rockets that soared against the purple heaven in green and crimson, and spoke to the Norumbia in the mysterious mute phrases of ships that meet in the dark.

Mrs. March wondered what had become of Burnamy; the promenades were much freer now than they had been since the ship sailed; when she rose to go below, she caught sight of Burnamy walking the deck transversely with some lady. She clutched her husband’s arm and stayed him in rich conjecture.

“Do you suppose he can have got her to walking with him already?”

They waited till Burnamy and his companion came in sight again. She was tilting forward, and turning from the waist, now to him and now from him.

“No; it’s that pivotal girl,” said March; and his wife said, “Well, I’m glad he won’t be put down by them.”



In the music-room sat the people she meant, and at the instant she passed on down the stairs, the daughter was saying to the father, "I don't see why you didn't tell me sooner, papa."

"It was such an unimportant matter that I didn't think to mention it. He offered it, and I took it; that was all. What difference could it have made to you?"

"None. But one doesn't like to do any one an injustice."

"I didn't know you were thinking anything about it."

"No, of course not."



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XIII.

The voyage of the *Norumbia* was one of those which passengers say they have never seen anything like, though for the first two or three days out neither the doctor nor the deck-steward could be got, to prophesy when the ship would be in. There was only a day or two when it could really be called rough, and the sea-sickness was confined to those who seemed wilful sufferers; they lay on the cushioned benches around the stairs-landing, and subsisted on biscuit and beef tea without qualifying the monotonous well-being of the other passengers, who passed without noticing them.

The second morning there was rain, and the air freshened, but the leaden sea lay level as before. The sun shone in the afternoon; with the sunset the fog came thick and white; the ship lowed dismally through the night; from the dense folds of the mist answering noises called back to her. Just before dark two men in a dory shouted up to her close under her bows, and then melted out of sight; when the dark fell the lights of fishing-schooners were seen, and their bells pealed; once loud cries from a vessel near at hand made themselves heard. Some people in the dining-saloon sang hymns; the smoking-room was dense with cigar fumes, and the card-players dealt their hands in an atmosphere emulous of the fog without.

The *Norumbia* was off the Banks, and the second day of fog was cold as if icebergs were haunting the opaque pallor around her. In the ranks of steamer chairs people lay like mummies in their dense wrappings; in the music-room the little children of travel discussed the different lines of steamers on which they had crossed, and babes of five and seven disputed about the motion on the *Cunarders* and *White Stars*; their nurses tried in vain to still them in behalf of older passengers trying to write letters there.

By the next morning the ship had run out of the fog; and people who could keep their feet said they were glad of the greater motion which they found beyond the Banks. They now talked of the heat of the first days out, and how much they had suffered; some who had passed the night on board before sailing tried to impart a sense of their misery in trying to sleep.

A day or two later a storm struck the ship, and the sailors stretched canvas along the weather promenade and put up a sheathing of boards across the bow end to keep off the rain. Yet a day or two more and the sea had fallen again and there was dancing on the widest space of the lee promenade.

The little events of the sea outside the steamer offered themselves in their poor variety. Once a ship in the offing, with all its square sails set, lifted them like three white towers from the deep. On the rim of the ocean the length of some westward liner blocked itself out against the horizon, and swiftly trailed its smoke out of sight. A few tramp steamers, lounging and lunging through the trough of the sea, were overtaken and left behind; an

old brigantine passed so close that her rusty iron sides showed plain, and one could discern the faces of the people on board.



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The steamer was oftenest without the sign of any life beyond her. One day a small bird beat the air with its little wings, under the roof of the promenade, and then flittered from sight over the surface, of the waste; a school of porpoises, stiff and wooden in their rise, plunged clumsily from wave to wave. The deep itself had sometimes the unreality, the artificiality of the canvas sea of the theatre. Commonly it was livid and cold in color; but there was a morning when it was delicately misted, and where the mist left it clear, it was blue and exquisitely iridescent under the pale sun; the wrinkled waves were finely pitted by the falling spray. These were rare moments; mostly, when it was not like painted canvas, it was hard like black rock, with surfaces of smooth cleavage. Where it met the sky it lay flat and motionless, or in the rougher weather carved itself along the horizon in successions of surges.

If the sun rose clear, it was overcast in a few hours; then the clouds broke and let a little sunshine through, to close again before the dim evening thickened over the waters. Sometimes the moon looked through the ragged curtain of vapors; one night it seemed to shine till morning, and shook a path of quicksilver from the horizon to the ship. Through every change, after she had left the fog behind, the steamer drove on with the pulse of her engines (that stopped no more than a man's heart stops) in a course which had nothing to mark it but the spread of the furrows from her sides, and the wake that foamed from her stern to the western verge of the sea.

The life of the ship, like the life of the sea, was a sodden monotony, with certain events which were part of the monotony. In the morning the little steward's bugle called the passengers from their dreams, and half an hour later called them to their breakfast, after such as chose had been served with coffee by their bedroom-stewards. Then they went on deck, where they read, or dozed in their chairs, or walked up and down, or stood in the way of those who were walking; or played shuffleboard and ring-toss; or smoked, and drank whiskey and aerated waters over their cards and papers in the smoking-room; or wrote letters in the saloon or the music-room. At eleven o'clock they spoiled their appetites for lunch with tea or bouillon to the music of a band of second-cabin stewards; at one, a single blast of the bugle called them to lunch, where they glutted themselves to the torpor from which they afterwards drowsed in their berths or chairs. They did the same things in the afternoon that they had done in the forenoon; and at four o'clock the deck-stewards came round with their cups and saucers, and their plates of sandwiches, again to the music of the band. There were two bugle-calls for dinner, and after dinner some went early to bed, and some sat up late and had grills and toast. At twelve the lights were put out in the saloons and the smoking-rooms.



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There were various smells which stored themselves up in the consciousness to remain lastingly relative to certain moments and places: a whiff of whiskey and tobacco that exhaled from the door of the smoking-room; the odor of oil and steam rising from the open skylights over the engine-room; the scent of stale bread about the doors of the dining-saloon.

The life was like the life at a sea-side hotel, only more monotonous. The walking was limited; the talk was the tentative talk of people aware that there was no refuge if they got tired of one another. The flirting itself, such as there was of it, must be carried on in the glare of the pervasive publicity; it must be crude and bold, or not be at all.

There seemed to be very little of it. There were not many young people on board of saloon quality, and these were mostly girls. The young men were mainly of the smoking-room sort; they seldom risked themselves among the steamer chairs. It was gayer in the second cabin, and gayer yet in the steerage, where robust emotions were operated by the accordion. The passengers there danced to its music; they sang to it and laughed to it unabashed under the eyes of the first-cabin witnesses clustered along the rail above the pit where they took their rude pleasures.

With March it came to his spending many hours of each long, swift day in his berth with a book under the convenient electric light. He was safe there from the acquaintances which constantly formed themselves only to fall into disintegration, and cling to him afterwards as inorganic particles of weather-guessing, and smoking-room gossip about the ship's run.

In the earliest hours of the voyage he thought that he saw some faces of the great world, the world of wealth and fashion; but these afterward vanished, and left him to wonder where they hid themselves. He did not meet them even in going to and from his meals; he could only imagine them served in those palatial state-rooms whose interiors the stewards now and then rather obtruded upon the public. There were people whom he encountered in the promenades when he got up for the sunrise, and whom he never saw at other times; at midnight he met men prowling in the dark whom he never met by day. But none of these were people of the great world. Before six o'clock they were sometimes second-cabin passengers, whose barrier was then lifted for a little while to give them the freedom of the saloon promenade.

From time to time he thought he would look up his Ohioan, and revive from a closer study of him his interest in the rare American who had never been to Europe. But he kept with his elderly wife, who had the effect of withholding him from March's advances. Young Mr. and Mrs. Leffers threw off more and more their disguise of a long-married pair, and became frankly bride and groom. They seldom talked with any one else, except at table; they walked up and down together, smiling into each others faces; they sat side by side in their steamer chairs; one shawl covered them both, and there was reason to believe that they were holding each other's hands under it.



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Mrs. Adding often took the chair beside Mrs. March when her husband was straying about the ship or reading in his berth; and the two ladies must have exchanged autobiographies, for Mrs. March was able to tell him just how long Mrs. Adding had been a widow, what her husband died of, and what had been done to save him; how she was now perfectly wrapt up in her boy, and was taking him abroad, with some notion of going to Switzerland, after the summer's travel, and settling down with him at school there. She and Mrs. March became great friends; and Rose, as his mother called him, attached himself reverently to March, not only as a celebrity of the first grade in his quality of editor of 'Every Other Week', but as a sage of wisdom and goodness, with whom he must not lose the chance of counsel upon almost every hypothesis and exigency of life.

March could not bring himself to place Burnamy quite where he belonged in contemporary literature, when Rose put him very high in virtue of the poem which he heard Burnamy was going to have printed in 'Every Other Week', and of the book which he was going to have published; and he let the boy bring to the young fellow the flattery which can come to any author but once, in the first request for his autograph that Burnamy confessed to have had. They were so near in age, though they were ten years apart, that Rose stood much more in awe of Burnamy than of others much more his seniors. He was often in the company of Kenby, whom he valued next to March as a person acquainted with men; he consulted March upon Kenby's practice of always taking up the language of the country he visited, if it were only for a fortnight; and he conceived a higher opinion of him from March's approval.

Burnamy was most with Mrs. March, who made him talk about himself when he supposed he was talking about literature, in the hope that she could get him to talk about the Triscoes; but she listened in vain as he poured out his soul in theories of literary art, and in histories of what he had written and what he meant to write. When he passed them where they sat together, March heard the young fellow's perpetually recurring I, I, I, my, my, my, me, me, me; and smiled to think how she was suffering under the drip-drip of his innocent egotism.

She bore in a sort of scientific patience his attentions to the pivotal girl, and Miss Triscoe's indifference to him, in which a less penetrating scrutiny could have detected no change from meal to meal. It was only at table that she could see them together, or that she could note any break in the reserve of the father and daughter. The signs of this were so fine that when she reported them March laughed in scornful incredulity. But at breakfast the third day out, the Triscoes, with the authority of people accustomed to social consideration, suddenly turned to the Marches, and began to make themselves agreeable; the father spoke to March of 'Every Other Week', which he seemed to know of in its



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relation to him; and the young girl addressed herself to Mrs. March's motherly sense not the less acceptably because indirectly. She spoke of going out with her father for an indefinite time, as if it were rather his wish than hers, and she made some inquiries about places in Germany; they had never been in Germany. They had some idea of Dresden; but the idea of Dresden with its American colony seemed rather tiresome; and did Mrs. March know anything about Weimar?

Mrs. March was obliged to say that she knew nothing about anyplace in Germany; and she explained perhaps too fully where and why she was going with her husband. She fancied a Boston note in that scorn for the tiresomeness of Dresden; but the girl's style was of New York rather than of Boston, and her accent was not quite of either place. Mrs. March began to try the Triscoes in this place and in that, to divine them and to class them. She had decided from the first that they were society people, but they were cultivated beyond the average of the few swells whom she had met; and there had been nothing offensive in their manner of holding themselves aloof from the other people at the table; they had a right to do that if they chose.

When the young Lefferses came in to breakfast, the talk went on between these and the Marches; the Triscoes presently left the table, and Mrs. March rose soon after, eager for that discussion of their behavior which March knew he should not be able to postpone.

He agreed with her that they were society people, but she could not at once accept his theory that they had themselves been the objects of an advance from them because of their neutral literary quality, through which they were of no social world, but potentially common to any. Later she admitted this, as she said, for the sake of argument, though what she wanted him to see, now, was that this was all a step of the girl's toward finding out something about Burnamy.

The same afternoon, about the time the deck-steward was making his round with his cups, Miss Triscoe abruptly advanced upon her from a neighboring corner of the bulkhead, and asked, with the air of one accustomed to have her advances gratefully received, if she might sit by her. The girl took March's vacant chair, where she had her cup of bouillon, which she continued to hold untasted in her hand after the first sip. Mrs. March did the same with hers, and at the moment she had got very tired of doing it, Burnamy came by, for the hundredth time that day, and gave her a hundredth bow with a hundredth smile. He perceived that she wished to get rid of her cup, and he sprang to her relief.

"May I take yours too?" he said very passively to Miss Triscoe.

"You are very good." she answered, and gave it.



Mrs. March with a casual air suggested, "Do you know Mr. Burnamy, Miss Triscoe?" The girl said a few civil things, but Burnamy did not try to make talk with her while he remained a few moments before Mrs. March. The pivotal girl came in sight, tilting and turning in a rare moment of isolation at the corner of the music-room, and he bowed abruptly, and hurried off to join her.



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Miss Triscoe did not linger; she alleged the necessity of looking up her father, and went away with a smile so friendly that Mrs. March might easily have construed it to mean that no blame attached itself to her in Miss Triscoe's mind.

