Complete March Family Trilogy eBook

Complete March Family Trilogy by William Dean Howells

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THEIR WEDDING JOURNEY

By William Dean Howells

1871

I. THE OUTSET

They first met in Boston, but the match was made in Europe, where they afterwards saw each other; whither, indeed, he followed her; and there the match was also broken off. Why it was broken off, and why it was renewed after a lapse of years, is part of quite a long love-story, which I do not think myself qualified to rehearse, distrusting my fitness for a sustained or involved narration; though I am persuaded that a skillful romancer could turn the courtship of Basil and Isabel March to excellent account. Fortunately for me, however, in attempting to tell the reader of the wedding-journey of a newly married couple, no longer very young, to be sure, but still fresh in the light of their love, I shall have nothing to do but to talk of some ordinary traits of American life as these appeared to them, to speak a little of well-known and easily accessible places, to present now a bit of landscape and now a sketch of character.

They had agreed to make their wedding-journey in the simplest and quietest way, and as it did not take place at once after their marriage, but some weeks later, it had all the desired charm of privacy from the outset.

“How much better,” said Isabel, “to go now, when nobody cares whether you go or stay, than to have started off upon a wretched wedding-breakfast, all tears and trousseau, and had people wanting to see you aboard the cars. Now there will not be a suspicion of honey-moonshine about us; we shall go just like anybody else,—with a difference, dear, with a difference!” and she took Basil’s cheeks between her hands. In order to do this, she had to ran round the table; for they were at dinner, and Isabel’s aunt, with whom they had begun married life, sat substantial between them. It was rather a girlish thing for Isabel, and she added, with a conscious blush, “We are past our first youth, you know; and we shall not strike the public as bridal, shall we? My one horror in life is an evident bride.”

Basil looked at her fondly, as if he did not think her at all too old to be taken for a bride; and for my part I do not object to a woman’s being of Isabel’s age, if she is of a good heart and temper. Life must have been very unkind to her if at that age she have not won more than she has lost. It seemed to Basil that his wife was quite as fair as when they met first, eight years before; but he could not help recurring with an inextinguishable regret to the long interval of their broken engagement, which but for that fatality they might have spent together, he imagined, in just such rapture as this.

The regret always haunted him, more or less; it was part of his love; the loss accounted irreparable really enriched the final gain.

“I don’t know,” he said presently, with as much gravity as a man can whose cheeks are clasped between a lady’s hands, “you don’t begin very well for a bride who wishes to keep her secret. If you behave in this way, they will put us into the ‘bridal chambers’ at all the hotels. And the cars—they’re beginning to have them on the palace-cars.”

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Just then a shadow fell into the room.

“Wasn’t that thunder, Isabel?” asked her aunt, who had been contentedly surveying the tender spectacle before her. “O dear! you’ll never be able to go by the boat to-night, if it storms. It ’s actually raining now!”

In fact, it was the beginning of that terrible storm of June, 1870. All in a moment, out of the hot sunshine of the day it burst upon us before we quite knew that it threatened, even before we had fairly noticed the clouds, and it went on from passion to passion with an inexhaustible violence. In the square upon which our friends looked out of their dining-room windows the trees whitened in the gusts, and darkened in the driving floods of the rainfall, and in some paroxysms of the tempest bent themselves in desperate submission, and then with a great shudder rent away whole branches and flung them far off upon the ground. Hail mingled with the rain, and now the few umbrellas that had braved the storm vanished, and the hurtling ice crackled upon the pavement, where the lightning played like flames burning from the earth, while the thunder roared overhead without ceasing. There was something splendidly theatrical about it all; and when a street-car, laden to the last inch of its capacity, came by, with horses that pranced and leaped under the stinging blows of the hailstones, our friends felt as if it were an effective and very naturalistic bit of pantomime contrived for their admiration. Yet as to themselves they were very sensible of a potent reality in the affair, and at intervals during the storm they debated about going at all that day, and decided to go and not to go, according to the changing complexion of the elements. Basil had said that as this was their first journey together in America, he wished to give it at the beginning as pungent a national character as possible, and that as he could imagine nothing more peculiarly American than a voyage to New York by a Fall River boat, they ought to take that route thither. So much upholstery, so much music, such variety cf company, he understood, could not be got in any other way, and it might be that they would even catch a glimpse of the inventor of the combination, who represented the very excess and extremity of a certain kind of Americanism. Isabel had eagerly consented; but these aesthetic motives were paralyzed for her by the thought of passing Point Judith in a storm, and she descended from her high intents first to the Inside Boats, without the magnificence and the orchestra, and then to the idea of going by land in a sleeping-car. Having comfortably accomplished this feat, she treated Basil’s consent as a matter of course, not because she did not regard him, but because as a woman she could not conceive of the steps to her conclusion as unknown to him, and always treated her own decisions as the product of their common reasoning. But her husband held out for the boat, and insisted that if the storm fell

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before seven o'clock, they could reach it at Newport by the last express; and it was this obstinacy that, in proof of Isabel's wisdom, obliged them to wait two hours in the station before going by the land route. The storm abated at five o'clock, and though the rain continued, it seemed well by a quarter of seven to set out for the Old Colony Depot, in sight of which a sudden and vivid flash of lightning caused Isabel to seize her husband's arm, and to implore him, "O don't go by the boat!" On this, Basil had the incredible weakness to yield; and bade the driver take them to the Worcester Depot. It was the first swerving from the ideal in their wedding journey, but it was by no means the last; though it must be confessed that it was early to begin.

They both felt more tranquil when they were irretrievably committed by the purchase of their tickets, and when they sat down in the waiting. room of the station, with all the time between seven and nine o'clock before them. Basil would have eked out the business of checking the trunks into an affair of some length, but the baggage-master did his duty with pitiless celerity; and so Basil, in the mere excess of his disoccupation, bought an accident-insurance ticket. This employed him half a minute, and then he gave up the unequal contest, and went and took his place beside Isabel, who sat prettily wrapped in her shawl, perfectly content.

"Isn't it charming," she said gayly, "having to wait so long? It puts me in mind of some of those other journeys we took together. But I can't think of those times with any patience, when we might really have had each other, and didn't! Do you remember how long we had to wait at Chambery? and the numbers of military gentlemen that waited too, with their little waists, and their kisses when they met? and that poor married military gentleman, with the plain wife and the two children, and a tarnished uniform? He seemed to be somehow in misfortune, and his mustache hung down in such a spiritless way, while all the other military mustaches about curled and bristled with so much boldness. I think 'salles d'attente' everywhere are delightful, and there is such a community of interest in them all, that when I come here only to go out to Brookline, I feel myself a traveller once more,—a blessed stranger in a strange land. O dear, Basil, those were happy times after all, when we might have had each other and didn't! And now we're the more precious for having been so long lost."

She drew closer and closer to him, and looked at him in a way that threatened betrayal of her bridal character.

"Isabel, you will be having your head on my shoulder, next," said he.

"Never!" she answered fiercely, recovering her distance with a start. "But, dearest, if you do see me going to—act absurdly, you know, do stop me."

“I’m very sorry, but I’ve got myself to stop. Besides, I didn’t undertake to preserve the incognito of this bridal party.”

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If any accident of the sort dreaded had really happened, it would not have mattered so much, for as yet they were the sole occupants of the waiting room. To be sure, the ticket-seller was there, and the lady who checked packages left in her charge, but these must have seen so many endearments pass between passengers,—that a fleeting caress or so would scarcely have drawn their notice to our pair. Yet Isabel did not so much even as put her hand into her husband's; and as Basil afterwards said, it was very good practice.

Our temporary state, whatever it is, is often mirrored in all that come near us, and our friends were fated to meet frequent parodies of their happiness from first to last on this journey. The travesty began with the very first people who entered the waiting-room after themselves, and who were a very young couple starting like themselves upon a pleasure tour, which also was evidently one of the first tours of any kind that they had made. It was of modest extent, and comprised going to New York and back; but they talked of it with a fluttered and joyful expectation as if it were a voyage to Europe. Presently there appeared a burlesque of their happiness (but with a touch of tragedy) in that kind of young man who is called by the females of his class a fellow, and two young women of that kind known to him as girls. He took a place between these, and presently began a robust flirtation with one of them. He possessed himself, after a brief struggle, of her parasol, and twirled it about, as he uttered, with a sort of tender rudeness inconceivable vapidities, such as you would expect from none but a man of the highest fashion. The girl thus courted became selfishly unconscious of everything but her own joy, and made no attempt to bring the other girl within its warmth, but left her to languish forgotten on the other side. The latter sometimes leaned forward, and tried to divert a little of the flirtation to herself, but the flirters snubbed her with short answers, and presently she gave up and sat still in the sad patience of uncourted women. In this attitude she became a burden to Isabel, who was glad when the three took themselves away, and were succeeded by a very stylish couple—from New York, she knew as well as if they had given her their address on West 999th Street. The lady was not pretty, and she was not, Isabel thought, dressed in the perfect taste of Boston; but she owned frankly to herself that the New-Yorkeress was stylish, undeniably effective. The gentleman bought a ticket for New York, and remained at the window of the office talking quite easily with the seller.

"You couldn't do that, my poor Basil," said Isabel, "you'd be afraid."

"O dear, yes; I'm only too glad to get off without browbeating; though I must say that this officer looks affable enough. Really," he added, as an acquaintance of the ticket-seller came in and nodded to him and said "Hot, to-day!" "this is very strange. I always felt as if these men had no private life, no friendships like the rest of us. On duty they seem so like sovereigns, set apart from mankind, and above us all, that it's quite incredible they should have the common personal relations."

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At intervals of their talk and silence there came vivid flashes of lightning and quite heavy shocks of thunder, very consoling to our friends, who took them as so many compliments to their prudence in not going by the boat, and who had secret doubts of their wisdom whenever these acknowledgments were withheld. Isabel went so far as to say that she hoped nothing would happen to the boat, but I think she would cheerfully have learnt that the vessel had been obliged to put back to Newport, on account of the storm, or even that it had been driven ashore at a perfectly safe place.