"Then you don't feel that it was a very distinct success?" her husband asked on his return.

"Not on the surface," she said.

"Better let ill enough alone," he advised.

She did not heed him. "All the same she cares for him. The very fact that she was so cold shows that."

"And do you think her being cold will make him care for her?"

"If she wants it to."

XIV.

At dinner that day the question of 'The Maiden Knight' was debated among the noises and silences of the band. Young Mrs. Leffers had brought the book to the table with her; she said she had not been able to lay it down before the last horn sounded; in fact she could have been seen reading it to her husband where he sat under the same shawl, the whole afternoon.

"Don't you think it's perfectly fascinating," she asked Mrs. Adding, with her petted mouth.

"Well," said the widow, doubtfully, "it's nearly a week since I read it, and I've had time to get over the glow."

"Oh, I could just read it forever!" the bride exclaimed.

"I like a book," said her husband, "that takes me out of myself. I don't want to think when I'm reading."

March was going to attack this ideal, but he reflected in time that Mr. Leffers had really stated his own motive in reading. He compromised. "Well, I like the author to do my thinking for me."

"Yes," said the other, "that is what I mean."



“The question is whether ‘The Maiden Knight’ fellow does it,” said Kenby, taking duck and pease from the steward at his shoulder.

“What my wife likes in it is to see what one woman can do and be single-handed,” said March.

“No,” his wife corrected him, “what a man thinks she can.”

“I suppose,” said Mr. Triscoe, unexpectedly, “that we’re like the English in our habit of going off about a book like a train of powder.”

“If you’ll say a row of bricks,” March assented, “I’ll agree with you. It’s certainly Anglo-Saxon to fall over one another as we do, when we get going. It would be interesting to know just how much liking there is in the popularity of a given book.”

“It’s like the run of a song, isn’t it?” Kenby suggested. “You can’t stand either, when it reaches a given point.”

He spoke to March and ignored Triscoe, who had hitherto ignored the rest of the table.

“It’s very curious,” March said. “The book or the song catches a mood, or feeds a craving, and when one passes or the other is glutted—”

“The discouraging part is,” Triscoe put in, still limiting himself to the Marches, “that it’s never a question of real taste. The things that go down with us are so crude, so coarsely spiced; they tickle such a vulgar palate—Now in France, for instance,” he suggested.



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“Well, I don’t know,” returned the editor. “After all, we eat a good deal of bread, and we drink more pure water than any other people. Even when we drink it iced, I fancy it isn’t so bad as absinthe.”

The young bride looked at him gratefully, but she said, “If we can’t get ice-water in Europe, I don’t know what Mr. Leffers will do,” and the talk threatened to pass among the ladies into a comparison of American and European customs.

Burnamy could not bear to let it. “I don’t pretend to be very well up in French literature,” he began, “but I think such a book as ‘The Maiden Knight’ isn’t such a bad piece of work; people are liking a pretty well-built story when they like it. Of course it’s sentimental, and it begs the question a good deal; but it imagines something heroic in character, and it makes the reader imagine it too. The man who wrote that book may be a donkey half the time, but he’s a genius the other half. By-and-by he’ll do something—after he’s come to see that his ‘Maiden Knight’ was a fool—that I believe even you won’t be down on, Mr. March, if he paints a heroic type as powerfully as he does in this book.”

He spoke with the authority of a journalist, and though he deferred to March in the end, he deferred with authority still. March liked him for coming to the defence of a young writer whom he had not himself learned to like yet. “Yes,” he said, “if he has the power you say, and can keep it after he comes to his artistic consciousness!”

Mrs. Leffers, as if she thought things were going her way, smiled; Rose Adding listened with shining eyes expectantly fixed on March; his mother viewed his rapture with tender amusement. The steward was at Kenby’s shoulder with the salad and his entreating “Bleace!” and Triscoe seemed to be questioning whether he should take any notice of Burnamy’s general disagreement. He said at last: “I’m afraid we haven’t the documents. You don’t seem to have cared much for French books, and I haven’t read ‘The Maiden Knight’.” He added to March: “But I don’t defend absinthe. Ice-water is better. What I object to is our indiscriminate taste both for raw whiskey—and for milk-and-water.”

No one took up the question again, and it was Kenby who spoke next. “The doctor thinks, if this weather holds, that we shall be into Plymouth Wednesday morning. I always like to get a professional opinion on the ship’s run.”

In the evening, as Mrs. March was putting away in her portfolio the journal-letter which she was writing to send back from Plymouth to her children, Miss Triscoe drifted to the place where she sat at their table in the dining-room by a coincidence which they both respected as casual.

“We had quite a literary dinner,” she remarked, hovering for a moment near the chair which she later sank into. “It must have made you feel very much at home. Or perhaps you’re so tired of it at home that you don’t talk about books.”



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“We always talk shop, in some form or other,” said Mrs. March. “My husband never tires of it. A good many of the contributors come to us, you know.”

“It must be delightful,” said the girl. She added as if she ought to excuse herself for neglecting an advantage that might have been hers if she had chosen, “I’m sorry one sees so little of the artistic and literary set. But New York is such a big place.”

“New York people seem to be very fond of it,” said Mrs. March. “Those who have always lived there.”

“We haven’t always lived there,” said the girl. “But I think one has a good time there—the best time a girl can have. It’s all very well coming over for the summer; one has to spend the summer somewhere. Are you going out for a long time?”

“Only for the summer. First to Carlsbad.”

“Oh, yes. I suppose we shall travel about through Germany, and then go to Paris. We always do; my father is very fond of it.”

“You must know it very well,” said Mrs. March, aimlessly.

“I was born there,—if that means knowing it. I lived there—till I was eleven years old. We came home after my mother died.”

“Oh!” said Mrs. March.

The girl did not go further into her family history; but by one of those leaps which seem to women as logical as other progressions, she arrived at asking, “Is Mr. Burnamy one of the contributors?”

Mrs. March laughed. “He is going to be, as soon as his poem is printed.”

“Poem?”

“Yes. Mr. March thinks it’s very good.”

“I thought he spoke very nicely about ‘The Maiden Knight’. And he has been very nice to papa. You know they have the same room.”

“I think Mr. Burnamy told me,” Mrs. March said.

The girl went on. “He had the lower berth, and he gave it up to papa; he’s done everything but turn himself out of doors.”



"I'm sure he's been very glad," Mrs. March ventured on Burnamy's behalf, but very softly, lest if she breathed upon these budding confidences they should shrink and wither away.

"I always tell papa that there's no country like America for real unselfishness; and if they're all like that, in Chicago!" The girl stopped, and added with a laugh, "But I'm always quarrelling with papa about America."

"We have a daughter living in Chicago," said Mrs. March, alluringly.

But Miss Triscoe refused the bait, either because she had said all she meant, or because she had said all she would, about Chicago, which Mrs. March felt for the present to be one with Burnamy. She gave another of her leaps. "I don't see why people are so anxious to get it like Europe, at home. They say that there was a time when there were no chaperons before hoops, you know." She looked suggestively at Mrs. March, resting one slim hand on the table, and controlling her skirt with the other, as if she were getting ready to rise at any moment. "When they used to sit on their steps."



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“It was very pleasant before hoops—in every way,” said Mrs. March. “I was young, then; and I lived in Boston, where I suppose it was always simpler than in New York. I used to sit on our steps. It was delightful for girls—the freedom.”

“I wish I had lived before hoops,” said Miss Triscoe.

“Well, there must be places where it’s before hoops yet: Seattle, and Portland, Oregon, for all I know,” Mrs. March suggested. “And there must be people in that epoch everywhere.”

“Like that young lady who twists and turns?” said Miss Triscoe, giving first one side of her face and then the other. “They have a good time. I suppose if Europe came to us in one way it had to come in another. If it came in galleries and all that sort of thing, it had to come in chaperons. You’ll think I’m a great extremist, Mrs. March; but sometimes I wish there was more America instead of less. I don’t believe it’s as bad as people say. Does Mr. March,” she asked, taking hold of the chair with one hand, to secure her footing from any caprice of the sea, while she gathered her skirt more firmly into the other, as she rose, “does he think that America is going—all wrong?”

“All wrong? How?”

“Oh, in politics, don’t you know. And government, and all that. And bribing. And the lower classes having everything their own way. And the horrid newspapers. And everything getting so expensive; and no regard for family, or anything of that kind.”

Mrs. March thought she saw what Miss Triscoe meant, but she answered, still cautiously, “I don’t believe he does always. Though there are times when he is very much disgusted. Then he says that he is getting too old—and we always quarrel about that—to see things as they really are. He says that if the world had been going the way that people over fifty have always thought it was going, it would have gone to smash in the time of the anthropoidal apes.”

“Oh, yes: Darwin,” said Miss Triscoe, vaguely. “Well, I’m glad he doesn’t give it up. I didn’t know but I was holding out just because I had argued so much, and was doing it out of—opposition. Goodnight!” She called her salutation gayly over her shoulder, and Mrs. March watched her gliding out of the saloon with a graceful tilt to humor the slight roll of the ship, and a little lurch to correct it, once or twice, and wondered if Burnamy was afraid of her; it seemed to her that if she were a young man she should not be afraid of Miss Triscoe.

The next morning, just after she had arranged herself in her steamer chair, he approached her, bowing and smiling, with the first of his many bows and smiles for the day, and at the same time Miss Triscoe came toward her from the opposite direction.



She nodded brightly to him, and he gave her a bow and smile too; he always had so many of them to spare.

“Here is your chair!” Mrs. March called to her, drawing the shawl out of the chair next her own. “Mr. March is wandering about the ship somewhere.”



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"I'll keep it for him," said Miss Triscoe, and as Burnamy offered to take the shawl that hung in the hollow of her arm, she let it slip into his hand with an "Oh; thank you," which seemed also a permission for him to wrap it about her in the chair.

He stood talking before the ladies, but he looked up and down the promenade. The pivotal girl showed herself at the corner of the music-room, as she had done the day before. At first she revolved there as if she were shedding her light on some one hidden round the corner; then she moved a few paces farther out and showed herself more obviously alone. Clearly she was there for Burnamy to come and walk with her; Mrs. March could see that, and she felt that Miss Triscoe saw it too. She waited for her to dismiss him to his flirtation; but Miss Triscoe kept chatting on, and he kept answering, and making no motion to get away. Mrs. March began to be as sorry for her as she was ashamed for him. Then she heard him saying, "Would you like a turn or two?" and Miss Triscoe answering, "Why, yes, thank you," and promptly getting out of her chair as if the pains they had both been at to get her settled in it were all nothing.

She had the composure to say, "You can leave your shawl with me, Miss Triscoe," and to receive her fervent, "Oh, thank you," before they sailed off together, with inhuman indifference to the girl at the corner of the music-room. Then she sank into a kind of triumphal collapse, from which she roused herself to point her husband to the chair beside her when he happened along.

He chose to be perverse about her romance. "Well, now, you had better let them alone. Remember Kendricks." He meant one of their young friends whose love-affair they had promoted till his happy marriage left them in lasting doubt of what they had done. "My sympathies are all with the pivotal girl. Hadn't she as much right to him, for the time being, or for good and all, as Miss Triscoe?"

"That depends upon what you think of Burnamy."

"Well, I don't like to see a girl have a young man snatched away from her just when she's made sure of him. How do you suppose she is feeling now?"

"She isn't feeling at all. She's letting her revolving light fall upon half a dozen other young men by this time, collectively or consecutively. All that she wants to make sure of is that they're young men—or old ones, even."

March laughed, but not altogether at what his wife said. "I've been having a little talk with Papa Triscoe, in the smoking-room."

"You smell like it," said his wife, not to seem too eager: "Well?"



“Well, Papa Triscoe seems to be in a pout. He doesn’t think things are going as they should in America. He hasn’t been consulted, or if he has, his opinion hasn’t been acted upon.”

“I think he’s horrid,” said Mrs. March. “Who are they?”

“I couldn’t make out, and I couldn’t ask. But I’ll tell you what I think.”



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“What?”

“That there’s no chance for, Burnamy. He’s taking his daughter out to marry her to a crowned head.”

XV.

It was this afternoon that the dance took place on the south promenade. Everybody came and looked, and the circle around the waltzers was three or four deep. Between the surrounding heads and shoulders, the hats of the young ladies wheeling and whirling, and the faces of the men who were wheeling and whirling them, rose and sank with the rhythm of their steps. The space allotted to the dancing was walled to seaward with canvas, and was prettily treated with German, and American flags: it was hard to go wrong with flags, Miss Triscoe said, securing herself under Mrs. March’s wing.

Where they stood they could see Burnamy’s face, flashing and flushing in the dance; at the end of the first piece he came to them, and remained talking and laughing till the music began again.