People constantly came and went in the waiting-room, which was sometimes quite full, and again empty of all but themselves. In the course of their observations they formed many cordial friendships and bitter enmities upon the ground of personal appearance, or particulars of dress, with people whom they saw for half a minute upon an average; and they took such a keen interest in every one, that it would be hard to say whether they were more concerned in an old gentleman with vigorously upright iron-gray hair, who sat fronting them, and reading all the evening papers, or a young man who hurled himself through the door, bought a ticket with terrific precipitation, burst out again, and then ran down a departing train before it got out of the station: they loved the old gentleman for a certain stubborn benevolence of expression, and if they had been friends of the young man and his family for generations and felt bound if any harm befell him to go and break the news gently to his parents, their nerves could not have been more intimately wrought upon by his hazardous behavior. Still, as they had their tickets for New York, and he was going out on a merely local train,—to Brookline, I believe, they could not, even in their anxiety, repress a feeling of contempt for his unambitious destination.

They were already as completely cut off from local associations and sympathies as if they were a thousand miles and many months away from Boston. They enjoyed the lonely flaring of the gas-jets as a gust of wind drew through the station; they shared the gloom and isolation of a man who took a seat in the darkest corner of the room, and sat there with folded arms, the genius of absence. In the patronizing spirit of travellers in a foreign country they noted and approved the vases of cut-flowers in the booth of the lady who checked packages, and the pots of ivy in her windows. “These poor Bostonians,” they said; “have some love of the beautiful in their rugged natures.”

But after all was said and thought, it was only eight o’clock, and they still had an hour to wait.

Basil grew restless, and Isabel said, with a subtile interpretation of his uneasiness, “I don’t want anything to eat, Basil, but I think I know the weaknesses of men; and you had better go and pass the next half-hour over a plate of something indigestible.”

This was said ‘con stizza’, the least little suggestion of it; but Basil rose with shameful alacrity. “Darling, if it’s your wish—”

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“It’s my fate, Basil,” said Isabel.

“I’ll go,” he exclaimed, “because it isn’t bridal, and will help us to pass for old married people.”

“No, no, Basil, be honest; fibbing isn’t your forte: I wonder you went into the insurance business; you ought to have been a lawyer. Go because you like eating, and are hungry, perhaps, or think you may be so before we get to New York.

“I shall amuse myself well enough here!”

I suppose it is always a little shocking and grievous to a wife when she recognizes a rival in butchers’-meat and the vegetables of the season. With her slender relishes for pastry and confectionery and her dainty habits of lunching, she cannot reconcile with the idea (of) her husband’s capacity for breakfasting, dining, supping, and hot meals at all hours of the day and night—as they write it on the sign-boards of barbaric eating-houses. But isabel would have only herself to blame if she had not perceived this trait of Basil’s before marriage. She recurred now, as his figure disappeared down the station, to memorable instances of his appetite in their European travels during their first engagement. “Yes, he ate terribly at Susa, when I was too full of the notion of getting into Italy to care for bouillon and cold roast chicken. At Rome I thought I must break with him on account of the wild-boar; and at Heidelberg, the sausage and the ham!—-how could he, in my presence? But I took him with all his faults,—and was glad to get him,” she added, ending her meditation with a little burst of candor; and she did not even think of Basil’s appetite when he reappeared.

With the thronging of many sorts of people, in parties and singly, into the waiting room, they became once again mere observers of their kind, more or less critical in temper, until the crowd grew so that individual traits were merged in the character of multitude. Even then, they could catch glimpses of faces so sweet or fine that they made themselves felt like moments of repose in the tumult, and here and there was something so grotesque in dress of manner that it showed distinct from the rest. The ticket-seller’s stamp clicked incessantly as he sold tickets to all points South and West: to New York, Philadelphia, Charleston; to New Orleans, Chicago, Omaha; to St. Paul, Duluth, St. Louis; and it would not have been hard to find in that anxious bustle, that unsmiling eagerness, an image of the whole busy affair of life. It was not a particularly sane spectacle, that impatience to be off to some place that lay not only in the distance, but also in the future—to which no line of road carries you with absolute certainty across an interval of time full of every imaginable chance and influence. It is easy enough to buy a ticket to Cincinnati, but it is somewhat harder to arrive there. Say that all goes well, is it exactly you who arrive?

In the midst of the disquiet there entered at last an old woman, so very infirm that she had to be upheld on either hand by her husband and the hackman who had brought

them, while a young girl went before with shawls and pillows which she arranged upon the seat. There the invalid lay down, and turned towards the crowd a white, suffering face, which was yet so heavenly meek and peaceful that it comforted whoever looked at it.

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In spirit our happy friends bowed themselves before it and owned that there was something better than happiness in it.

“What is it like, Isabel?”

“O, I don’t know, darling,” she said; but she thought, “Perhaps it is like some blessed sorrow that takes us out of this prison of a world, and sets us free of our every-day hates and desires, our aims, our fears. ourselves. Maybe a long and mortal sickness might come to wear such a face in one of us two, and the other could see it, and not regret the poor mask of youth and pretty looks that had fallen away.”

She rose and went over to the sick woman, on whose face beamed a tender smile, as Isabel spoke to her. A chord thrilled in two lives hitherto unknown to each other; but what was said Basil would not ask when the invalid had taken Isabel’s hand between her own, as for adieu, and she came back to his side with swimming eyes. Perhaps his wife could have given no good reason for her emotion, if he had asked it. But it made her very sweet and dear to him; and I suppose that when a tolerably unselfish man is once secure of a woman’s love, he is ordinarily more affected by her compassion and tenderness for other objects than by her feelings towards himself. He likes well enough to think, “She loves me,” but still better, “How kind and good she is!”

They lost sight of the invalid in the hurry of getting places on the cars, and they never saw her again. The man at the wicket-gate leading to the train had thrown it up, and the people were pressing furiously through as if their lives hung upon the chance of instant passage. Basil had secured his ticket for the sleeping-car, and so he and Isabel stood aside and watched the tumult. When the rash was over they passed through, and as they walked up and down the platform beside the train, “I was thinking,” said Isabel, “after I spoke to that poor old lady, of what Clara Williams says: that she wonders the happiest women in the world can look each other in the face without bursting into tears, their happiness is so unreasonable, and so built upon and hedged about with misery. She declares that there’s nothing so sad to her as a bride, unless it’s a young mother, or a little girl growing up in the innocent gayety of her heart. She wonders they can live through it.”

“Clara is very much of a reformer, and would make an end of all of us men, I suppose, —except her father, who supports her in the leisure that enables her to do her deep thinking. She little knows what we poor fellows have to suffer, and how often we break down in business hours, and sob upon one another’s necks. Did that old lady talk to you in the same strain?”

“O no! she spoke very calmly of her sickness, and said she had lived a blessed life. Perhaps it was that made me shed those few small tears. She seemed a very religious person.”

“Yes,” said Basil, “it is almost a pity that religion is going out. But then you are to have the franchise.”

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“All aboard!”

This warning cry saved him from whatever heresy he might have been about to utter; and presently the train carried them out into the gas-sprinkled darkness, with an ever-growing speed that soon left the city lamps far behind. It is a phenomenon whose commonness alone prevents it from being most impressive, that departure of the night-express. The two hundred miles it is to travel stretch before it, traced by those slender clews, to lose which is ruin, and about which hang so many dangers. The draw bridges that gape upon the way, the trains that stand smoking and steaming on the track, the rail that has borne the wear so long that it must soon snap under it, the deep cut where the overhanging mass of rock trembles to its fall, the obstruction that a pitiless malice may have placed in your path,—you think of these after the journey is done, but they seldom haunt your fancy while it lasts. The knowledge of your helplessness in any circumstances is so perfect that it begets a sense of irresponsibility, almost of security; and as you drowse upon the pallet of the sleeping car, and feel yourself hurled forward through the obscurity, you are almost thankful that you can do nothing, for it is upon this condition only that you can endure it; and some such condition as this, I suppose, accounts for many heroic facts in the world. To the fantastic mood which possesses you equally, sleeping or waking, the stoppages of the train have a weird character; and Worcester, Springfield, New Haven, and Stamford are rather points in dream-land than well-known towns of New England. As the train stops you drowse if you have been waking, and wake if you have been in a doze; but in any case you are aware of the locomotive hissing and coughing beyond the station, of flaring gas-jets, of clattering feet of passengers getting on and off; then of some one, conductor or station-master, walking the whole length of the train; and then you are aware of an insane satisfaction in renewed flight through the darkness. You think hazily of the folk in their beds in the town left behind, who stir uneasily at the sound of your train’s departing whistle; and so all is a blank vigil or a blank slumber.

By daylight Basil and Isabel found themselves at opposite ends of the car, struggling severally with the problem of the morning’s toilet. When the combat was ended, they were surprised at the decency of their appearance, and Isabel said, “I think I’m presentable to an early Broadway public, and I’ve a fancy for not going to a hotel. Lucy will be expecting us out there before noon; and we can pass the time pleasantly enough for a few hours just wandering about.”

She was a woman who loved any cheap defiance of custom, and she had an agreeable sense of adventure in what she proposed. Besides, she felt that nothing could be more in the unconventional spirit in which they meant to make their whole journey than a stroll about New York at half-past six in the morning.

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“Delightful!” answered Basil, who was always charmed with these small originalities. “You look well enough for an evening party; and besides, you won’t meet one of your own critical class on Broadway at this hour. We will breakfast at one of those gilded metropolitan restaurants, and then go round to Leonard’s, who will be able to give us just three unhurried seconds. After that we’ll push on out to his place.”

At that early hour there were not many people astir on the wide avenue down which our friends strolled when they left the station; but in the aspect of those they saw there was something that told of a greater heat than they had yet known in Boston, and they were sensible of having reached a more southern latitude. The air, though freshened by the over-night’s storm, still wanted the briskness and sparkle and pungency of the Boston air, which is as delicious in summer as it is terrible in winter; and the faces that showed themselves were sodden from the yesterday’s heat and perspiration. A corner-grocer, seated in a sort of fierce despondency upon a keg near his shop door, had lightly equipped himself for the struggle of the day in the battered armor of the day before, and in a pair of roomy pantaloons, and a baggy shirt of neutral tint—perhaps he had made a vow not to change it whilst the siege of the hot weather lasted,—now confronted the advancing sunlight, before which the long shadows of the buildings were slowly retiring. A marketing mother of a family paused at a provision-store, and looking weakly in at the white-aproned butcher among his meats and flies, passes without an effort to purchase. Hurried and wearied shop-girls tripped by in the draperies that betrayed their sad necessity to be both fine and shabby; from a boarding-house door issued briskly one of those cool young New Yorkers whom no circumstances can oppress: breezy-coated, white-livened, clean, with a good cigar in the mouth, a light cane caught upon the elbow of one of the arms holding up the paper from which the morning’s news is snatched, whilst the person sways lightly with the walk; in the street-cars that slowly tinkled up and down were rows of people with baskets between their legs and papers before their faces; and all showed by some peculiarity of air or dress the excess of heat which they had already borne, and to which they seemed to look forward, and gave by the scantiness of their number a vivid impression of the uncounted thousands within doors prolonging, before the day’s terror began, the oblivion of sleep.

As they turned into one of the numerical streets to cross to Broadway, and found themselves in a yet deeper seclusion, Basil-began to utter in a musing tone:

> “A city against the world’s gray Prime,
> Lost in some desert, far from Time,
> Where noiseless Ages gliding through,
> Have only sifted sands and dew,
> Yet still a marble head of man
> Lying

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on all the haunted plan;
The passions of the human heart
Beating the marble breast of Art,
Were not more lone to one who first
Upon its giant silence burst,
Than this strange quiet, where the tide
Of life, upheaved on either aide,
Hangs trembling, ready soon to beat
With human waves the Morning Street."

"How lovely!" said Isabel, swiftly catching at her skirt, and deftly escaping contact with one of a long row of ash-barrels posted sentinel-like on the edge of the pavement. "Whose is it, Basil?"

"Ah! a poet's," answered her husband, "a man of whom we shall one day any of us be glad to say that we liked him before he was famous. What a nebulous sweetness the first lines have, and what a clear, cool light of day-break in the last!"

"You could have been as good a poet as that, Basil," said the ever-personal and concretely-speaking Isabel, who could not look at a mountain without thinking what Basil might have done in that way, if he had tried.

"O no, I couldn't, dear. It's very difficult being any poet at all, though it's easy to be like one. But I've done with it; I broke with the Muse the day you accepted me. She came into my office, looking so shabby,—not unlike one of those poor shop-girls; and as I was very well dressed from having just been to see you, why, you know, I felt the difference. 'Well, my dear?' said I, not quite liking the look of reproach she was giving me. 'You are groins to leave me,' she answered sadly. 'Well, yes; I suppose I must. You see the insurance business is very absorbing; and besides, it has a bad appearance, your coming about so in office hours, and in those clothes.' 'O,' she moaned out, 'you used to welcome me at all times, out in the country, and thought me prettily dressed.' 'Yes, yes; but this is Boston; and Boston makes a great difference in one's ideas; and I'm going to be married, too. Come, I don't want to seem ungrateful; we have had many pleasant times together, I own it; and I've no objections to your being present at Christmas and Thanksgiving and birthdays, but really I must draw the line there.' She gave me a look that made my heart ache, and went straight to my desk and took out of a pigeon hole a lot of papers,—odes upon your cruelty, Isabel; songs to you; sonnets, —the sonnet, a mighty poor one, I'd made the day before,—and threw them all into the grate. Then she turned to me again, signed adieu with mute lips, and passed out. I could hear the bottom wire of the poor thing's hoop-skirt clicking against each step of the stairway, as she went slowly and heavily down to the street." "O don't—don't, Basil," said his wife, "it seems like something wrong. I think you ought to have been ashamed."

“Ashamed! I was heart broken. But it had to come to that. As I got hopeful about you, the Muse became a sad bore; and more than once I found myself smiling at her when her back was turned. The Muse doesn’t like being laughed at any more than another woman would, and she would have left me shortly. No, I couldn’t be a poet like our Morning-Street friend. But see! the human wave is beginning to sprinkle the pavement with cooks and second-girls.”

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They were frowzy serving-maids and silent; each swept down her own door steps and the pavement in front of her own house, and then knocked her broom on the curbstone and vanished into the house, on which the hand of change had already fallen. It was no longer a street solely devoted to the domestic gods, but had been invaded at more than one point by the bustling deities of business in such streets the irregular, inspired doctors and doctresses come first with inordinate door-plates, then a milliner filling the parlor window with new bonnets; here even a publisher had hung his sign beside a door, through which the feet of young ladies used to trip, and the feet of little children to patter. Here and there stood groups of dwellings unmolested as yet outwardly; but even these had a certain careworn and guilty air, as if they knew themselves to be cheapish boarding-houses or furnished lodgings for gentlemen, and were trying to hide it. To these belonged the frowzy serving-women; to these the rows of ash-barrels, in which the decrepit children and mothers of the streets were clawing for bits of coal.

By the time Basil and Isabel reached Broadway there were already some omnibuses beginning their long day's travel up and down the handsome, tiresome length of that avenue; but for the most part it was empty. There was, of course, a hurry of foot-passengers upon the sidewalks, but these were sparse and uncharacteristic, for New York proper was still fast asleep. The waiter at the restaurant into which our friends stepped was so well aware of this, and so perfectly assured they were not of the city, that he could not forbear a little patronage of them, which they did not resent. He brought Basil what he had ordered in barbaric abundance, and charged for it with barbaric splendor. It is all but impossible not to wish to stand well with your waiter: I have myself been often treated with conspicuous rudeness by the tribe, yet I have never been able to withhold the 'douceur' that marked me for a gentleman in their eyes, and entitled me to their dishonorable esteem. Basil was not superior to this folly, and left the waster with the conviction that, if he was not a New Yorker, he was a high-bred man of the world at any rate.

Vexed by a sense of his own pitifulness, this man of the world continued his pilgrimage down Broadway, which even in that desert state was full of a certain interest. Troops of laborers straggled along the pavements, each with his dinner-pail in hand; and in many places the eternal building up and pulling down was already going on; carts were struggling up the slopes of vast cellars, with loads of distracting rubbish; here stood the half-demolished walls of a house, with a sad variety of wall-paper showing in the different rooms; there clinked the trowel upon the brick, yonder the hammer on the stone; overhead swung and threatened the marble block that the derrick was lifting to its place. As yet these forces of demolition and construction had the business of the street almost to themselves.

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“Why, how shabby the street is!” said Isabel, at last. When I landed, after being abroad, I remember that Broadway impressed me with its splendor.”

“Ah I but you were merely coming from Europe then; and now you arrive from Burton, and are contrasting this poor Broadway with Washington Street. Don’t be hard upon it, Isabel; every street can’t be a Boston street, you know,” said Basil. Isabel, herself a Bostonian of great intensity both by birth and conviction, believed her husband the only man able to have thoroughly baffled the malignity of the stars in causing him to be born out of Boston; yet he sometimes trifled with his hardly achieved triumph, and even showed an indifference to it, with an insincerity of which there can be no doubt whatever.

“O stuff!” she retorted, “as if I had any of that silly local pride! Though you know well enough that Boston is the best place in the world. But Basil! I suppose Broadway strikes us as so fine, on coming ashore from Europe, because we hardly expect anything of America then.”

“Well, I don’t know. Perhaps the street has some positive grandeur of its own, though it needs a multitude of people in it to bring out its best effects. I’ll allow its disheartening shabbiness and meanness in many ways; but to stand in front of Grace Church, on a clear day,—a day of late September, say,—and look down the swarming length of Broadway, on the movement and the numbers, while the Niagara roar swelled and swelled from those human rapids, was always like strong new wine to me. I don’t think the world affords such another sight; and for one moment, at such times, I’d have been willing to be an Irish councilman, that I might have some right to the pride I felt in the capital of the Irish Republic. What a fine thing it must be for each victim of six centuries of oppression to reflect that he owns at least a dozen Americans, and that, with his fellows, he rules a hundred helpless millionaires!”

Like all daughters of a free country, Isabel knew nothing about politics, and she felt that she was getting into deep water; she answered buoyantly, but she was glad to make her weariness the occasion of hailing a stage, and changing the conversation. The farther down town they went the busier the street grew; and about the Astor House, where they alighted, there was already a bustle that nothing but a fire could have created at the same hour in Boston. A little farther on the steeple of Trinity rose high into the scorching sunlight, while below, in the shadow that was darker than it was cool, slumbered the old graves among their flowers.

“How still they lie!” mused the happy wife, peering through the iron fence in passing.

“Yes, their wedding-journeys are ended, poor things!” said Basil; and through both their minds flashed the wonder if they should ever come to something like that; but it appeared so impossible that they both smiled at the absurdity.

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“It’s too early yet for Leonard,” continued Basil; “what a pity the church-yard is locked up. We could spend the time so delightfully in it. But, never mind; let us go down to the Battery,—it ’s not a very pleasant place, but it’s near, and it’s historical, and it’s open,—-where these drowsy friends of ours used to take the air when they were in the fashion, and had some occasion for the element in its freshness. You can imagine—it’s cheap—how they used to see Mr. Burr and Mr. Hamilton down there.”