“Don’t you want to try it?” he asked abruptly of Miss Triscoe.

“Isn’t it rather—public?” she asked back.

Mrs. March could feel the hand which the girl had put through her arm thrill with temptation; but Burnamy could not.

“Perhaps it is rather obvious,” he said, and he made a long glide over the deck to the feet of the pivotal girl, anticipating another young man who was rapidly advancing from the opposite quarter. The next moment her hat and his face showed themselves in the necessary proximity to each other within the circle.

“How well she dances!” said Miss Triscoe.

“Do you think so? She looks as if she had been wound up and set going.”

“She’s very graceful,” the girl persisted.

The day ended with an entertainment in the saloon for one of the marine charities which address themselves to the hearts and pockets of passengers on all steamers. There were recitations in English and German, and songs from several people who had kindly consented, and ever more piano performance. Most of those who took part were of the race gifted in art and finance; its children excelled in the music, and its fathers counted the gate-money during the last half of the programme, with an audible clinking of the silver on the table before them.



Miss Triscoe was with her father, and Mrs. March was herself chaperoned by Mr. Burnamy: her husband had refused to come to the entertainment. She hoped to leave Burnamy and Miss Triscoe together before the evening ended; but Miss Triscoe merely stopped with her father, in quitting the saloon, to laugh at some features of the entertainment, as people who take no part in such things do; Burnamy stood up to exchange some unimpassioned words with her, and then they said good-night.



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The next morning, at five o'clock, the Norumbia came to anchor in the pretty harbor of Plymouth. In the cool early light the town lay distinct along the shore, quaint with its small English houses, and stately with some public edifices of unknown function on the uplands; a country-seat of aristocratic aspect showed itself on one of the heights; on another the tower of a country church peered over the tree-tops; there were lines of fortifications, as peaceful, at their distance, as the stone walls dividing the green fields. The very iron-clads in the harbor close at hand contributed to the amiable gayety of the scene under the pale blue English sky, already broken with clouds from which the flush of the sunrise had not quite faded. The breath of the land came freshly out over the water; one could almost smell the grass and the leaves. Gulls wheeled and darted over the crisp water; the tones of the English voices on the tender were pleasant to the ear, as it fussed and scuffled to the ship's side. A few score of the passengers left her; with their baggage they formed picturesque groups on the tender's deck, and they set out for the shore waving their hands and their handkerchiefs to the friends they left clustering along the rail of the Norumbia. Mr. and Mrs. Leffers bade March farewell, in the final fondness inspired by his having coffee with them before they left the ship; they said they hated to leave.

The stop had roused everybody, and the breakfast tables were promptly filled, except such as the passengers landing at Plymouth had vacated; these were stripped of their cloths, and the remaining commensals placed at others. The seats of the Lefferses were given to March's old Ohio friend and his wife. He tried to engage them in the tally which began to be general in the excitement of having touched land; but they shyly held aloof.

Some English newspapers had come aboard from the tug, and there was the usual good-natured adjustment of the American self-satisfaction, among those who had seen them, to the ever-surprising fact that our continent is apparently of no interest to Europe. There were some meagre New York stock-market quotations in the papers; a paragraph in fine print announced the lynching of a negro in Alabama; another recorded a coal-mining strike in Pennsylvania.

"I always have to get used to it over again," said Kenby. "This is the twentieth time I have been across, and I'm just as much astonished as I was the first, to find out that they don't want to know anything about us here."

"Oh," said March, "curiosity and the weather both come from the west. San Francisco wants to know about Denver, Denver about Chicago, Chicago about New York, and New York about London; but curiosity never travels the other way any more than a hot wave or a cold wave."

"Ah, but London doesn't care a rap about Vienna," said Kenby.

“Well, some pressures give out before they reach the coast, on our own side. It isn’t an infallible analogy.”



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Triscoe was fiercely chewing a morsel, as if in haste to take part in the discussion. He gulped it, and broke out. "Why should they care about us, anyway?"

March lightly ventured, "Oh, men and brothers, you know."

"That isn't sufficient ground. The Chinese are men and brothers; so are the South-Americans and Central-Africans, and Hawaiians; but we're not impatient for the latest news about them. It's civilization that interests civilization."

"I hope that fact doesn't leave us out in the cold with the barbarians?" Burnamy put in, with a smile.

"Do you think we are civilized?" retorted the other.

"We have that superstition in Chicago," said Burnamy. He added, still smiling, "About the New-Yorkers, I mean."

"You're more superstitious in Chicago than I supposed. New York is an anarchy, tempered by vigilance committees."

"Oh, I don't think you can say that," Kenby cheerfully protested, "since the Reformers came in. Look at our streets!"

"Yes, our streets are clean, for the time being, and when we look at them we think we have made a clean sweep in our manners and morals. But how long do you think it will be before Tammany will be in the saddle again?"

"Oh, never in the world!" said the optimistic head of the table.

"I wish I had your faith; or I should if I didn't feel that it is one of the things that help to establish Tammanys with us. You will see our Tammany in power after the next election." Kenby laughed in a large-hearted incredulity; and his laugh was like fuel to the other's flame. "New York is politically a mediaeval Italian republic, and it's morally a frontier mining-town. Socially it's—" He stopped as if he could not say what.

"I think it's a place where you have a very nice time, papa," said his daughter, and Burnamy smiled with her; not because he knew anything about it.

Her father went on as if he had not heard her. "It's as vulgar and crude as money can make it. Nothing counts but money, and as soon as there's enough, it counts for everything. In less than a year you'll have Tammany in power; it won't be more than a year till you'll have it in society."

"Oh no! Oh no!" came from Kenby. He did not care much for society, but he vaguely respected it as the stronghold of the proprieties and the amenities.



“Isn’t society a good place for Tammany to be in?” asked March in the pause Triscoe let follow upon Kenby’s laugh.

“There’s no reason why it shouldn’t be. Society is as bad as all the rest of it. And what New York is, politically, morally, and socially, the whole country wishes to be and tries to be.”

There was that measure of truth in the words which silences; no one could find just the terms of refutation.

“Well,” said Kenby at last, “it’s a good thing there are so many lines to Europe. We’ve still got the right to emigrate.”



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“Yes, but even there we don’t escape the abuse of our infamous newspapers for exercising a man’s right to live where he chooses. And there is no country in Europe—except Turkey, or Spain—that isn’t a better home for an honest man than the United States.”

The Ohioan had once before cleared his throat as if he were going to speak. Now, he leaned far enough forward to catch Triscoe’s eye, and said, slowly and distinctly: “I don’t know just what reason you have to feel as you do about the country. I feel differently about it myself—perhaps because I fought for it.”

At first, the others were glad of this arrogance; it even seemed an answer; but Burnamy saw Miss Triscoe’s cheek, flush, and then he doubted its validity.

Triscoe nervously crushed a biscuit in his hand, as if to expend a violent impulse upon it. He said, coldly, “I was speaking from that stand-point.”

The Ohioan shrank back in his seat, and March felt sorry for him, though he had put himself in the wrong. His old hand trembled beside his plate, and his head shook, while his lips formed silent words; and his shy wife was sharing his pain and shame.

Kenby began to talk about the stop which the Norumbia was to make at Cherbourg, and about what hour the next day they should all be in Cuxhaven. Miss Triscoe said they had never come on the Hanseatic Line before, and asked several questions. Her father did not speak again, and after a little while he rose without waiting for her to make the move from table; he had punctiliously deferred to her hitherto. Eltwin rose at the same time, and March feared that he might be going to provoke another defeat, in some way.

Eltwin lifted his voice, and said, trying to catch Triscoe’s eye, “I think I ought to beg your pardon, sir. I do beg your pardon.”

March perceived that Eltwin wished to make the offer of his reparation as distinct as his aggression had been; and now he quaked for Triscoe, whose daughter he saw glance apprehensively at her father as she swayed aside to let the two men come together.

“That is all right, Colonel—”

“Major,” Eltwin conscientiously interposed.

“Major,” Triscoe bowed; and he put out his hand and grasped the hand which had been tremulously rising toward him. “There can’t be any doubt of what we did, no matter what we’ve got.”

“No, no!” said the other, eagerly. “That was what I meant, sir. I don’t think as you do; but I believe that a man who helped to save the country has a right to think what he pleases about it.”



Triscoe said, "That is all right, my dear sir. May I ask your regiment?"

The Marches let the old fellows walk away together, followed by the wife of the one and the daughter of the other. They saw the young girl making some graceful overtures of speech to the elder woman as they went.

"That was rather fine, my dear," said Mrs. March.



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“Well, I don’t know. It was a little too dramatic, wasn’t it? It wasn’t what I should have expected of real life.”

“Oh, you spoil everything! If that’s the spirit you’re going through Europe in!”

“It isn’t. As soon as I touch European soil I shall reform.”

XVI.

That was not the first time General Triscoe had silenced question of his opinions with the argument he had used upon Eltwin, though he was seldom able to use it so aptly. He always found that people suffered, his belief in our national degeneration much more readily when they knew that he had left a diplomatic position in Europe (he had gone abroad as secretary of a minor legation) to come home and fight for the Union. Some millions of other men had gone into the war from the varied motives which impelled men at that time; but he was aware that he had distinction, as a man of property and a man of family, in doing so. His family had improved as time passed, and it was now so old that back of his grandfather it was lost in antiquity. This ancestor had retired from the sea and become a merchant in his native Rhode Island port, where his son established himself as a physician, and married the daughter of a former slave-trader whose social position was the highest in the place; Triscoe liked to mention his maternal grandfather when he wished a listener to realize just how anomalous his part in a war against slavery was; it heightened the effect of his pose.

He fought gallantly through the war, and he was brevetted Brigadier-General at the close. With this honor, and with the wound which caused an almost imperceptible limp in his gait, he won the heart of a rich New York girl, and her father set him up in a business, which was not long in going to pieces in his hands. Then the young couple went to live in Paris, where their daughter was born, and where the mother died when the child was ten years old. A little later his father-in-law died, and Triscoe returned to New York, where he found the fortune which his daughter had inherited was much less than he somehow thought he had a right to expect.

The income from her fortune was enough to live on, and he did not go back to Paris, where, in fact, things were not so much to his mind under the Republic as they had been under the Second Empire. He was still willing to do something for his country, however, and he allowed his name to be used on a citizen’s ticket in his district; but his provision-man was sent to Congress instead. Then he retired to Rhode Island and attempted to convert his shore property into a watering-place; but after being attractively plotted and laid out with streets and sidewalks, it allured no one to build on it except the birds and the chipmonks, and he came back to New York, where his daughter had remained in school.



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One of her maternal aunts made her a coming-out tea, after she left school; and she entered upon a series of dinners, dances, theatre parties, and receptions of all kinds; but the tide of fairy gold pouring through her fingers left no engagement-ring on them. She had no duties, but she seldom got out of humor with her pleasures; she had some odd tastes of her own, and in a society where none but the most serious books were ever seriously mentioned she was rather fond of good ones, and had romantic ideas of a life that she vaguely called bohemian. Her character was never tested by anything more trying than the fear that her father might take her abroad to live; he had taken her abroad several times for the summer.

The dreaded trial did not approach for several years after she had ceased to be a bud; and then it came when her father was again willing to serve his country in diplomacy, either at the Hague, or at Brussels, or even at Berne. Reasons of political geography prevented his appointment anywhere, but General Triscoe having arranged his affairs for going abroad on the mission he had expected, decided to go without it. He was really very fit for both of the offices he had sought, and so far as a man can deserve public place by public service, he had deserved it. His pessimism was uncommonly well grounded, and if it did not go very deep, it might well have reached the bottom of his nature.

His daughter had begun to divine him at the early age when parents suppose themselves still to be mysteries to their children. She did not think it necessary ever to explain him to others; perhaps she would not have found it possible; and now after she parted from Mrs. Eltwin and went to sit down beside Mrs. March she did not refer to her father. She said how sweet she had found the old lady from Ohio; and what sort of place did Mrs. March suppose it was where Mrs. Eltwin lived? They seemed to have everything there, like any place. She had wanted to ask Mrs. Eltwin if they sat on their steps; but she had not quite dared.

Burnamy came by, slowly, and at Mrs. March's suggestion he took one of the chairs on her other side, to help her and Miss Triscoe look at the Channel Islands and watch the approach of the steamer to Cherbourg, where the Norumbia was to land again. The young people talked across Mrs. March to each other, and said how charming the islands were, in their gray-green insubstantiality, with valleys furrowing them far inward, like airy clefts in low banks of clouds. It seemed all the nicer not to know just which was which; but when the ship drew nearer to Cherbourg, he suggested that they could see better by going round to the other side of the ship. Miss Triscoe, as at the other times when she had gone off with Burnamy, marked her allegiance, to Mrs. March by leaving a wrap with her.