All places that fashion has once loved and abandoned are very melancholy; but of all such places, I think the Battery is the most forlorn. Are there some sickly locust-trees there that cast a tremulous and decrepit shade upon the mangy grass-plots? I believe so, but I do not make sure; I am certain only of the mangy grass-plots, or rather the spaces between the paths, thinly overgrown with some kind of refuse and opprobrious weed, a stunted and pauper vegetation proper solely to the New York Battery. At that hour of the summer morning when our friends, with the aimlessness of strangers who are waiting to do something else, saw the ancient promenade, a few scant and hungry-eyed little boys and girls were wandering over this weedy growth, not playing, but moving listlessly to and fro, fantastic in the wild inaptness of their costumes. One of these little creatures wore, with an odd involuntary jauntiness, the cast-off best drew of some happier child, a gay little garment cut low in the neck and short in the sleeves, which gave her the grotesque effect of having been at a party the night before. Presently came two jaded women, a mother and a grandmother, that appeared, when they had crawled out of their beds, to have put on only so much clothing as the law compelled. They abandoned themselves upon the green stuff, whatever it was, and, with their lean hands clasped outside their knees, sat and stared, silent and hopeless, at the eastern sky, at the heart of the terrible furnace, into which in those days the world seemed cast to be burnt up, while the child which the younger woman had brought with her feebly wailed unheeded at her side. On one side of these women were the shameless houses out of which they might have crept, and which somehow suggested riotous maritime dissipation; on the other side were those houses in which had once dwelt rich and famous folk, but which were now dropping down the boarding-house scale through various un-homelike occupations to final dishonor and despair. Down nearer the water, and not far from the castle that was once a playhouse and is now the depot of emigration, stood certain express-wagons, and about these lounged a few hard-looking men. Beyond laughed and danced the fresh blue water of the bay, dotted with sails and smokestacks.

“Well,” said Basil, “I think if I could choose, I should like to be a friendless German boy, setting foot for the first time on this happy continent. Fancy his rapture on beholding this lovely spot, and these charming American faces! What a smiling aspect life in the New World must wear to his young eyes, and how his heart must leap within him!”

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“Yes, Basil; it’s all very pleasing, and thank you for bringing me. But if you don’t think of any other New York delights to show me, do let us go and sit in Leonard’s office till he comes, and then get out into the country as soon as possible.”

Basil defended himself against the imputation that he had been trying to show New York to his wife, or that he had any thought but of whiling away the long morning hours, until it should be time to go to Leonard. He protested that a knowledge of Europe made New York the most uninteresting town in America, and that it was the last place in the world where he should think of amusing himself or any one else; and then they both upbraided the city’s bigness and dullness with an enjoyment that none but Bostonians can know. They particularly derided the notion of New York’s being loved by any one. It was immense, it was grand in some ways, parts of it were exceedingly handsome; but it was too vast, too coarse, too restless. They could imagine its being liked by a successful young man of business, or by a rich young girl, ignorant of life and with not too nice a taste in her pleasures; but that it should be dear to any poet or scholar, or any woman of wisdom and refinement, that they could not imagine. They could not think of any one’s loving New York as Dante loved Florence, or as Madame de Stael loved Paris, or as Johnson loved black, homely, home-like London. And as they twittered their little dispraises, the giant Mother of Commerce was growing more and more conscious of herself, waking from her night’s sleep and becoming aware of her fleets and trains, and the myriad hands and wheels that throughout the whole sea and land move for her, and do her will even while she sleeps. All about the wedding-journeyers swelled the deep tide of life back from its night-long ebb. Broadway had filled her length with people; not yet the most characteristic New York crowd, but the not less interesting multitude of strangers arrived by the early boats and trams, and that easily distinguishable class of lately New-Yorkized people from other places, about whom in the metropolis still hung the provincial traditions of early rising; and over all, from moment to moment, the eager, audacious, well-dressed, proper life of the mighty city was beginning to prevail,—though this was not so notable where Basil and Isabel had paused at a certain window. It was the office of one of the English steamers, and he was saying, “It was by this line I sailed, you know,”—and she was interrupting him with, “When who could have dreamed that you would ever be telling me of it here?” So the old marvel was wondered over anew, till it filled the world in which there was room for nothing but the strangeness that they should have loved each other so long and not made it known, that they should ever have uttered it, and that, being uttered, it should be so much more and better than ever could have been dreamed. The broken engagement was a fable of

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disaster that only made their present fortune more prosperous. The city ceased about them, and they walked on up the street, the first man and first woman in the garden of the new-made earth. As they were both very conscious people, they recognized in themselves some sense of this, and presently drolled it away, in the opulence of a time when every moment brought some beautiful dream, and the soul could be prodigal of its bliss.

“I think if I had the naming of the animals over again, this morning, I shouldn’t call snakes ‘snakes’; should you, Eve?” laughed Basil in intricate acknowledgment of his happiness.

“O no, Adam; we’d look out all the most graceful euphemisms in the newspapers, and we wouldn’t hurt the feelings of a spider.”

II. MIDSUMMER-DAY’S DREAM.

They had waited to see Leonard, in order that they might learn better how to find his house in the country; and now, when they came in upon him at nine o’clock, he welcomed them with all his friendly heart. He rose from the pile of morning’s letters to which he had but just sat down; he placed them the easiest chairs; he made a feint of its not being a busy hour with him, and would have had them look upon his office, which was still damp and odorous from the porter’s broom, as a kind of down-town parlor; but after they had briefly accounted to his amazement for their appearance then and there, and Isabel had boasted of the original fashion in which they had that morning seen New York, they took pity on him, and bade him adieu till evening.

They crossed from Broadway to the noisome street by the ferry, and in a little while had taken their places in the train on the other side of the water.

“Don’t tell me, Basil,” said Isabel, “that Leonard travels fifty miles every day by rail going to and from his work!”

“I must, dearest, if I would be truthful.”

“Then, darling, there are worse things in this world than living up at the South End, aren’t there?” And in agreement upon Boston as a place of the greatest natural advantages, as well as all acquirable merits, with after talk that need not be recorded, they arrived in the best humor at the little country station near which the Leonards dwelt.

I must inevitably follow Mrs. Isabel thither, though I do it at the cost of the reader, who suspects the excitements which a long description of the movement would delay. The ladies were very old friends, and they had not met since Isabel’s return from Europe and

renewal of her engagement. Upon the news of this, Mrs. Leonard had swallowed with surprising ease all that she had said in blame of Basil's conduct during the rupture, and exacted a promise from her friend that she should pay her the first visit after their marriage. And now that they had come together, their only talk; was of husbands, whom they viewed in every light to which husbands could be turned,

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and still found an inexhaustible novelty in the theme. Mrs. Leonard beheld in her friend's joy the sweet reflection of her own honeymoon, and Isabel was pleased to look upon the prosperous marriage of the former as the image of her future. Thus, with immense profit and comfort, they reassured one another by every question and answer, and in their weak content lapsed far behind the representative women of our age, when husbands are at best a necessary evil, and the relation of wives to them is known to be one of pitiable subjection. When these two pretty, fogies put their heads of false hair together, they were as silly and benighted as their great-grandmothers could have been in the same circumstances, and, as I say, shamefully encouraged each other, in their absurdity. The absurdity appeared too good and blessed to be true. "Do you really suppose, Basil," Isabel would say to her oppressor, after having given him some elegant extract from the last conversation upon husbands, "that we shall get on as smoothly as the Leonards when we have been married ten years? Lucy says that things go more hitchily the first year than ever they do afterwards, and that people love each other better and better just because they've got used to it. Well, our bliss does seem a little crude and garish compared with their happiness; and yet"—she put up both her palms against his, and gave a vehement little push—"there is something agreeable about it, even at this stage of the proceedings."

"Isabel," said her husband, with severity, "this is bridal!"

"No matter! I only want to seem an old married woman to the general public. But the application of it is that you must be careful not to contradict me, or cross me in anything, so that we can be like the Leonards very much sooner than they became so. The great object is not to have any hitchiness; and you know you *are* provoking—at times."

They both educated themselves for continued and tranquil happiness by the example and precept of their friends; and the time passed swiftly in the pleasant learning, and in the novelty of the life led by the Leonards. This indeed merits a closer study than can be given here, for it is the life led by vast numbers of prosperous New Yorkers who love both the excitement of the city and the repose of the country, and who aspire to unite the enjoyment of both in their daily existence. The suburbs of the metropolis stretch landward fifty miles in every direction; and everywhere are handsome villas like Leonard's, inhabited by men like himself, whom strict study of the time-table enables to spend all their working hours in the city and all their smoking and sleeping hours in the country.

The home and the neighborhood of the Leonards put on their best looks for our bridal pair, and they were charmed. They all enjoyed the visit, said guests and hosts, they were all sorry to have it come to an end; yet they all resigned themselves to this conclusion. Practically, it had no other result than to detain the travellers into the very heart of the hot weather. In that weather it was easy to do anything that did not require

an active effort, and resignation was so natural with the mercury at ninety, that I aan not sure but there was something sinful in it.

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They had given up their cherished purpose of going to Albany by the day boat, which was represented to them in every impossible phase. It would be dreadfully crowded, and whenever it stopped the heat would be insupportable. Besides it would bring them to Albany at an hour when they must either spend the night there, or push on to Niagara by the night train. "You had better go by the evening boat. It will be light almost till you reach West Point, and you'll see all the best scenery. Then you can get a good night's rest, and start fresh in the morning." So they were counseled, and they assented, as they would have done if they had been advised: "You had better go by the morning boat. It's deliciously cool, travelling; you see the whole of the river, you reach Albany for supper, and you push through to Niagara that night and are done with it."

They took leave of Leonard at breakfast and of his wife at noon, and fifteen minutes later they were rushing from the heat of the country into the heat of the city, where some affairs and pleasures were to employ them till the evening boat should start.

Their spirits were low, for the terrible spell of the great heat brooded upon them. All abroad burned the fierce white light of the sun, in which not only the earth seemed to parch and thirst, but the very air withered, and was faint and thin to the troubled respiration. Their train was full of people who had come long journeys from broiling cities of the West, and who were dusty and ashen and reeking in the slumbers at which some of them still vainly caught. On every one lay an awful languor. Here and there stirred a fan, like the broken wing of a dying bird; now and then a sweltering young mother shifted her hot baby from one arm to another; after every station the desperate conductor swung through the long aisle and punched the ticket, which each passenger seemed to yield him with a tacit malediction; a suffering child hung about the empty tank, which could only gasp out a cindery drop or two of ice-water. The wind buffeted faintly at the windows; when the door was opened, the clatter of the rails struck through and through the car like a demoniac yell.

Yet when they arrived at the station by the ferry-side, they seemed to have entered its stifling darkness from fresh and vigorous atmosphere, so close and dead and mined with the carbonic breath of the locomotives was the air of the place. The thin old wooden walls that shut out the glare of the sun transmitted an intensified warmth; the roof seemed to hover lower and lower, and in its coal-smoked, raftery hollow to generate a heat deadlier than that poured upon it from the skies.

In a convenient place in the station hung a thermometer, before which every passenger, on going aboard the ferry-boat, paused as at a shrine, and mutely paid his devotions. At the altar of this fetich our friends also paused, and saw that the mercury was above ninety, and exulting with the pride that savages take in the cruel might of their idols, bowed their souls to the great god Heat.

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On the boat they found a place where the breath of the sea struck cool across their faces, and made them forget the thermometer for the brief time of the transit. But presently they drew near that strange, irregular row of wooden buildings and jutting piers which skirts the river on the New York aide, and before the boat's motion ceased the air grew thick and warm again, and tainted with the foulness of the street on which the buildings front. Upon this the boat's passengers issued, passing up through a gangway, on one side of which a throng of return-passengers was pent by a gate of iron barn, like a herd of wild animals. They were streaming with perspiration, and, according to their different temperaments, had faces of deep crimson or deadly pallor.

"Now the question is, my dear," said Basil when, free of the press, they lingered for a moment in the shade outside, "whether we had better walk up to Broadway, at an immediate sacrifice of fibre, and get a stage there, or take one of these cars here, and be landed a little nearer, with half the exertion. By this route we shall have sights end smells which the other can't offer us, but whichever we take we shall be sorry."

"Then I say take this," decided Isabel. "I want to be sorry upon the easiest possible terms, this weather."

They hailed the first car that passed, and got into it. Well for them both if she could have exercised this philosophy with regard to the whole day's business, or if she could have given up her plans for it, with the same resignation she had practiced in regard to the day boat! It seems to me a proof of the small advance our race has made in true wisdom, that we find it so hard to give up doing anything we have meant to do. It matters very little whether the affair is one of enjoyment or of business, we feel the same bitter need of pursuing it to the end. The mere fact of intention gives it a flavor of duty, and dutiolatry, as one may call the devotion, has passed so deeply into our life that we have scarcely a sense any more of the sweetness of even a neglected pleasure. We will not taste the fine, guilty rapture of a deliberate dereliction; the gentle sin of omission is all but blotted from the calendar of our crimes. If I had been Columbus, I should have thought twice before setting sail, when I was quite ready to do so; and as for Plymouth Rock, I should have sternly resisted the blandishments of those twin sirens, Starvation and Cold, who beckoned the Puritans shoreward, and as soon as ever I came in sight of their granite perch should have turned back to England. But it is now too late to repair these errors, and so, on one of the hottest days of last year, behold my obdurate bridal pair, in a Tenth or Twentieth Avenue horse-car, setting forth upon the fulfillment of a series of intentions, any of which had wiselier been left unaccomplished. Isabel had said they would call upon certain people in Fiftieth Street, and then

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shop slowly down, ice-creaming and staging and variously cooling and calming by the way, until they reached the ticket-office on Broadway, whence they could indefinitely betake themselves to the steamboat an hour or two before her departure. She felt that they had yielded sufficiently to circumstances and conditions already on this journey, and she was resolved that the present half-day in New York should be the half-day of her original design.

It was not the most advisable thing, as I have allowed, but it was inevitable, and it afforded them a spectacle which is by no means wanting in sublimity, and which is certainly unique,—the spectacle of that great city on a hot day, defiant of the elements, and prospering on with every form of labor, and at a terrible cost of life. The man carrying the hod to the top of the walls that rankly grow and grow as from his life's blood, will only lay down his load when he feels the mortal glare of the sun blaze in upon heart and brain; the plethoric millionaire for whom he toils will plot and plan in his office till he swoons at the desk; the trembling beast must stagger forward while the flame-faced tormentor on the box has strength to lash him on; in all those vast palaces of commerce there are ceaseless sale and purchase, packing and unpacking, lifting up and laying down, arriving and departing loads; in thousands of shops is the unspared and unsparing weariness of selling; in the street, filled by the hurry and suffering of tens of thousands, is the weariness of buying.

Their afternoon's experience was something that Basil and Isabel could, when it was past, look upon only as a kind of vision, magnificent at times, and at other times full of indignity and pain. They seemed to have dreamed of a long horse-car pilgrimage through that squalid street by the river-side, where presently they came to a market, opening upon the view hideous vistas of carnage, and then into a wide avenue, with processions of cars like their own coming and going up and down the centre of a foolish and useless breadth, which made even the tall buildings (rising gauntly up among the older houses of one or two stories) on either hand look low, and let in the sun to bake the dust that the hot breaths of wind caught up and gent swirling into the shabby shops. Here they dreamed of the eternal demolition and construction of the city, and farther on of vacant lots full of granite boulders, clambered over by goats. In their dream they had fellow-passengers, whose sufferings made them odious and whom they were glad to leave behind when they alighted from the car, and running out of the blaze of the avenue, quenched themselves in the shade of the cross-street. A little strip of shadow lay along the row of brown-stone fronts, but there were intervals where the vacant lots cast no shadow. With great bestowal of thought they studied hopelessly how to avoid these spaces as if they had been difficult torrents or vast expanses of desert sand; they crept slowly along till they came to such a place, and dashed swiftly across it, and then, fainter than before, moved on. They seemed now and then to stand at doors, and to be told that people were out and again that they were in; and they had a sense of cool dark

parlors, and the airy rustling of light-muslined ladies, of chat and of fans and ice-water, and then they came forth again; and evermore

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"The day increased from heat to heat."

At last they were aware of an end of their visits, and of a purpose to go down town again, and of seeking the nearest car by endless blocks of brown-stone fronts, which with their eternal brownstone flights of steps, and their handsome, intolerable uniformity, oppressed them like a procession of houses trying to pass a given point and never getting by. Upon these streets there was, seldom a soul to be seen, so that when their ringing at a door had evoked answer, it had startled them with a vague, sad surprise. In the distance on either hand they could see cars and carts and wagons toiling up and down the avenues, and on the next intersecting pavement sometimes a laborer with his jacket slung across his shoulder, or a dog that had plainly made up his mind to go mad. Up to the time of their getting into one of those phantasmal cars for the return down-townwards they had kept up a show of talk in their wretched dream; they had spoken of other hot days that they had known elsewhere; and they had wondered that the tragical character of heat had been so little recognized. They said that the daily New York murder might even at that moment be somewhere taking place; and that no murder of the whole homicidal year could have such proper circumstance; they morbidly wondered what that day's murder would be, and in what swarming tenement-house, or den of the assassin streets by the river-sides,—if indeed it did not befall in some such high, close-shuttered, handsome dwelling as those they passed, in whose twilight it would be so easy to strike down the master and leave him undiscovered and unmourned by the family ignorantly absent at the mountains or the seaside. They conjectured of the horror of midsummer battles, and pictured the anguish of shipwrecked men upon a tropical coast, and the grimy misery of stevedores unloading shiny cargoes of anthracite coal at city docks. But now at last, as they took seats opposite one another in the crowded car, they seemed to have drifted infinite distances and long epochs asunder. They looked hopelessly across the intervening gulf, and mutely questioned when it was and from what far city they or some remote ancestors of theirs had set forth upon a wedding journey. They bade each other a tacit farewell, and with patient, pathetic faces awaited the end of the world.

When they alighted, they took their way up through one of the streets of the great wholesale businesses, to Broadway. On this street was a throng of trucks and wagons lading and unlading; bales and boxes rose and sank by pulleys overhead; the footway was a labyrinth of packages of every shape and size: there was no flagging of the pitiless energy that moved all forward, no sign of how heavy a weight lay on it, save in the reeking faces of its helpless instruments. But when the wedding-journeyers emerged upon Broadway, the other passages and incidents of their dream faded before the superior fantasticality of the spectacle.

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It was four o'clock, the deadliest hour of the deadly summer day. The spiritless air seemed to have a quality of blackness in it, as if filled with the gloom of low-hovering wings. One half the street lay in shadow, and one half in sun; but the sunshine itself was dim, as if a heat greater than its own had smitten it with languor. Little gusts of sick, warm wind blew across the great avenue at the corners of the intersecting streets. In the upward distance, at which the journeyers looked, the loftier roofs and steeples lifted themselves dim out of the livid atmosphere, and far up and down the length of the street swept a stream of tormented life. All sorts of wheeled things thronged it, conspicuous among which rolled and jarred the gaudily painted Stages, with quivering horses driven each by a man who sat in the shade of a branching white umbrella, and suffered with a moody truculence of aspect, and as if he harbored the bitterness of death in his heart for the crowding passengers within, when one of them pulled the strap about his legs, and summoned him to halt. Most of the foot-passengers kept to the shady side, and to the unaccustomed eyes of the strangers they were not less in number than at any other time, though there were fewer women among them. Indomitably resolute of soul, they held their course with the swift pace of custom, and only here and there they showed the effect of the heat. One man, collarless, with waistcoat unbuttoned, and hat set far back from his forehead, waved a fan before his death-white flabby face, and set down one foot after the other with the heaviness of a somnambulist. Another, as they passed him, was saying huskily to the friend at his side, "I can't stand this much longer. My hands tingle as if they had gone to sleep; my heart—" But still the multitude hurried on, passing, repassing, encountering, evading, vanishing into shop-doors and emerging from them, dispersing down the side streets, and swarming out of them. It was a scene that possessed the beholder with singular fascination, and in its effect of universal lunacy, it might well have seemed the last phase of a world presently to be destroyed. They who were in it but not of it, as they fancied, though there was no reason for this,—looked on it amazed, and at last their own errands being accomplished, and themselves so far cured of the madness of purpose, they cried with one voice, that it was a hideous sight, and strove to take refuge from it in the nearest place where the soda-fountain sparkled.