Every one was restless in breaking with the old life at sea. There had been an equal unrest when the ship first sailed; people had first come aboard in the demoralization of severing their ties with home, and they shrank from forming others. Then the charm of

the idle, eventless life grew upon them, and united them in a fond reluctance from the inevitable end.



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Now that the beginning of the end had come, the pangs of disintegration were felt in all the once-more-repellant particles. Burnamy and Miss Triscoe, as they hung upon the rail, owned to each other that they hated to have the voyage over. They had liked leaving Plymouth and being at sea again; they wished that they need not be reminded of another debarkation by the energy of the crane in hoisting the Cherbourg baggage from the hold.

They approved of the picturesqueness of three French vessels of war that passed, dragging their kraken shapes low through the level water. At Cherbourg an emotional French tender came out to the ship, very different in her clamorous voices and excited figures from the steady self-control of the English tender at Plymouth; and they thought the French fortifications much more on show than the English had been. Nothing marked their youthful date so much to the Marches, who presently joined them, as their failure to realize that in this peaceful sea the great battle between the Kearsarge and the Alabama was fought. The elder couple tried to affect their imaginations with the fact which reanimated the spectre of a dreadful war for themselves; but they had to pass on and, leave the young people unmoved.

Mrs. March wondered if they noticed the debarkation of the pivotal girl, whom she saw standing on the deck of the tender, with her hands at her waist, and giving now this side and now that side of her face to the young men waving their hats to her from the rail of the ship. Burnamy was not of their number, and he seemed not to know that the girl was leaving him finally to Miss Triscoe. If Miss Triscoe knew it she did nothing the whole of that long, last afternoon to profit by the fact. Burnamy spent a great part of it in the chair beside Mrs. March, and he showed an intolerable resignation to the girl's absence.

"Yes," said March, taking the place Burnamy left at last, "that terrible patience of youth!"

"Patience? Folly! Stupidity! They ought to be together every instant! Do they suppose that life is full of such chances? Do they think that fate has nothing to do but—"

She stopped for a fit climax, and he suggested, "Hang round and wait on them?"

"Yes! It's their one chance in a life-time, probably."

"Then you've quite decided that they're in love?" He sank comfortably back, and put up his weary legs on the chair's extension with the conviction that love had no such joy as that to offer.

"I've decided that they're intensely interested in each other."



“Then what more can we ask of them? And why do you care what they do or don’t do with their chance? Why do you wish their love well, if it’s that? Is marriage such a very certain good?”

“It isn’t all that it might be, but it’s all that there is. What would our lives have been without it?” she retorted.

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“Oh, we should have got on. It’s such a tremendous risk that we, ought to go round begging people to think twice, to count a hundred, or a nonillion, before they fall in love to the marrying-point. I don’t mind their flirting; that amuses them; but marrying is a different thing. I doubt if Papa Triscoe would take kindly to the notion of a son-in-law he hadn’t selected himself, and his daughter doesn’t strike me as a young lady who has any wisdom to throw away on a choice. She has her little charm; her little gift of beauty, of grace, of spirit, and the other things that go with her age and sex; but what could she do for a fellow like Burnamy, who has his way to make, who has the ladder of fame to climb, with an old mother at the bottom of it to look after? You wouldn’t want him to have an eye on Miss Triscoe’s money, even if she had money, and I doubt if she has much. It’s all very pretty to have a girl like her fascinated with a youth of his simple traditions; though Burnamy isn’t altogether pastoral in his ideals, and he looks forward to a place in the very world she belongs to. I don’t think it’s for us to promote the affair.”

“Well, perhaps you’re right,” she sighed. “I will let them alone from this out. Thank goodness, I shall not have them under my eyes very long.”

“Oh, I don’t think there’s any harm done yet,” said her husband, with a laugh.

At dinner there seemed so little harm of the kind he meant that she suffered from an illogical disappointment. The young people got through the meal with no talk that seemed inductive; Burnamy left the table first, and Miss Triscoe bore his going without apparent discouragement; she kept on chatting with March till his wife took him away to their chairs on deck.

There were a few more ships in sight than there were in mid-ocean; but the late twilight thickened over the North Sea quite like the night after they left New York, except that it was colder; and their hearts turned to their children, who had been in abeyance for the week past, with a remorseful pang. “Well,” she said, “I wish we were going to be in New York to-morrow, instead of Hamburg.”

“Oh, no! Oh, no!” he protested. “Not so bad as that, my dear. This is the last night, and it’s hard to manage, as the last night always is. I suppose the last night on earth—”

“Basil!” she implored.

“Well, I won’t, then. But what I want is to see a Dutch lugger. I’ve never seen a Dutch lugger, and—”

She suddenly pressed his arm, and in obedience to the signal he was silent; though it seemed afterwards that he ought to have gone on talking as if he did not see Burnamy and Miss Triscoe swinging slowly by. They were walking close together, and she was leaning forward and looking up into his face while he talked.



“Now,” Mrs. March whispered, long after they were out of hearing, “let us go instantly. I wouldn’t for worlds have them see us here when they get found again. They would feel that they had to stop and speak, and that would spoil everything. Come!”



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XVII.

Burnamy paused in a flow of autobiography, and modestly waited for Miss Triscoe's prompting. He had not to wait long.

"And then, how soon did you think of printing your things in a book?"

"Oh, about as soon as they began to take with the public."

"How could you tell that they were-taking?"

"They were copied into other papers, and people talked about them."

"And that was what made Mr. Stoller want you to be his secretary?"

"I don't believe it was. The theory in the office was that he didn't think much of them; but he knows I can write shorthand, and put things into shape."

"What things?"

"Oh—ideas. He has a notion of trying to come forward in politics. He owns shares in everything but the United States Senate—gas, electricity, railroads, aldermen, newspapers—and now he would like some Senate. That's what I think."

She did not quite understand, and she was far from knowing that this cynic humor expressed a deadlier pessimism than her father's fiercest accusals of the country. "How fascinating it is!" she said, innocently.

"And I suppose they all envy your coming out?"

"In the office?"

"Yes. I should envy, them—staying."

Burnamy laughed. "I don't believe they envy me. It won't be all roses for me—they know that. But they know that I can take care of myself if it isn't." He remembered something one of his friends in the office had said of the painful surprise the Bird of Prey would feel if he ever tried his beak on him in the belief that he was soft.

She abruptly left the mere personal question. "And which would you rather write: poems or those kind of sketches?"

"I don't know," said Burnamy, willing to talk of himself on any terms. "I suppose that prose is the thing for our time, rather more; but there are things you can't say in prose. I



used to write a great deal of verse in college; but I didn't have much luck with editors till Mr. March took this little piece for 'Every Other Week'."

"Little? I thought it was a long poem!"

Burnamy laughed at the notion. "It's only eight lines."

"Oh!" said the girl. "What is it about?"

He yielded to the temptation with a weakness which he found incredible in a person of his make. "I can repeat it if you won't give me away to Mrs. March."

"Oh, no indeed!" He said the lines over to her very simply and well." They are beautiful—beautiful!"

"Do you think so?" he gasped, in his joy at her praise.

"Yes, lovely. Do you know, you are the first literary man—the only literary man—I ever talked with. They must go out—somewhere! Papa must meet them at his clubs. But I never do; and so I'm making the most of you."

"You can't make too much of me, Miss Triscoe," said Burnamy.



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She would not mind his mocking. “That day you spoke about ‘The Maiden Knight’, don’t you know, I had never heard any talk about books in that way. I didn’t know you were an author then.”

“Well, I’m not much of an author now,” he said, cynically, to retrieve his folly in repeating his poem to her.

“Oh, that will do for you to say. But I know what Mrs. March thinks.”

He wished very much to know what Mrs. March thought, too; ‘Every Other Week’ was such a very good place that he could not conscientiously neglect any means of having his work favorably considered there; if Mrs. March’s interest in it would act upon her husband, ought not he to know just how much she thought of him as a writer? “Did she like the poem.”

Miss Triscoe could not recall that Mrs. March had said anything about the poem, but she launched herself upon the general current of Mrs. March’s liking for Burnamy. “But it wouldn’t do to tell you all she said!” This was not what he hoped, but he was richly content when she returned to his personal history. “And you didn’t know any one when, you went up to Chicago from—”

“Tippecanoe? Not exactly that. I wasn’t acquainted with any one in the office, but they had printed somethings of mine, and they were willing to let me try my hand. That was all I could ask.”

“Of course! You knew you could do the rest. Well, it is like a romance. A woman couldn’t have such an adventure as that!” sighed the girl.

“But women do!” Burnamy retorted. “There is a girl writing on the paper now—she’s going to do the literary notices while I’m gone—who came to Chicago from Ann Arbor, with no more chance than I had, and who’s made her way single-handed from interviewing up.”

“Oh,” said Miss Triscoe, with a distinct drop in her enthusiasm. “Is she nice?”

“She’s mighty clever, and she’s nice enough, too, though the kind of journalism that women do isn’t the most dignified. And she’s one of the best girls I know, with lots of sense.”

“It must be very interesting,” said Miss Triscoe, with little interest in the way she said it. “I suppose you’re quite a little community by yourselves.”

“On the paper?”

“Yes.”



“Well, some of us know one another, in the office, but most of us don’t. There’s quite a regiment of people on a big paper. If you’d like to come out,” Burnamy ventured, “perhaps you could get the Woman’s Page to do.”

“What’s that?”

“Oh, fashion; and personal gossip about society leaders; and recipes for dishes and diseases; and correspondence on points of etiquette.”

He expected her to shudder at the notion, but she merely asked, “Do women write it?”

He laughed reminiscently. “Well, not always. We had one man who used to do it beautifully—when he was sober. The department hasn’t had any permanent head since.”

He was sorry he had said this, but it did not seem to shock her, and no doubt she had not taken it in fully. She abruptly left the subject. “Do you know what time we really get in to-morrow?”



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“About one, I believe—there’s a consensus of stewards to that effect, anyway.” After a pause he asked, “Are you likely to be in Carlsbad?”

“We are going to Dresden, first, I believe. Then we may go on down to Vienna. But nothing is settled, yet.”

“Are you going direct to Dresden?”

“I don’t know. We may stay in Hamburg a day or two.”

“I’ve got to go straight to Carlsbad. There’s a sleeping-car that will get me there by morning: Mr. Stoller likes zeal. But I hope you’ll let me be of use to you any way I can, before we part tomorrow.”

“You’re very kind. You’ve been very good already—to papa.” He protested that he had not been at all good. “But he’s used to taking care of himself on the other side. Oh, it’s this side, now!”

“So it is! How strange that seems! It’s actually Europe. But as long as we’re at sea, we can’t realize it. Don’t you hate to have experiences slip through your fingers?”

“I don’t know. A girl doesn’t have many experiences of her own; they’re always other people’s.”

This affected Burnamy as so profound that he did not question its truth. He only suggested, “Well; sometimes they make other people have the experiences.”

Whether Miss Triscoe decided that this was too intimate or not she left the question. “Do you understand German?”

“A little. I studied it at college, and I’ve cultivated a sort of beer-garden German in Chicago. I can ask for things.”

“I can’t, except in French, and that’s worse than English, in Germany, I hear.”

“Then you must let me be your interpreter up to the last moment. Will you?”

She did not answer. “It must be rather late, isn’t it?” she asked. He let her see his watch, and she said, “Yes, it’s very late,” and led the way within. “I must look after my packing; papa’s always so prompt, and I must justify myself for making him let me give up my maid when we left home; we expect to get one in Dresden. Good-night!”

Burnamy looked after her drifting down their corridor, and wondered whether it would have been a fit return for her expression of a sense of novelty in him as a literary man if



he had told her that she was the first young lady he had known who had a maid. The fact awed him; Miss Triscoe herself did not awe him so much.

XVIII.

The next morning was merely a transitional period, full of turmoil and disorder, between the broken life of the sea and the untried life of the shore. No one attempted to resume the routine of the voyage. People went and came between their rooms and the saloons and the decks, and were no longer careful to take their own steamer chairs when they sat down for a moment.



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In the cabins the berths were not made up, and those who remained below had to sit on their hard edges, or on the sofas, which were cumbered with, hand-bags and rolls of shawls. At an early hour after breakfast the bedroom stewards began to get the steamer trunks out and pile them in the corridors; the servants all became more caressingly attentive; and people who had left off settling the amount of the fees they were going to give, anxiously conferred together. The question whether you ought ever to give the head steward anything pressed crucially at the early lunch, and Kenby brought only a partial relief by saying that he always regarded the head steward as an officer of the ship. March made the experiment of offering him six marks, and the head steward took them quite as if he were not an officer of the ship. He also collected a handsome fee for the music, which is the tax levied on all German ships beyond the tolls exacted on the steamers of other nations.

After lunch the flat shore at Cuxhaven was so near that the summer cottages of the little watering-place showed through the warm drizzle much like the summer cottages of our own shore, and if it had not been for the strange, low sky, the Americans might easily have fancied themselves at home again.

Every one waited on foot while the tender came out into the stream where the *Norumbia* had dropped anchor. People who had brought their hand-baggage with them from their rooms looked so much safer with it that people who had left theirs to their stewards had to go back and pledge them afresh not to forget it. The tender came alongside, and the transfer of the heavy trunks began, but it seemed such an endless work that every one sat down in some other's chair. At last the trunks were all on the tender, and the bareheaded stewards began to run down the gangways with the hand-baggage. "Is this Hoboken?" March murmured in his wife's ear, with a bewildered sense of something in the scene like the reversed action of the kinematograph.

On the deck of the tender there was a brief moment of reunion among the companions of the voyage, the more intimate for their being crowded together under cover from the drizzle which now turned into a dashing rain. Burnamy's smile appeared, and then Mrs. March recognized Miss Triscoe and her father in their travel dress; they were not far from Burnamy's smile, but he seemed rather to have charge of the Eltwins, whom he was helping look after their bags and bundles. Rose Adding was talking with Kenby, and apparently asking his opinion of something; Mrs. Adding sat near them tranquilly enjoying her son.

Mrs. March made her husband identify their baggage, large and small, and after he had satisfied her, he furtively satisfied himself by a fresh count that it was all there. But he need not have taken the trouble; their long, calm bedroom-steward was keeping guard over it; his eyes expressed a contemptuous pity for their anxiety, whose like he must have been very tired of. He brought their handbags into the customs-room at the station where they landed; and there took a last leave and a last fee with unexpected cordiality.



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Again their companionship suffered eclipse in the distraction which the customs inspectors of all countries bring to travellers; and again they were united during the long delay in the waiting-room, which was also the restaurant. It was full of strange noises and figures and odors—the shuffling of feet, the clash of crockery, the explosion of nervous German voices, mixed with the smell of beer and ham, and the smoke of cigars. Through it all pierced the wail of a postman standing at the door with a letter in his hand and calling out at regular intervals, “Krahnay, Krahnay!” When March could bear it no longer he went up to him and shouted, “Crane! Crane!” and the man bowed gratefully, and began to cry, “Kren! Kren!” But whether Mr. Crane got his letter or not, he never knew.

People were swarming at the window of the telegraph-office, and sending home cablegrams to announce their safe arrival; March could not forbear cabling to his son, though he felt it absurd. There was a great deal of talking, but no laughing, except among the Americans, and the girls behind the bar who tried to understand, what they wanted, and then served them with what they chose for them. Otherwise the Germans, though voluble, were unsmiling, and here on the threshold of their empire the travellers had their first hint of the anxious mood which seems habitual with these amiable people.

Mrs. Adding came screaming with glee to March where he sat with his wife, and leaned over her son to ask, “Do you know what lese-majesty is? Rose is afraid I’ve committed it!”

“No, I don’t,” said March. “But it’s the unpardonable sin. What have you been doing?”

“I asked the official at the door when our train would start, and when he said at half past three, I said, ‘How tiresome!’ Rose says the railroads belong to the state here, and that if I find fault with the time-table, it’s constructive censure of the Emperor, and that’s lese-majesty.” She gave way to her mirth, while the boy studied March’s face with an appealing smile.

“Well, I don’t think you’ll be arrested this time, Mrs. Adding; but I hope it will be a warning to Mrs. March. She’s been complaining of the coffee.”

“Indeed I shall say what I like,” said Mrs. March. “I’m an American.”

“Well, you’ll find you’re a German, if you like to say anything disagreeable about the coffee in the restaurant of the Emperor’s railroad station; the first thing you know I shall be given three months on your account.”

Mrs. Adding asked: “Then they won’t punish ladies? There, Rose! I’m safe, you see; and you’re still a minor, though you are so wise for your years.”

She went back to her table, where Kenby came and sat down by her.



“I don’t know that I quite like her playing on that sensitive child,”, said Mrs. March. “And you’ve joined with her in her joking. Go and speak, to him!”

The boy was slowly following his mother, with his head fallen. March overtook him, and he started nervously at the touch of a hand on his shoulder, and then looked gratefully up into the man’s face. March tried to tell him what the crime of lese-majesty was, and he said: “Oh, yes. I understood that. But I got to thinking; and I don’t want my mother to take any risks.”



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"I don't believe she will, really, Rose. But I'll speak to her, and tell her she can't be too cautious."

"Not now, please!" the boy entreated.

"Well, I'll find another chance," March assented. He looked round and caught a smiling nod from Burnamy, who was still with the Eltwins; the Triscoes were at a table by themselves; Miss Triseoe nodded too, but her father appeared not to see March. "It's all right, with Rose," he said, when he sat down again by his wife; "but I guess it's all over with Burnamy," and he told her what he had seen. "Do you think it came to any displeasure between them last night? Do you suppose he offered himself, and she—"

"What nonsense!" said Mrs. March, but she was not at peace. "It's her father who's keeping her away from him."

"I shouldn't mind that. He's keeping her away from us, too." But at that moment Miss Triscoe as if she had followed his return from afar, came over to speak to his wife. She said they were going on to Dresden that evening, and she was afraid they might have no chance to see each other on the train or in Hamburg. March, at this advance, went to speak with her father; he found him no more reconciled to Europe than America.

"They're Goths," he said of the Germans. "I could hardly get that stupid brute in the telegraph-office to take my despatch."

On his way back to his wife March met Miss Triscoe; he was not altogether surprised to meet Burnamy with her, now. The young fellow asked if he could be of any use to him, and then he said he would look him up in the train. He seemed in a hurry, but when he walked away with Miss Triscoe he did not seem in a hurry.

March remarked upon the change to his wife, and she sighed, "Yes, you can see that as far as they're concerned."

"It's a great pity that there should be parents to complicate these affairs," he said. "How simple it would be if there were no parties to them but the lovers! But nature is always insisting upon fathers and mothers, and families on both sides."

XIX.

The long train which they took at last was for the Norumbia's people alone, and it was of several transitional and tentative types of cars. Some were still the old coach-body carriages; but most were of a strange corridor arrangement, with the aide at the aide, and the seats crossing from it, with compartments sometimes rising to the roof, and sometimes rising half-way. No two cars seemed quite alike, but all were very comfortable; and when the train began to run out through the little sea-side town into the



country, the old delight of foreign travel began. Most of the houses were little and low and gray, with ivy or flowering vines covering their walls to their browntiled roofs; there was here and there a touch of Northern Gothic in the architecture; but usually where it was pretentious it was in the mansard taste, which was so bad with us a generation ago, and is still very bad in Cuxhaven.



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The fields, flat and wide, were dotted with familiar shapes of Holstein cattle, herded by little girls, with their hair in yellow pigtales. The gray, stormy sky hung low, and broke in fitful rains; but perhaps for the inclement season of mid-summer it was not very cold. Flowers were blooming along the embankments and in the rank green fields with a dogged energy; in the various distances were groups of trees embowering cottages and even villages, and always along the ditches and watercourses were double lines of low willows. At the first stop the train made, the passengers flocked to the refreshment-booth, prettily arranged beside the station, where the abundance of the cherries and strawberries gave proof that vegetation was in other respects superior to the elements. But it was not of the profusion of the sausages, and the ham which openly in slices or covertly in sandwiches claimed its primacy in the German affections; every form of this was flanked by tall glasses of beer.

A number of the natives stood by and stared unsmiling at the train, which had broken out in a rash of little American flags at every window. This boyish display, which must have made the Americans themselves laugh, if their sense of humor had not been lost in their impassioned patriotism, was the last expression of unity among the Norumbia's passengers, and they met no more in their sea-solidarity. Of their table acquaintance the Marches saw no one except Burnamy, who came through the train looking for them. He said he was in one of the rear cars with the Eltwins, and was going to Carlsbad with them in the sleeping-car train leaving Hamburg at seven. He owned to having seen the Triscoes since they had left Cuxhaven; Mrs. March would not suffer herself to ask him whether they were in the same carriage with the Eltwins. He had got a letter from Mr. Stoller at Cuxhaven, and he begged the Marches to let him engage rooms for them at the hotel where he was going to stay with him.

After they reached Hamburg they had flying glimpses of him and of others in the odious rivalry to get their baggage examined first which seized upon all, and in which they no longer knew one another, but selfishly struggled for the good-will of porters and inspectors. There was really no such haste; but none could govern themselves against the general frenzy. With the porter he secured March conspired and perspired to win the attention of a cold but not unkindly inspector. The officer opened one trunk, and after a glance at it marked all as passed, and then there ensued a heroic strife with the porter as to the pieces which were to go to the Berlin station for their journey next day, and the pieces which were to go to the hotel overnight. At last the division was made; the Marches got into a cab of the first class; and the porter, crimson and steaming at every pore from the physical and intellectual strain, went back into the station.

They had got the number of their cab from the policeman who stands at the door of all large German stations and supplies the traveller with a metallic check for the sort of vehicle he demands. They were not proud, but it seemed best not to risk a second-class cab in a strange city, and when their first-class cab came creaking and limping out of the rank, they saw how wise they had been, if one of the second class could have been worse.



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As they rattled away from the station they saw yet another kind of turnout, which they were destined to see more and more in the German lands. It was that team of a woman harnessed with a dog to a cart which the women of no other country can see without a sense of personal insult. March tried to take the humorous view, and complained that they had not been offered the choice of such an equipage by the policeman, but his wife would not be amused. She said that no country which suffered such a thing could be truly civilized, though he made her observe that no city in the world, except Boston or Brooklyn, was probably so thoroughly trolleyed as Hamburg. The hum of the electric car was everywhere, and everywhere the shriek of the wires overhead; batlike flights of connecting plates traversed all the perspectives through which they drove to the pleasant little hotel they had chosen.

XX.

On one hand their windows looked toward a basin of the Elbe, where stately white swans were sailing; and on the other to the new Rathhaus, over the trees that deeply shaded the perennial mud of a cold, dim public garden, where water-proof old women and impervious nurses sat, and children played in the long twilight of the sour, rain-soaked summer of the fatherland. It was all picturesque, and within-doors there was the novelty of the meagre carpets and stalwart furniture of the Germans, and their beds, which after so many ages of Anglo-Saxon satire remain immutably preposterous. They are apparently imagined for the stature of sleepers who have shortened as they broadened; their pillows are triangularly shaped to bring the chin tight upon the breast under the bloated feather bulk which is meant for covering, and which rises over the sleeper from a thick substratum of cotton coverlet, neatly buttoned into the upper sheet, with the effect of a portly waistcoat.

The hotel was illumined by the kindly splendor of the uniformed portier, who had met the travellers at the door, like a glowing vision of the past, and a friendly air diffused itself through the whole house. At the dinner, which, if not so cheap as they had somehow hoped, was by no means bad, they took counsel with the English-speaking waiter as to what entertainment Hamburg could offer for the evening, and by the time they had drunk their coffee they had courage for the Circus Renz, which seemed to be all there was.

The conductor of the trolley-car, which they hailed at the street corner, stopped it and got off the platform, and stood in the street until they were safely aboard, without telling them to step lively, or pulling them up the steps; or knuckling them in the back to make them move forward. He let them get fairly seated before he started the car, and so lost the fun of seeing them lurch and stagger violently, and wildly clutch each other for support. The Germans have so little sense of humor that probably no one in the



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car would have been amused to see the strangers flung upon the floor. No one apparently found it droll that the conductor should touch his cap to them when he asked for their fare; no one smiled at their efforts to make him understand where they wished to go, and he did not wink at the other passengers in trying to find out. Whenever the car stopped he descended first, and did not remount till the dismounting passenger had taken time to get well away from it. When the Marches got into the wrong car in coming home, and were carried beyond their street, the conductor would not take their fare.

The kindly civility which environed them went far to alleviate the inclemency of the climate; it began to rain as soon as they left the shelter of the car, but a citizen of whom they asked the nearest way to the Circus Renz was so anxious to have them go aright that they did not mind the wet, and the thought of his goodness embittered March's self-reproach for under-tipping the sort of gorgeous heyduk, with a staff like a drum-major's, who left his place at the circus door to get their tickets. He brought them back with a magnificent bow, and was then as visibly disappointed with the share of the change returned to him as a child would have been.

They went to their places with the sting of his disappointment rankling in their hearts. "One ought always to overpay them," March sighed, "and I will do it from this time forth; we shall not be much the poorer for it. That heyduk is not going to get off with less than a mark when we come out." As an earnest of his good faith he gave the old man who showed them to their box a tip that made him bow double, and he bought every conceivable libretto and play-bill offered him at prices fixed by his remorse.