It was a vain desire. At the front door of the apothecary's hung a thermometer, and as they entered they heard the next comer cry out with a maniacal pride in the affliction laid upon mankind, "Ninety-seven degrees!" Behind them at the door there poured in a ceaseless stream of people, each pausing at the shrine of heat; before he tossed off the hissing draught that two pale, close-clipped boys served them from either side of the fountain. Then in the order

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of their coming they issued through another door upon the side street, each, as he disappeared, turning his face half round, and casting a casual glance upon a little group near another counter. The group was of a very patient, half-frightened, half-puzzled looking gentleman who sat perfectly still on a stool, and of a lady who stood beside him, rubbing all over his head a handkerchief full of pounded ice, and easing one hand with the other when the first became tired. Basil drank his soda and paused to look upon this group, which he felt would commend itself to realistic sculpture as eminently characteristic of the local life, and as "The Sunstroke" would sell enormously in the hot season. "Better take a little more of that," the apothecary said, looking up from his prescription, and, as the organized sympathy of the seemingly indifferent crowd, smiling very kindly at his patient, who thereupon tasted something in the glass he held. "Do you still feel like fainting?" asked the humane authority. "Slightly, now and then," answered the other, "but I'm hanging on hard to the bottom curve of that icicled S on your soda-fountain, and I feel that I'm all right as long as I can see that. The people get rather hazy, occasionally, and have no features to speak of. But I don't know that I look very impressive myself," he added in the jesting mood which seems the natural condition of Americans in the face of all embarrassments.

"O, you'll do!" the apothecary answered, with a laugh; but he said, in answer to an anxious question from the lady, "He mustn't be moved for an hour yet," and gayly pestled away at a prescription, while she resumed her office of grinding the pounded ice round and round upon her husband's skull. Isabel offered her the commiseration of friendly words, and of looks kinder yet, and then seeing that they could do nothing, she and Basil fell into the endless procession, and passed out of the side door. "What a shocking thing!" she whispered. "Did you see how all the people looked, one after another, so indifferently at that couple, and evidently forgot them the next instant? It was dreadful. I shouldn't like to have you sun-struck in New York."

"That's very considerate of you; but place for place, if any accident must happen to me among strangers, I think I should prefer to have it in New York. The biggest place is always the kindest as well as the cruelest place. Amongst the thousands of spectators the good Samaritan as well as the Levite would be sure to be. As for a sun-stroke, it requires peculiar gifts. But if you compel me to a choice in the matter, then I say, give me the busiest part of Broadway for a sun-stroke. There is such experience of calamity there that you could hardly fall the first victim to any misfortune. Probably the gentleman at the apothecary's was merely exhausted by the heat, and ran in there for revival. The apothecary has a case of the kind on his hands every blazing afternoon, and knows just what to do. The crowd

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may be a little ‘ennuye’ of sun-strokes, and to that degree indifferent, but they most likely know that they can only do harm by an expression of sympathy, and so they delegate their pity as they have delegated their helpfulness to the proper authority, and go about their business. If a man was overcome in the middle of a village street, the blundering country druggist wouldn’t know what to do, and the tender-hearted people would crowd about so that no breath of air could reach the victim.”

“May be so, dear,” said the wife, pensively; but if anything did happen to you in New York, I should like to have the spectators look as if they saw a human being in trouble. Perhaps I’m a little exacting.”

“I think you are. Nothing is so hard as to understand that there are human beings in this world besides one’s self and one’s set. But let us be selfishly thankful that it isn’t you and I there in the apothecary’s shop, as it might very well be; and let us get to the boat as soon as we can, and end this horrible midsummer-day’s dream. We must have a carriage,” he added with tardy wisdom, hailing an empty hack, “as we ought to have had all day; though I’m not sorry, now the worst’s over, to have seen the worst.”

III. THE NIGHT BOAT.

There is little proportion about either pain or pleasure: a headache darkens the universe while it lasts, a cup of tea really lightens the spirit bereft of all reasonable consolations. Therefore I do not think it trivial or untrue to say that there is for the moment nothing more satisfactory in life than to have bought your ticket on the night boat up the Hudson and secured your state-room key an hour or two before departure, and some time even before the pressure at the clerk’s office has begun. In the transaction with this castellated baron, you have of course been treated with haughtiness, but not with ferocity, and your self-respect swells with a sense of having escaped positive insult; your key clicks cheerfully in your pocket against its gutta-percha number, and you walk up and down the gorgeously carpeted, single-columned, two-story cabin, amid a multitude of plush sofas and chairs, a glitter of glass, and a tinkle of prismatic chandeliers overhead, unawed even by the aristocratic gloom of the yellow waiters. Your own stateroom as you enter it from time to time is an ever-new surprise of splendors, a magnificent effect of amplitude, of mahogany bedstead, of lace curtains, and of marble topped wash-stand. In the mere wantonness of an unalloyed prosperity you say to the saffron nobleman nearest your door, “Bring me a pitcher of ice-water, quick, please!” and you do not find the half-hour that he is gone very long.

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If the ordinary wayfarer experiences so much pleasure from these things, then imagine the infinite comfort of our wedding-journeyers, transported from Broadway on that pitiless afternoon to the shelter and the quiet of that absurdly palatial steamboat. It was not yet crowded, and by the river-side there was almost a freshness in the air. They disposed of their troubling bags and packages; they complimented the ridiculous princeliness of their stateroom, and then they betook themselves to the sheltered space aft of the saloon, where they sat down for the tranquiller observance of the wharf and whatever should come to be seen by them. Like all people who have just escaped with their lives from some menacing calamity, they were very philosophical in spirit; and having got aboard of their own motion, and being neither of them apparently the worse for the ordeal they had passed through, were of a light, conversational temper.

“What an amusingly superb affair!” Basil cried as they glanced through an open window down the long vista of the saloon. “Good heavens! Isabel, does it take all this to get us plain republicans to Albany in comfort and safety, or are we really a nation of princes in disguise? Well, I shall never be satisfied with less hereafter,” he added. “I am spoilt for ordinary paint and upholstery from this hour; I am a ruinous spendthrift, and a humble three-story swell-front up at the South End is no longer the place for me. Dearest,

‘Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,’

never to leave this Aladdin’s-palace-like steamboat, but spend our lives in perpetual trips up and down the Hudson.”

To which not very costly banter Isabel responded in kind, and rapidly sketched the life they could lead aboard. Since they could not help it, they mocked the public provision which, leaving no interval between disgraceful squalor and ludicrous splendor, accommodates our democratic ‘menage’ to the taste of the richest and most extravagant plebeian amongst us. He, unhappily, minds danger and oppression as little as he minds money, so long as he has a spectacle and a sensation, and it is this ruthless imbecile who will have lace curtains to the steamboat berth into which he gets with his pantaloons on, and out of which he may be blown by an exploding boiler at any moment; it is he who will have for supper that overgrown and shapeless dinner in the lower saloon, and will not let any one else buy tea or toast for a less sum than he pays for his surfeit; it is he who perpetuates the insolence of the clerk and the reluctance of the waiters; it is he, in fact, who now comes out of the saloon, with his womenkind, and takes chairs under the awning where Basil and Isabel sit. Personally, he is not so bad; he is good-looking, like all of us; he is better dressed than most of us; he behaves himself quietly, if not easily; and no lord so loathes a scene. Next year he is going to Europe, where he will not show to so much advantage as here; but for the present it would be hard to say in what way he is vulgar, and perhaps vulgarity is not so common a thing after all.

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It was something besides the river that made the air so much more sufferable than it had been. Over the city, since our friends had come aboard the boat, a black cloud had gathered and now hung low upon it, while the wind from the face of the water took the dust in the neighboring streets, and frolicked it about the house-tops, and in the faces of the arriving passengers, who, as the moment of departure drew near, appeared in constantly increasing numbers and in greater variety, with not only the trepidation of going upon them, but also with the electrical excitement people feel before a tempest.

The breast of the black cloud was now zigzagged from moment to moment by lightning, and claps of deafening thunder broke from it. At last the long endurance of the day was spent, and out of its convulsion burst floods of rain, again and again sweeping the promenade-deck where the people sat, and driving them disconsolate into the saloon. The air was darkened as by night, and with many regrets for the vanishing prospect, mingled with a sense of relief from the heat, our friends felt the boat tremble away from her moorings and set forth upon her trip.

“Ah! if we had only taken the day boat!” moaned Isabel. “Now, we shall see nothing of the river landscape, and we shall never be able to put ourselves down when we long for Europe, by declaring that the scenery of the Hudson is much finer than that of the Rhine.”

Yet they resolved, this indomitably good-natured couple, that they would be just even to the elements, which had by no means been generous to them; and they owned that if so noble a storm had celebrated their departure upon some storied river from some more romantic port than New York, they would have thought it an admirable thing. Even whilst they contented themselves, the storm passed, and left a veiled and humid sky overhead, that gave a charming softness to the scene on which their eyes fell when they came out of the saloon again, and took their places with a largely increased companionship on the deck.