"One ought to do it," he said. "We are of the quality of good geniuses to these poor souls; we are Fortune in disguise; we are money found in the road. It is an accursed system, but they are more its victims than we." His wife quite agreed with him, and with the same good conscience between them they gave themselves up to the pure joy which the circus, of all modern entertainments, seems alone to inspire. The house was full from floor to roof when they came ins and every one was intent upon the two Spanish clowns, Lui-Lui and Soltamontes, whose drolleries spoke the universal language of circus humor, and needed no translation into either German or English. They had missed by an event or two the more patriotic attraction of "Miss Darlings, the American Star," as she was billed in English, but they were in time for one of those equestrian performances which leave the spectator almost exanimate from their prolixity, and the pantomimic piece which closed the evening.



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This was not given until nearly the whole house had gone out and stayed itself with beer and cheese and ham and sausage, in the restaurant which purveys these light refreshments in the summer theatres all over Germany. When the people came back gorged to the throat, they sat down in the right mood to enjoy the allegory of "The Enchanted Mountain's Fantasy; the Mountain episodes; the High-interesting Sledges-Courses on the Steep Acclivities; the Amazing-Up-rush of the thence plunging-Four Trains, which arrive with Lightnings-swiftness at the Top of the over-40-feet-high Mountain-the Highest Triumph of the To-day's Circus-Art; the Sledge-journey in the Wizard-mountain, and the Fairy Ballet in the Realm of the Ghost-prince, with Gold and Silver, Jewel, Bloomghosts, Gnomes, Gnomesses, and Dwarfs, in never-till-now-seen Splendor of Costume." The Marches were happy in this allegory, and happier in the ballet, which is everywhere delightfully innocent, and which here appealed with the large flat feet and the plain good faces of the 'coryphees' to all that was simplest and sweetest in their natures. They could not have resisted, if they had wished, that environment, of good-will; and if it had not been for the disappointed heyduk, they would have got home from their evening at the Circus Renz without a pang.

They looked for him everywhere when they came out, but he had vanished, and they were left with a regret which, if unavailing, was not too poignant. In spite of it they had still an exhilaration in their release from the companionship of their fellow-voyagers which they analyzed as the psychical revulsion from the strain of too great interest in them. Mrs. March declared that for the present, at least, she wanted Europe quite to themselves; and she said that not even for the pleasure of seeing Burnamy and Miss Triscoe come into their box together world she have suffered an American trespass upon their exclusive possession of the Circus Renz.

In the audience she had seen German officers for the first time in Hamburg, and she meant, if unremitting question could bring out the truth, to know why she had not met any others. She had read much of the prevalence and prepotence of the German officers who would try to push her off the sidewalk, till they realized that she was an American woman, and would then submit to her inflexible purpose of holding it. But she had been some seven or eight hours in Hamburg, and nothing of the kind had happened to her, perhaps because she had hardly yet walked a block in the city streets, but perhaps also because there seemed to be very few officers or military of any kind in Hamburg.

XXI.



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Their absence was plausibly explained, the next morning, by the young German friend who came in to see the Marches at breakfast. He said Hamburg had been so long a free republic that the presence of a large imperial garrison was distasteful to the people, and as a matter of fact there were very few soldiers quartered there, whether the authorities chose to indulge the popular grudge or not. He was himself in a joyful flutter of spirits, for he had just the day before got his release from military service. He gave them a notion of what the rapture of a man reprieved from death might be, and he was as radiantly happy in the ill health which had got him his release as if it had been the greatest blessing of heaven. He bubbled over with smiling regrets that he should be leaving his home for the first stage of the journey which he was to take in search of strength, just as they had come, and he pressed them to say if there were not something that he could do for them.

“Yes,” said Mrs. March, with a promptness surprising to her husband, who could think of nothing; “tell us where Heinrich Heine lived when he was in Hamburg. My husband has always had a great passion for him and wants to look him up everywhere.”

March had forgotten that Heine ever lived in Hamburg, and the young man had apparently never known it. His face fell; he wished to make Mrs. March believe that it was only Heine’s uncle who had lived there; but she was firm; and when he had asked among the hotel people he came back gladly owning that he was wrong, and that the poet used to live in Konigstrasse, which was very near by, and where they could easily know the house by his bust set in its front. The portier and the head waiter shared his ecstasy in so easily obliging the friendly American pair, and joined him in minutely instructing the driver when they shut them into their carriage.

They did not know that his was almost the only laughing face they should see in the serious German Empire; just as they did not know that it rained there every day. As they drove off in the gray drizzle with the unfounded hope that sooner or later the weather would be fine, they bade their driver be very slow in taking them through Konigstrasse, so that he should by no means miss Heine’s dwelling, and he duly stopped in front of a house bearing the promised bust. They dismounted in order to revere it more at their ease, but the bust proved, by an irony bitterer than the sick, heart-breaking, brilliant Jew could have imagined in his cruelest moment, to be that of the German Milton, the respectable poet Klopstock, whom Heine abhorred and mocked so pitilessly.



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In fact it was here that the good, much-forgotten Klopstock dwelt, when he came home to live with a comfortable pension from the Danish government; and the pilgrims to the mistaken shrine went asking about among the neighbors in Konigstrasse, for some manner of house where Heine might have lived; they would have been willing to accept a flat, or any sort of two-pair back. The neighbors were somewhat moved by the anxiety of the strangers; but they were not so much moved as neighbors in Italy would have been. There was no eager and smiling sympathy in the little crowd that gathered to see what was going on; they were patient of question and kind in their helpless response, but they were not gay. To a man they had not heard of Heine; even the owner of a sausage and blood-pudding shop across the way had not heard of him; the clerk of a stationer-and-bookseller's next to the butcher's had heard of him, but he had never heard that he lived in Konigstrasse; he never had heard where he lived in Hamburg.

The pilgrims to the fraudulent shrine got back into their carriage, and drove sadly away, instructing their driver with the rigidity which their limited German favored, not to let any house with a bust in its front escape him. He promised, and took his course out through Konigstrasse, and suddenly they found themselves in a world of such eld and quaintness that they forgot Heine as completely as any of his countrymen had done. They were in steep and narrow streets, that crooked and turned with no apparent purpose of leading anywhere, among houses that looked down upon them with an astonished stare from the leaden-sashed windows of their timber-laced gables. The facades with their lattices stretching in bands quite across them, and with their steep roofs climbing high in successions of blinking dormers, were more richly mediaeval than anything the travellers had ever dreamt of before, and they feasted themselves upon the unimagined picturesqueness with a leisurely minuteness which brought responsive gazers everywhere to the windows; windows were set ajar; shop doors were darkened by curious figures from within, and the traffic of the tortuous alleys was interrupted by their progress. They could not have said which delighted them more—the houses in the immediate foreground, or the sharp high gables in the perspectives and the background; but all were like the painted scenes of the stage, and they had a pleasant difficulty in realizing that they were not persons in some romantic drama.

The illusion remained with them and qualified the impression which Hamburg made by her much-trolleyed Bostonian effect; by the decorous activity and Parisian architecture of her business streets; by the turmoil of her quays, and the innumerable masts and chimneys of her shipping. At the heart of all was that quaintness, that picturesqueness of the past, which embodied the spirit of the old Hanseatic city, and seemed the expression of the home-side of her history.



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The sense of this gained strength from such slight study of her annals as they afterwards made, and assisted the digestion of some morsels of tough statistics. In the shadow of those Gothic houses the fact that Hamburg was one of the greatest coffee marts and money marts of the world had a romantic glamour; and the fact that in the four years from 1870 till 1874 a quarter of a million emigrants sailed on her ships for the United States seemed to stretch a nerve of kindred feeling from those mediaeval streets through the whole shabby length of Third Avenue.

It was perhaps in this glamour, or this feeling of commercial solidarity, that March went to have a look at the Hamburg Bourse, in the beautiful new Rathhaus. It was not undergoing repairs, it was too new for that; but it was in construction, and so it fulfilled the function of a public edifice, in withholding its entire interest from the stranger. He could not get into the Senate Chamber; but the Bourse was free to him, and when he stepped within, it rose at him with a roar of voices and of feet like the New York Stock Exchange. The spectacle was not so frantic; people were not shaking their fists or fingers in each other's noses; but they were all wild in the tamer German way, and he was glad to mount from the Bourse to the poor little art gallery upstairs, and to shut out its clamor. He was not so glad when he looked round on these, his first, examples of modern German art. The custodian led him gently about and said which things were for sale, and it made his heart ache to see how bad they were, and to think that, bad as they were, he could not buy any of them.

XXII.

In the start from Cuxhaven the passengers had the irresponsible ease of people ticketed through, and the steamship company had still the charge of their baggage. But when the Marches left Hamburg for Leipsic (where they had decided to break the long pull to Carlsbad), all the anxieties of European travel, dimly remembered from former European days, offered themselves for recognition. A porter vanished with their hand-baggage before they could note any trait in him for identification; other porters made away with their trunks; and the interpreter who helped March buy his tickets, with a vocabulary of strictly railroad English, had to help him find the pieces in the baggage-room, curiously estranged in a mountain of alien boxes. One official weighed them; another obliged him to pay as much in freight as for a third passenger, and gave him an illegible scrap of paper which recorded their number and destination. The interpreter and the porters took their fees with a professional effect of dissatisfaction, and he went to wait with his wife amidst the smoking and eating and drinking in the restaurant. They burst through with the rest when the doors were opened to the train, and followed a glimpse of the porter with their hand-bags, as he ran down the platform, still bent upon escaping them, and brought him to bay at last in a car where he had got very good seats for them, and sank into their places, hot and humiliated by their needless tumult.



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As they cooled, they recovered their self-respect, and renewed a youthful joy in some of the long-estranged facts. The road was rougher than the roads at home; but for much less money they had the comfort, without the unavailing splendor, of a Pullman in their second-class carriage. Mrs. March had expected to be used with the severity on the imperial railroads which she had failed to experience from the military on the Hamburg sidewalks, but nothing could be kindlier than the whole management toward her. Her fellow-travellers were not lavish of their rights, as Americans are; what they got, that they kept; and in the run from Hamburg to Leipsic she had several occasions to observe that no German, however young or robust, dreams of offering a better place, if he has one, to a lady in grace to her sex or age; if they got into a carriage too late to secure a forward-looking seat, she rode backward to the end of that stage. But if they appealed to their fellow-travellers for information about changes, or stops, or any of the little facts that they wished to make sure of, they were enlightened past possibility of error. At the point where they might have gone wrong the explanations were renewed with a thoughtfulness which showed that their anxieties had not been forgotten. She said she could not see how any people could be both so selfish and so sweet, and her husband seized the advantage of saying something offensive:

“You women are so pampered in America that you are astonished when you are treated in Europe like the mere human beings you are.”

She answered with unexpected reasonableness:

“Yes, there’s something in that; but when the Germans have taught us how despicable we are as women, why do they treat us so well as human beings?”

This was at ten o’clock, after she had ridden backward a long way, and at last, within an hour of Leipsic, had got a seat confronting him. The darkness had now hidden the landscape, but the impression of its few simple elements lingered pleasantly in their sense: long levels, densely wooded with the precise, severely disciplined German forests, and checkered with fields of grain and grass, soaking under the thin rain that from time to time varied the thin sunshine.

The villages and peasants’ cottages were notably few; but there was here and there a classic or a gothic villa, which, at one point, an English-speaking young lady turned from her Tauchnitz novel to explain as the seat of some country gentleman; the land was in large holdings, and this accounted for the sparsity of villages and cottages.



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She then said that she was a German teacher of English, in Hamburg, and was going home to Potsdam for a visit. She seemed like a German girl out of 'The Initials', and in return for this favor Mrs. March tried to invest herself with some romantic interest as an American. She failed to move the girl's fancy, even after she had bestowed on her an immense bunch of roses which the young German friend in Hamburg had sent to them just before they left their hotel. She failed, later, on the same ground with the pleasant-looking English woman who got into their carriage at Magdeburg, and talked over the 'London Illustrated News' with an English-speaking Fraulein in her company; she readily accepted the fact of Mrs. March's nationality, but found nothing wonderful in it, apparently; and when she left the train she left Mrs. March to recall with fond regret the old days in Italy when she first came abroad, and could make a whole carriage full of Italians break into ohs and ahs by saying that she was an American, and telling how far she had come across the sea.

"Yes," March assented, "but that was a great while ago, and Americans were much rarer than they are now in Europe. The Italians are so much more sympathetic than the Germans and English, and they saw that you wanted to impress them. Heaven knows how little they cared! And then, you were a very pretty young girl in those days; or at least I thought so."

"Yes," she sighed, "and now I'm a plain old woman."

"Oh, not quite so bad as that."

"Yes, I am! Do you think they would have cared more if it had been Miss Triscoe?"

"Not so much as if it had been the pivotal girl. They would have found her much more their ideal of the American woman; and even she would have had to have been here thirty years ago."