They had already reached that part of the river where the uplands begin, and their course was between stately walls of rocky steepness, or wooded slopes, or grassy hollows, the scene forever losing and taking grand and lovely shape. Wreaths of mist hung about the tops of the loftier headlands, and long shadows draped their sides. As the night grew, lights twinkled from a lonely house here and there in the valleys; a swarm of lamps showed a town where it lay upon the lap or at the foot of the hills. Behind them stretched the great gray river, haunted with many sails; now a group of canal-boats grappled together, and having an air of coziness in their adventure upon this strange current out of their own sluggish waters, drifted out of sight; and now a smaller and slower steamer, making a laborious show of keeping up was passed, and reluctantly fell behind; along the water’s edge rattled and hooted the frequent trains.

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They could not tell at any time what part of the river they were on, and they could not, if they would, have made its beauty a matter of conscientious observation; but all the more, therefore, they deeply enjoyed it without reference to time or place. They felt some natural pain when they thought that they might unwittingly pass the scenes that Irving has made part of the common dream-land, and they would fair have seen the lighted windows of the house out of which a cheerful ray has penetrated to so many hearts; but being sure of nothing, as they were, they had the comfort of finding the Tappan Zee in every expanse of the river, and of discovering Sunny-Side on every pleasant slope. By virtue of this helplessness, the Hudson, without ceasing to be the Hudson, became from moment to moment all fair and stately streams upon which they had voyaged or read of voyaging, from the Nile to the Mississippi. There is no other travel like river travel; it is the perfection of movement, and one might well desire never to arrive at one's destination. The abundance of room, the free, pure air, the constant delight of the eyes in the changing landscape, the soft tremor of the boat, so steady upon her keel, the variety of the little world on board,—all form a charm which no good heart in a sound body can resist. So, whilst the twilight held, well content, in contiguous chairs, they purred in flattery of their kindly fate, imagining different pleasures, certainly, but none greater, and tasting to its subtlest flavor the happiness conscious of itself.

Their own satisfaction, indeed, was so interesting to them in this objective light, that they had little desire to turn from its contemplation to the people around them; and when at last they did so, it was still with lingering glances of self-recognition and enjoyment. They divined rightly that one of the main conditions of their present felicity was the fact that they had seen so much of time and of the world, that they had no longer any desire to take beholding eyes, or to make any sort of impressive figure, and they understood that their prosperous love accounted as much as years and travel for this result. If they had had a loftier opinion of themselves, their indifference to others might have made them offensive; but with their modest estimate of their own value in the world, they could have all the comfort of self-sufficiency, without its vulgarity.

"O yes!" said Basil, in answer to some apostrophe to their bliss from Isabel, "it's the greatest imaginable satisfaction to have lived past certain things. I always knew that I was not a very handsome or otherwise captivating person, but I can remember years—-now blessedly remote—when I never could see a young girl without hoping she would mistake me for something of that sort. I couldn't help desiring that some fascination of mine, which had escaped my own analysis, would have an effect upon her. I dare say all young men are so. I

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used to live for the possible interest I might inspire in your sex, Isabel. They controlled my movements, my attitudes; they forbade me repose; and yet I believe I was no ass, but a tolerably sensible fellow. Blessed be marriage, I am free at last! All the loveliness that exists outside of you, dearest,—and it 's mighty little,—is mere pageant to me; and I thank Heaven that I can meet the most stylish girl now upon the broad level of our common humanity. Besides, it seems to me that our experience of life has quieted us in many other ways. What a luxury it is to sit here, and reflect that we do not want any of these people to suppose us rich, or distinguished, or beautiful, or well dressed, and do not care to show off in any sort of way before them!"

This content was heightened, no doubt, by a just sense of their contrast to the group of people nearest there,—a young man of the second or third quality—and two young girls. The eldest of these was carrying on a vivacious flirtation with the young man, who was apparently an acquaintance of brief standing; the other was scarcely more than a child, and sat somewhat abashed at the sparkle of the colloquy. They were conjecturally sisters going home from some visit, and not skilled in the world, but of a certain repute in their country neighborhood for beauty and wit. The young man presently gave himself out as one who, in pursuit of trade for the dry-goods house he represented, had travelled many thousands of miles in all parts of the country. The encounter was visibly that kind of adventure which both would treasure up for future celebration to their different friends; and it had a brilliancy and interest which they could not even now consent to keep to themselves. They talked to each other and at all the company within hearing, and exchanged curt speeches which had for them all the sensation of repartee.

Young Man. They say that beauty unadorned is adorned the most.

Young Woman (bridling, and twitching her head from side to side, in the high excitement of the dialogue). Flattery is out of place.

Young Man. Well, never mind. If you don't believe me, you ask your mother when you get home.

(Titter from the younger sister.)

Young Woman (scornfully). Umph! my mother has no control over me!

Young Man. Nobody else has, either, I should gay. (Admiringly.)

Young Woman. Yes, you've told the truth for once, for a wonder. I'm able to take care of myself,—perfectly. (Almost hoarse with a sense of sarcastic performance.)

Young Man. “Whole team and big dog under the wagon,” as they say out West.

Young Woman. Better a big dog than a puppy, any day.

Giggles and horror from the younger sister, sensation in the young man, and so much rapture in the young woman that she drops the key of her state-room from her hand. They both stoop, and a jocose scuffle for it ensues, after which the talk takes an autobiographical turn on the part of the young man, and drops into an unintelligible murmur. “Ah! poor Real Life, which I love, can I make others share the delight I find in thy foolish and insipid face?”

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Not far from this group sat two Hebrews, one young and the other old, talking of some business out of which the latter had retired. The younger had been asked his opinion upon some point, and he was expanding with a flattered consciousness of the elder's perception of his importance, and toadying to him with the pleasure which all young men feel in winning the favor of seniors in their vocation. "Well, as I was a-say'n', Isaac don't seem to haf no natcheral pent for the glothing business. Man gomes in and wands a goat,"—he seemed to be speaking of a garment and not a domestic animal,—-"Isaac'll zell him the goat he wands him to puy, and he'll make him believe it 'a the goat he was a lookin' for. Well, now, that's well enough as far as it goes; but you know and I know, Mr. Rosenthal, that that 's no way to do business. A man gan't zugzeed that goes upon that brincible. Id's wrong. Id's easy enough to make a man puy the goat you want him to, if he wands a goat, but the thing is to make him puy the goat that you wand to zell when he don't wand no goat at all. You've asked me what I thought and I've dold you. Isaac'll never zugzeed in the redail glothing-business in the world!"

"Well," sighed the elder, who filled his armchair quite full, and quivered with a comfortable jelly-like tremor in it, at every pulsation of the engine, "I was afraid of something of the kind. As you say, Benjamin, he don't seem to have no pent for it. And yet I proughd him up to the business; I drained him to it, myself."

Besides these talkers, there were scattered singly, or grouped about in twos and threes and fours, the various people one encounters on a Hudson River boat, who are on the whole different from the passengers on other rivers, though they all have features in common. There was that man of the sudden gains, who has already been typified; and there was also the smoother rich man of inherited wealth, from whom you can somehow know the former so readily. They were each attended by their several retinues of womankind, the daughters all much alike, but the mothers somewhat different. They were going to Saratoga, where perhaps the exigencies of fashion would bring them acquainted, and where the blue blood of a quarter of a century would be kind to the yesterday's fluid of warmer hue. There was something pleasanter in the face of the hereditary aristocrat, but not so strong, nor, altogether, so admirable; particularly if you reflected that he really represented nothing in the world, no great culture, no political influence, no civic aspiration, not even a pecuniary force, nothing but a social set, an alien club-life, a tradition of dining. We live in a true fairy land after all, where the hoarded treasure turns to a heap of dry leaves. The almighty dollar defeats itself, and finally buys nothing that a man cares to have. The very highest pleasure that such an American's money can purchase is exile, and to this rich man doubtless Europe is a twice-told tale. Let us clap our empty pockets, dearest reader, and be glad.

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We can be as glad, apparently, and with the same reason as the poorly dressed young man standing near beside the guard, whose face Basil and Isabel chose to fancy that of a poet, and concerning whom, they romanced that he was going home, wherever his home was, with the manuscript of a rejected book in his pocket. They imagined him no great things of a poet, to be sure, but his pensive face claimed delicate feeling for him, and a graceful, sombre fancy, and they conjectured unconsciously caught flavors of Tennyson and Browning in his verse, with a moderner tint from Morris: for was it not a story out of mythology, with gods and heroes of the nineteenth century, that he was now carrying back from New York with him? Basil sketched from the colors of his own long-accepted disappointments a moving little picture of this poor imagined poet's adventures; with what kindness and unkindness he had been put to shame by publishers, and how, descending from his high, hopes of a book, he had tried to sell to the magazines some of the shorter pieces out of the "And other Poems" which were to have filled up the volume. "He's going back rather stunned and bewildered; but it's something to have tasted the city, and its bitter may turn to sweet on his palate, at last, till he finds himself longing for the tumult that he abhors now. Poor fellow! one compassionate cut-throat of a publisher even asked him to lunch, being struck, as we are, with something fine in his face. I hope he's got somebody who believes in him, at home. Otherwise he'd be more comfortable, for the present, if he went over the railing there."

So the play of which they were both actors and spectators went on about them. Like all passages of life, it seemed now a grotesque mystery, with a bluntly enforced moral, now a farce of the broadest, now a latent tragedy folded in the disguises of comedy. All the elements, indeed, of either were at work there, and this was but one brief scene of the immense complex drama which was to proceed so variously in such different times and places, and to have its denouement only in eternity. The contrasts were sharp: each group had its travesty in some other; the talk of one seemed the rude burlesque, the bitter satire of the next; but of all these parodies none was so terribly effective as the two women, who sat in the midst of the company, yet were somehow distinct from the rest. One wore the deepest black of widowhood, the other was dressed in bridal white, and they were both alike awful in their mockery of guiltless sorrow and guiltless joy. They were not old, but the soul of youth was dead in their pretty, lamentable faces, and ruin ancient as sin looked from their eyes; their talk and laughter seemed the echo of an innumerable multitude of the lost haunting the world in every land and time, each solitary forever, yet all bound together in the unity of an imperishable slavery and shame.