She laughed a little ruefully. "Well, at any rate, I should like to know how Miss Triscoe would have affected them."

"I should much rather know what sort of life that English woman is living here with her German husband; I fancied she had married rank. I could imagine how dull it must be in her little Saxon town, from the way she clung to her Illustrated News, and explained the pictures of the royalties to her friend. There is romance for you!"

They arrived at Leipsic fresh and cheerful after their five hours' journey, and as in a spell of their travelled youth they drove up through the academic old town, asleep under its dimly clouded sky, and silent except for the trolley-cars that prowled its streets with their feline purr, and broke at times into a long, shrill caterwaul. A sense of the past imparted itself to the well-known encounter with the portier and the head waiter at the hotel door, to the payment of the driver, to the endeavor of the secretary to have them take the

most expensive rooms in the house, and to his compromise upon the next most, where they found themselves in great comfort, with electric lights



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and bells, and a quick succession of fee-taking call-boys in dress-coats too large for them. The spell was deepened by the fact, which March kept at the bottom of his consciousness for the present, that one of their trunks was missing. This linked him more closely to the travel of other days, and he spent the next forenoon in a telegraphic search for the stray, with emotions tinged by the melancholy of recollection, but in the security that since it was somewhere in the keeping of the state railway, it would be finally restored to him.

XXIII.

Their windows, as they saw in the morning, looked into a large square of aristocratic physiognomy, and of a Parisian effect in architecture, which afterwards proved characteristic of the town, if not quite so characteristic as to justify the passion of Leipsic for calling itself Little Paris. The prevailing tone was of a gray tending to the pale yellow of the Tauchnitz editions with which the place is more familiarly associated in the minds of English-speaking travellers. It was rather more sombre than it might have been if the weather had been fair; but a quiet rain was falling dreamily that morning, and the square was provided with a fountain which continued to dribble in the rare moments when the rain forgot itself. The place was better shaded than need be in that sunless land by the German elms that look like ours and it was sufficiently stocked with German statues, that look like no others. It had a monument, too, of the sort with which German art has everywhere disfigured the kindly fatherland since the war with France. These monuments, though they are so very ugly, have a sort of pathos as records of the only war in which Germany unaided has triumphed against a foreign foe, but they are as tiresome as all such memorial pomps must be. It is not for the victories of a people that any other people can care. The wars come and go in blood and tears; but whether they are bad wars, or what are comically called good wars, they are of one effect in death and sorrow, and their fame is an offence to all men not concerned in them, till time has softened it to a memory

“Of old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago.”

It was for some such reason that while the Marches turned with instant satiety from the swelling and strutting sculpture which celebrated the Leipsic heroes of the war of 1870, they had heart for those of the war of 1813; and after their noonday dinner they drove willingly, in a pause of the rain, out between yellowing harvests of wheat and oats to the field where Napoleon was beaten by the Russians, Austrians and Prussians (it always took at least three nations to beat the little wretch) fourscore years before. Yet even there Mrs. March was really more concerned for the sparsity of corn-flowers in the grain,

which in their modern character of Kaiserblumen she found strangely absent from their loyal function; and March was more



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taken with the notion of the little gardens which his guide told him the citizens could have in the suburbs of Leipsic and enjoy at any trolley-car distance from their homes. He saw certain of these gardens in groups, divided by low, unenvious fences, and sometimes furnished with summer-houses, where the tenant could take his pleasure in the evening air, with his family. The guide said he had such a garden himself, at a rent of seven dollars a year, where he raised vegetables and flowers, and spent his peaceful leisure; and March fancied that on the simple domestic side of their life, which this fact gave him a glimpse of, the Germans were much more engaging than in their character of victors over either the First or the Third Napoleon. But probably they would not have agreed with him, and probably nations will go on making themselves cruel and tiresome till humanity at last prevails over nationality.

He could have put the case to the guide himself; but though the guide was imaginably liberated to a cosmopolitan conception of things by three years' service as waiter in English hotels, where he learned the language, he might not have risen to this. He would have tried, for he was a willing and kindly soul, though he was not a 'valet de place' by profession. There seemed in fact but one of that useless and amusing race (which is everywhere falling into decay through the rivalry of the perfected Baedeker,) left in Leipsic, and this one was engaged, so that the Marches had to devolve upon their ex-waiter, who was now the keeper of a small restaurant. He gladly abandoned his business to the care of his wife, in order to drive handsomely about in his best clothes, with strangers who did not exact too much knowledge from him. In his zeal to do something he possessed himself of March's overcoat when they dismounted at their first gallery, and let fall from its pocket his prophylactic flask of brandy, which broke with a loud crash on the marble floor in the presence of several masterpieces, and perfumed the whole place. The masterpieces were some excellent works of Luke Kranach, who seemed the only German painter worth looking at when there were any Dutch or Italian pictures near, but the travellers forgot the name and nature of the Kranachs, and remembered afterwards only the shattered fragments of the brandy-flask, just how they looked on the floor, and the fumes, how they smelt, that rose from the ruin.

It might have been a warning protest of the veracities against what they were doing; but the madness of sight-seeing, which spoils travel, was on them, and they delivered themselves up to it as they used in their ignorant youth, though now they knew its futility so well. They spared themselves nothing that they had time for, that day, and they felt falsely guilty for their omissions, as if they really had been duties to art and history which must be discharged, like obligations to one's maker and one's neighbor.



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They had a touch of genuine joy in the presence of the beautiful old Rathhaus, and they were sensible of something like a genuine emotion in passing the famous and venerable university; the very air of Leipsic is redolent of printing and publication, which appealed to March in his quality of editor, and they could not fail of an impression of the quiet beauty of the town, with its regular streets of houses breaking into suburban villas of an American sort, and intersected with many canals, which in the intervals of the rain were eagerly navigated by pleasure boats, and contributed to the general picturesqueness by their frequent bridges, even during the drizzle. There seemed to be no churches to do, and as it was a Sunday, the galleries were so early closed against them that they were making a virtue as well as a pleasure of the famous scene of Napoleon's first great defeat.

By a concert between their guide and driver their carriage drew up at the little inn by the road-side, which is also a museum stocked with relics from the battle-field, and with objects of interest relating to it. Old muskets, old swords, old shoes and old coats, trumpets, drums, gun-carriages, wheels, helmets, cannon balls, grape-shot, and all the murderous rubbish which battles come to at last, with proclamations, autographs, caricatures and likenesses of Napoleon, and effigies of all the other generals engaged, and miniatures and jewels of their womenkind, filled room after room, through which their owner vaunted his way, with a loud pounding voice and a bad breath. When he wished them to enjoy some gross British satire or clumsy German gibe at Bonaparte's expense, and put his face close to begin the laugh, he was something so terrible that March left the place with a profound if not a reasoned regret that the French had not won the battle of Leipsic. He walked away musing pensively upon the traveller's inadequacy to the ethics of history when a breath could so sway him against his convictions; but even after he had cleansed his lungs with some deep respirations he found himself still a Bonapartist in the presence of that stone on the rising ground where Napoleon sat to watch the struggle on the vast plain, and see his empire slipping through his blood-stained fingers. It was with difficulty that he could keep from revering the hat and coat which are sculptured on the stone, but it was well that he succeeded, for he could not make out then or afterwards whether the habiliments represented were really Napoleon's or not, and they might have turned out to be Barclay de Tolly's.

While he stood trying to solve this question of clothes he was startled by the apparition of a man climbing the little slope from the opposite quarter, and advancing toward them. He wore the imperial crossed by the pointed mustache once so familiar to a world much the worse for them, and March had the shiver of a fine moment in which he fancied the Third Napoleon rising to view the scene where the First had looked his coming ruin in the face.



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“Why, it’s Miss Triscoe!” cried his wife, and before March had noticed the approach of another figure, the elder and the younger lady had rushed upon each other, and encountered with a kiss. At the same time the visage of the last Emperor resolved itself into the face of General Triscoe, who gave March his hand in a more tempered greeting.

The ladies began asking each other of their lives since their parting two days before, and the men strolled a few paces away toward the distant prospect of Leipsic, which at that point silhouettes itself in a noble stretch of roofs and spires and towers against the horizon.

General Triscoe seemed no better satisfied with Germany than he had been on first stepping ashore at Cuxhaven. He might still have been in a pout with his own country, but as yet he had not made up with any other; and he said, “What a pity Napoleon didn’t thrash the whole dunderheaded lot! His empire would have been a blessing to them, and they would have had some chance of being civilized under the French. All this unification of nationalities is the great humbug of the century. Every stupid race thinks it’s happy because it’s united, and civilization has been set back a hundred years by the wars that were fought to bring the unions about; and more wars will have to be fought to keep them up. What a farce it is! What’s become of the nationality of the Danes in Schleswig-Holstein, or the French in the Rhine Provinces, or the Italians in Savoy?”

March had thought something like this himself, but to have it put by General Triscoe made it offensive. “I don’t know. Isn’t it rather quarrelling with the course of human events to oppose accomplished facts? The unifications were bound to be, just as the separations before them were. And so far they have made for peace, in Europe at least, and peace is civilization. Perhaps after a great many ages people will come together through their real interests, the human interests; but at present it seems as if nothing but a romantic sentiment of patriotism can unite them. By-and-by they may find that there is nothing in it.”

“Perhaps,” said the general, discontentedly. “I don’t see much promise of any kind in the future.”

“Well, I don’t know. When you think of the solid militarism of Germany, you seem remanded to the most hopeless moment of the Roman Empire; you think nothing can break such a force; but my guide says that even in Leipsic the Socialists outnumber all the other parties, and the army is the great field of the Socialist propaganda. The army itself may be shaped into the means of democracy—even of peace.”

“You’re very optimistic,” said Triscoe, curtly. “As I read the signs, we are not far from universal war. In less than a year we shall make the break ourselves in a war with Spain.” He looked very fierce as he prophesied, and he dotted March over with his staccato glances.

“Well, I’ll allow that if Tammany comes in this year, we shall have war with Spain. You can’t ask more than that, General Triscoe?”



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Mrs. March and Miss Triscoe had not said a word of the 'battle of Leipsic', or of the impersonal interests which it suggested to the men. For all these, they might still have been sitting in their steamer chairs on the promenade of the Norumbia at a period which seemed now of geological remoteness. The girl accounted for not being in Dresden by her father's having decided not to go through Berlin but to come by way of Leipsic, which he thought they had better see; they had come without stopping in Hamburg. They had not enjoyed Leipsic much; it had rained the whole day before, and they had not gone out. She asked when Mrs. March was going on to Carlsbad, and Mrs. March answered, the next morning; her husband wished to begin his cure at once.

Then Miss Triscoe pensively wondered if Carlsbad would do her father any good; and Mrs. March discreetly inquired General Triscoe's symptoms.

"Oh, he hasn't any. But I know he can't be well—with his gloomy opinions."

"They may come from his liver," said Mrs. March. "Nearly everything of that kind does. I know that Mr. March has been terribly depressed at times, and the doctor said it was nothing but his liver; and Carlsbad is the great place for that, you know."

"Perhaps I can get papa to run over some day, if he doesn't like Dresden. It isn't very far, is it?"

They referred to Mrs. March's Baedeker together, and found that it was five hours.

"Yes, that is what I thought," said Miss Triscoe, with a carelessness which convinced Mrs. March she had looked up the fact already.

"If you decide to come, you must let us get rooms for you at our hotel. We're going to Pupp's; most of the English and Americans go to the hotels on the Hill, but Pupp's is in the thick of it in the lower town; and it's very gay, Mr. Kenby says; he's been there often. Mr. Burnamy is to get our rooms."

"I don't suppose I can get papa to go," said Miss Triscoe, so insincerely that Mrs. March was sure she had talked over the different routes; to Carlsbad with Burnamy—probably on the way from Cuxhaven. She looked up from digging the point of her umbrella in the ground. "You didn't meet him here this morning?"

Mrs. March governed herself to a calm which she respected in asking, "Has Mr. Burnamy been here?"

"He came on with Mr. and Mrs. Eltwin, when we did, and they all decided to stop over a day. They left on the twelve-o'clock train to-day."

Mrs. March perceived that the girl had decided not to let the facts betray themselves by chance, and she treated them as of no significance.



“No, we didn’t see him,” she said, carelessly.

The two men came walking slowly towards them, and Miss Triscoe said, “We’re going to Dresden this evening, but I hope we shall meet somewhere, Mrs. March.”

“Oh, people never lose sight of each other in Europe; they can’t; it’s so little!”



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“Agatha,” said the girl’s father, “Mr. March tells me that the museum over there is worth seeing.”

“Well,” the girl assented, and she took a winning leave of the Marches, and moved gracefully away with her father.

“I should have thought it was Agnes,” said Mrs. March, following them with her eyes before she turned upon her husband. “Did he tell you Burnamy had been here? Well, he has! He has just gone on to Carlsbad. He made, those poor old Eltwins stop over with him, so he could be with her.”

“Did she say that?”

“No, but of course he did.”

“Then it’s all settled?”

“No, it isn’t settled. It’s at the most interesting point.”

“Well, don’t read ahead. You always want to look at the last page.”

“You were trying to look at the last page yourself,” she retorted, and she would have liked to punish him for his complex dishonesty toward the affair; but upon the whole she kept her temper with him, and she made him agree that Miss Triscoe’s getting her father to Carlsbad was only a question of time.

They parted heart’s-friends with their ineffectual guide, who was affectionately grateful for the few marks they gave him, at the hotel door; and they were in just the mood to hear men singing in a farther room when they went down to supper. The waiter, much distracted from their own service by his duties to it, told them it was the breakfast party of students which they had heard beginning there about noon. The revellers had now been some six hours at table, and he said they might not rise before midnight; they had just got to the toasts, which were apparently set to music.

The students of right remained a vivid color in the impression of the university town. They pervaded the place, and decorated it with their fantastic personal taste in coats and trousers, as well as their corps caps of green, white, red, and blue, but above all blue. They were not easily distinguishable from the bicyclers who were holding one of the dull festivals of their kind in Leipsic that day, and perhaps they were sometimes both students and bicyclers. As bicyclers they kept about in the rain, which they seemed not to mind; so far from being disheartened, they had spirits enough to take one another by the waist at times and waltz in the square before the hotel. At one moment of the holiday some chiefs among them drove away in carriages; at supper a winner of prizes sat covered with badges and medals; another who went by the hotel streamed with ribbons; and an elderly man at his side was bespattered with small knots and ends of

them, as if he had been in an explosion of ribbons somewhere. It seemed all to be as exciting for them, and it was as tedious for the witnesses, as any gala of students and bicyclers at home.



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Mrs. March remained with an unrequited curiosity concerning their different colors and different caps, and she tried to make her husband find out what they severally meant; he pretended a superior interest in the nature of a people who had such a passion for uniforms that they were not content with its gratification in their immense army, but indulged it in every pleasure and employment of civil life. He estimated, perhaps not very accurately, that only one man out of ten in Germany wore citizens' dress; and of all functionaries he found that the dogs of the women-and-dog teams alone had no distinctive dress; even the women had their peasant costume.

There was an industrial fair open at Leipsic which they went out of the city to see after supper, along with a throng of Leipsickers, whom an hour's interval of fine weather tempted forth on the trolley; and with the help of a little corporal, who took a fee for his service with the eagerness of a civilian, they got wheeled chairs, and renewed their associations with the great Chicago Fair in seeing the exposition from them. This was not, March said, quite the same as being drawn by a woman-and-dog team, which would have been the right means of doing a German fair; but it was something to have his chair pushed by a slender young girl, whose stalwart brother applied his strength to the chair of the lighter traveller; and it was fit that the girl should reckon the common hire, while the man took the common tip. They made haste to leave the useful aspects of the fair, and had themselves trundled away to the Colonial Exhibit, where they vaguely expected something like the agreeable corruptions of the Midway Plaisance. The idea of her colonial progress with which Germany is trying to affect the home-keeping imagination of her people was illustrated by an encampment of savages from her Central-African possessions. They were getting their supper at the moment the Marches saw them, and were crouching, half naked, around the fires under the kettles, and shivering from the cold, but they were not very characteristic of the imperial expansion, unless perhaps when an old man in a red blanket suddenly sprang up with a knife in his hand and began to chase a boy round the camp. The boy was lighter-footed, and easily outran the sage, who tripped at times on his blanket. None of the other Central Africans seemed to care for the race, and without waiting for the event, the American spectators ordered themselves trundled away to another idle feature of the fair, where they hoped to amuse themselves with the image of Old Leipsic.

This was so faithfully studied from the past in its narrow streets and Gothic houses that it was almost as picturesque as the present epoch in the old streets of Hamburg. A drama had just begun to be represented on a platform of the public square in front of a fourteenth-century beer-house, with people talking from the windows round, and revellers in the costume of the period drinking beer and eating sausages at tables in the open air. Their eating and drinking were genuine, and in the midst of it a real rain began, to pour down upon them, without affecting them any more than if they had been Germans of the nineteenth century. But it drove the Americans to a shelter from which they could not see the play, and when it held up, they made their way back to their hotel.

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Their car was full of returning pleasers, some of whom were happy beyond the sober wont of the fatherland. The conductor took a special interest in his tipsy passengers, trying to keep them in order, and genially entreating them to be quiet when they were too obstreperous. From time to time he got some of them off, and then, when he remounted the car, he appealed to the remaining passengers for their sympathy with an innocent smile, which the Americans, still strange to the unjoyous physiognomy of the German Empire, failed to value at its rare worth.

Before he slept that night March tried to assemble from the experiences and impressions of the day some facts which he would not be ashamed of as a serious observer of life in Leipsic, and he remembered that their guide had said house-rent was very low. He generalized from the guide's content with his fee that the Germans were not very rapacious; and he became quite irrelevantly aware that in Germany no man's clothes fitted him, or seemed expected to fit him; that the women dressed somewhat better, and were rather pretty sometimes, and that they had feet as large as the kind hearts of the Germans of every age and sex. He was able to note, rather more freshly, that with all their kindness the Germans were a very nervous people, if not irritable, and at the least cause gave way to an agitation, which indeed quickly passed, but was violent while it lasted. Several times that day he had seen encounters between the portier and guests at the hotel which promised violence, but which ended peacefully as soon as some simple question of train-time was solved. The encounters always left the portier purple and perspiring, as any agitation must with a man so tight in his livery. He bemoaned himself after one of them as the victim of an unhappy calling, in which he could take no exercise. "It is a life of excitements, but not of movements," he explained to March; and when he learned where he was going, he regretted that he could not go to Carlsbad too. "For sugar?" he asked, as if there were overmuch of it in his own make.

March felt the tribute, but he had to say, "No; liver."

"Ah!" said the portier, with the air of failing to get on common ground with him.

XXV.

The next morning was so fine that it would have been a fine morning in America. Its beauty was scarcely sullied, even subjectively, by the telegram which the portier sent after the Marches from the hotel, saying that their missing trunk had not yet been found, and their spirits were as light as the gay little clouds which blew about in the sky, when their train drew out in the sunshine, brilliant on the charming landscape all the way to Carlsbad. A fatherly 'traeger' had done his best to get them the worst places in a non-smoking compartment, but had succeeded so poorly that they were very comfortable, with no companions but a mother and daughter, who spoke German in soft low tones together. Their compartment was pervaded by tobacco fumes from the smokers, but as

these were twice as many as the non-smokers, it was only fair, and after March had got a window open it did not matter, really.



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He asked leave of the strangers in his German, and they consented in theirs; but he could not master the secret of the window-catch, and the elder lady said in English, "Let me show you," and came to his help.

The occasion for explaining that they were Americans and accustomed to different car windows was so tempting that Mrs. March could not forbear, and the other ladies were affected as deeply as she could wish. Perhaps they were the more affected because it presently appeared that they had cousins in New York whom she knew of, and that they were acquainted with an American family that had passed the winter in Berlin. Life likes to do these things handsomely, and it easily turned out that this was a family of intimate friendship with the Marches; the names, familiarly spoken, abolished all strangeness between the travellers; and they entered into a comparison of tastes, opinions, and experiences, from which it seemed that the objects and interests of cultivated people in Berlin were quite the same as those of cultivated people in New York. Each of the parties to the discovery disclaimed any superiority for their respective civilizations; they wished rather to ascribe a greater charm and virtue to the alien conditions; and they acquired such merit with one another that when the German ladies got out of the train at Franzensbad, the mother offered Mrs. March an ingenious folding footstool which she had admired. In fact, she left her with it clasped to her breast, and bowing speechless toward the giver in a vain wish to express her gratitude.

"That was very pretty of her, my dear," said March. "You couldn't have done that."

"No," she confessed; "I shouldn't have had the courage. The courage of my emotions," she added, thoughtfully.

"Ah, that's the difference! A Berliner could do it, and a Bostonian couldn't. Do you think it so much better to have the courage of your convictions?"

"I don't know. It seems to me that I'm less and less certain of everything that I used to be sure of."

He laughed, and then he said, "I was thinking how, on our wedding journey, long ago, that Gray Sister at the Hotel Dieu in Quebec offered you a rose."

"Well?"

"That was to your pretty youth. Now the gracious stranger gives you a folding stool."

"To rest my poor old feet. Well, I would rather have it than a rose, now."

"You bent toward her at just the slant you had when you took the flower that time; I noticed it. I didn't see that you looked so very different. To be sure the roses in your cheeks have turned into rosettes; but rosettes are very nice, and they're much more permanent; I prefer them; they will keep in any climate."



She suffered his mockery with an appreciative sigh. “Yes, our age caricatures our youth, doesn’t it?”

“I don’t think it gets much fun out of it,” he assented.

“No; but it can’t help it. I used to rebel against it when it first began. I did enjoy being young.”



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“You did, my dear,” he said, taking her hand tenderly; she withdrew it, because though she could bear his sympathy, her New England nature could not bear its expression. “And so did I; and we were both young a long time. Travelling brings the past back, don’t you think? There at that restaurant, where we stopped for dinner—”

“Yes, it was charming! Just as it used to be! With that white cloth, and those tall shining bottles of wine, and the fruit in the centre, and the dinner in courses, and that young waiter who spoke English, and was so nice! I’m never going home; you may, if you like.”

“You bragged to those ladies about our dining-cars; and you said that our railroad restaurants were quite as good as the European.”

“I had to do that. But I knew better; they don’t begin to be.”

“Perhaps not; but I’ve been thinking that travel is a good deal alike everywhere. It’s the expression of the common civilization of the world. When I came out of that restaurant and ran the train down, and then found that it didn’t start for fifteen minutes, I wasn’t sure whether I was at home or abroad. And when we changed cars at Eger, and got into this train which had been baking in the sun for us outside the station, I didn’t know but I was back in the good old Fitchburg depot. To be sure, Wallenstein wasn’t assassinated at Boston, but I forgot his murder at Eger, and so that came to the same thing. It’s these confounded fifty-odd years. I used to recollect everything.”

He had got up and was looking out of the window at the landscape, which had not grown less amiable in growing rather more slovenly since they had crossed the Saxon border into Bohemia. All the morning and early afternoon they had run through lovely levels of harvest, where men were cradling the wheat and women were binding it into sheaves in the narrow fields between black spaces of forest. After they left Eger, there was something more picturesque and less thrifty in the farming among the low hills which they gradually mounted to uplands, where they tasted a mountain quality in the thin pure air. The railroad stations were shabbier; there was an indefinable touch of something Southern in the scenery and the people. Lilies were rocking on the sluggish reaches of the streams, and where the current quickened, tall wheels were lifting water for the fields in circles of brimming and spilling pockets. Along the embankments, where a new track was being laid, barefooted women were at work with pick and spade and barrow, and little yellow-haired girls were lugging large white-headed babies, and watching the train go by. At an up grade where it slowed in the ascent he began to throw out to the children the pfennigs which had been left over from the passage in Germany, and he pleased himself with his bounty, till the question whether the children could spend the money forced itself upon him. He sat down feeling less like a good genius than a

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cruel magician who had tricked them with false wealth; but he kept his remorse to himself, and tried to interest his wife in the difference of social and civic ideal expressed in the change of the inhibitory notices at the car windows, which in Germany had strongest forbidden him to outlean himself, and now in Austria entreated him not to outbow himself. She refused to share in the speculation, or to debate the yet nicer problem involved by the placarded prayer in the washroom to the Messrs. Travellers not to take away the soap; and suddenly he felt himself as tired as she looked, with that sense of the futility of travel which lies in wait for every one who profits by travel.

PG EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Bad wars, or what are comically called good wars
Calm of those who have logic on their side
Decided not to let the facts betray themselves by chance
Explained perhaps too fully
Futility of travel
Humanity may at last prevail over nationality
Impertinent prophecies of their enjoying it so much
Less certain of everything that I used to be sure of
Life of the ship, like the life of the sea: a sodden monotony
Life was like the life at a sea-side hotel, but more monotonous
Madness of sight-seeing, which spoils travel
Night so bad that it was worse than no night at all
Our age caricatures our youth
Prices fixed by his remorse
Recipes for dishes and diseases
Reckless and culpable optimism
Repeated the nothings they had said already
She cares for him: that she was so cold shows that
She could bear his sympathy, but not its expression
Suffering under the drip-drip of his innocent egotism
They were so near in age, though they were ten years apart
Unfounded hope that sooner or later the weather would be fine
Wilful sufferers
Woman harnessed with a dog to a cart
Wooded with the precise, severely disciplined German forests
Work he was so fond of and so weary of