What a stale effect! What hackneyed characters! Let us be glad the night drops her curtain upon the cheap spectacle, and shuts these with the other actors from our view.

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Within the cabin, through which Basil and Isabel now slowly moved, there were numbers of people lounging about on the sofas, in various attitudes of talk or vacancy; and at the tables there were others reading “Lothair,” a new book in the remote epoch of which I write, and a very fashionable book indeed. There was in the air that odor of paint and carpet which prevails on steamboats; the glass drops of the chandeliers ticked softly against each other, as the vessel shook with her respiration, like a comfortable sleeper, and imparted a delicious feeling of coziness and security to our travellers.

A few hours later they struggled awake at the sharp sound of the pilot’s bell signaling the engineer to slow the boat. There was a moment of perfect silence; then all the drops of the chandeliers in the saloon clashed musically together; then fell another silence; and at last came wild cries for help, strongly qualified with blasphemies and curses. “Send out a boat!” “There was a woman aboard that steamboat!” “Lower your boats!” “Run a craft right down, with your big boat!” “Send out a boat and pick up the crew!” The cries rose and sank, and finally ceased; through the lattice of the state-room window some lights shone faintly on the water at a distance.

“Wait here, Isabel!” said her husband. “We’ve run down a boat. We don’t seem hurt; but I’ll go see. I’ll be back in a minute.”

Isabel had emerged into a world of dishabille, a world wildly unbuttoned and unlaced, where it was the fashion for ladies to wear their hair down their backs, and to walk about in their stockings, and to speak to each other without introduction. The place with which she had felt so familiar a little while before was now utterly estranged. There was no motion of the boat, and in the momentary suspense a quiet prevailed, in which those grotesque shapes of disarray crept noiselessly round whispering panic-stricken conjectures. There was no rushing to and fro, nor tumult of any kind, and there was not a man to be seen, for apparently they had all gone like Basil to learn the extent of the calamity. A mist of sleep involved the whole, and it was such a topsy-turvy world that it would have seemed only another dream-land, but that it was marked for reality by one signal fact. With the rest appeared the woman in bridal white and the woman in widow’s black, and there, amidst the fright that made all others friends, and for aught that most knew, in the presence of death itself, these two moved together shunned and friendless.

Somehow, even before Basil returned, it had become known to Isabel and the rest that their own steamer had suffered no harm, but that she had struck and sunk another convoying a flotilla of canal boats, from which those alarming cries and curses had come. The steamer was now lying by for the small boats she had sent out to pick up the crew of the sunken vessel.

“Why, I only heard a little tinkling of the chandeliers,” said one of the ladies. “Is it such a very alight matter to run down another boat and sink it?”

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She appealed indirectly to Basil, who answered lightly, “I don’t think you ladies ought to have been disturbed at all. In running over a common tow-boat on a perfectly clear night like this there should have been no noise and no perceptible jar. They manage better on the Mississippi, and both boats often go down without waking the lightest sleeper on board.”

The ladies, perhaps from a deficient sense of humor, listened with undisguised displeasure to this speech. It dispersed them, in fact; some turned away to bivouac for the rest of the night upon the arm-chairs and sofas, while others returned to their rooms. With the latter went Isabel. “Lock me in, Basil,” she said, with a bold meekness, “and if anything more happens don’t wake me till the last moment.” It was hard to part from him, but she felt that his vigil would somehow be useful to the boat, and she confidingly fell into a sleep that lasted till daylight.

Meantime, her husband, on whom she had tacitly devolved so great a responsibility, went forward to the promenade in front of the saloon, in hopes of learning something more of the catastrophe from the people whom he had already found gathered there.

A large part of the passengers were still there, seated or standing about in earnest colloquy. They were in that mood which follows great excitement, and in which the feeblest-minded are sure to lead the talk. At such times one feels that a sensible frame of mind is unsympathetic, and if expressed, unpopular, or perhaps not quite safe; and Basil, warned by his fate with the ladies, listened gravely to the voice of the common imbecility and incoherence.

The principal speaker was a tall person, wearing a silk travelling-cap. He had a face of stupid benignity and a self-satisfied smirk; and he was formally trying to put at his ease, and hopelessly confusing the loutish youth before him. “You say you saw the whole accident, and you’re probably the only passenger that did see it. You’ll be the most important witness at the trial,” he added, as if there would ever be any trial about it. “Now, how did the tow-boat hit us?”

“Well, she came bows on.”

“Ah! bows on,” repeated the other, with great satisfaction; and a little murmur of “Bows on!” ran round the listening circle.

“That is,” added the witness, “it seemed as if we struck her amidships, and cut her in two, and sunk her.”

“Just so,” continued the examiner, accepting the explanation, “bows on. Now I want to ask if you saw our captain or any of the crew about?”

“Not a soul,” said the witness, with the solemnity of a man already on oath.

“That’ll do,” exclaimed the other. “This gentleman’s experience coincides exactly with my own. I didn’t see the collision, but I did see the cloud of steam from the sinking boat, and I saw her go down. There wasn’t an officer to be found anywhere on board our boat. I looked about for the captain and the mate myself, and couldn’t find either of them high or low.”

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“The officers ought all to have been sitting here on the promenade deck,” suggested one ironical spirit in the crowd, but no one noticed him.

The gentleman in the silk travelling-cap now took a chair, and a number of sympathetic listeners drew their chairs about him, and then began an interchange of experience, in which each related to the last particular all that he felt, thought, and said, and, if married, what his wife felt, thought, and said, at the moment of the calamity. They turned the disaster over and over in their talk, and rolled it under their tongues. Then they reverted to former accidents in which they had been concerned; and the silk-capped gentleman told, to the common admiration, of a fearful escape of his, on the Erie Road, from being thrown down a steep embankment fifty feet high by a piece of rock that had fallen on the track. “Now just see, gentlemen, what a little thing, humanly speaking, life depends upon. If that old woman had been able to sleep, and hadn’t sent that boy down to warn the train, we should have run into the rock and been dashed to pieces. The passengers made up a purse for the boy, and I wrote a full account of it to the papers.”

“Well,” said one of the group, a man in a hard hat, “I never lie down on a steamboat or a railroad train. I want to be ready for whatever happens.”

The others looked at this speaker with interest, as one who had invented a safe method of travel.

“I happened to be up to-night, but I almost always undress and go to bed, just as if I were in my own house,” said the gentleman of the silk cap.

“I don’t say your way isn’t the best, but that’s my way.”

The champions of the rival systems debated their merits with suavity and mutual respect, but they met with scornful silence a compromising spirit who held that it was better to throw off your coat and boots, but keep your pantaloons on. Meanwhile, the steamer was hanging idle upon the current, against which it now and then stirred a careless wheel, still waiting for the return of the small boats. Thin gray clouds, through rifts of which a star sparkled keenly here and there, veiled the heavens; shadowy bluffs loomed up on either hand; in a hollow on the left twinkled a drowsy little town; a beautiful stillness lay on all.

After an hour’s interval a shout was heard from far down the river; then later the plash of oars; then a cry hailing the approaching boats, and the answer, “All safe!” Presently the boats had come alongside, and the passengers crowded down to the guard to learn the details of the search. Basil heard a hollow, moaning, gurgling sound, regular as that of the machinery, for some note of which he mistook it. “Clear the gangway there!” shouted a gruff voice; “man scalded here!” And a burden was carried by from which fluttered, with its terrible regularity, that utterance of mortal anguish.

Basil went again to the forward promenade, and sat down to see the morning come.

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The boat swiftly ascended the current, and presently the steeper shores were left behind and the banks fell away in long upward sloping fields, with farm-houses and with stacks of harvest dimly visible in the generous expanses. By and by they passed a fisherman drawing his nets, and bending from his boat, there near Albany, N. Y., in the picturesque immortal attitudes of Raphael's Galilean fisherman; and now a flush mounted the pale face of the east, and through the dewy coolness of the dawn there came, more to the sight than any other sense, a vague menace of heat. But as yet the air was deliciously fresh and sweet, and Basil bathed his weariness in it, thinking with a certain luxurious compassion of the scalded man, and how he was to fare that day. This poor wretch seemed of another order of beings, as the calamitous always seem to the happy, and Basil's pity was quite an abstraction; which, again, amused and shocked him, and he asked his heart of bliss to consider of sorrow a little more earnestly as the lot of all men, and not merely of an alien creature here and there. He dutifully tried to imagine another issue to the disaster of the night, and to realize himself suddenly bereft of her who so filled his life. He bade his soul remember that, in the security of sleep, Death had passed them both so close that his presence might well have chilled their dreams, as the iceberg that grazes the ship in the night freezes all the air about it. But it was quite idle: where love was, life only was; and sense and spirit alike put aside the burden that he would have laid upon them; his revery reflected with delicious caprice the looks, the tones, the movements that he loved, and bore him far away from the sad images that he had invited to mirror themselves in it.

IV. A DAY'S RAILROADING

Happiness has commonly a good appetite; and the thought of the fortunately ended adventures of the night, the fresh morning air, and the content of their own hearts, gifted our friends, by the time the boat reached Albany, with a wholesome hunger, so that they debated with spirit the question of breakfast and the best place of breakfasting in a city which neither of them knew, save in the most fugitive and sketchy way.

They decided at last, in view of the early departure of the train, and the probability that they would be more hurried at a hotel, to breakfast at the station, and thither they went and took places at one of the many tables within, where they seemed to have been expected only by the flies. The waitress plainly had not looked for them, and for a time found their presence so incredible that she would not acknowledge the rattling that Basil was obliged to make on his glass. Then it appeared that the cook would not believe in them, and he did not send them, till they were quite faint, the peppery and muddy draught which impudently affected to be coffee, the oily slices of fugacious potatoes slipping about in their shallow dish and skillfully evading pursuit, the pieces of beef that simulated steak, the hot, greasy biscuit, steaming evilly up into the face when opened, and then soddening into masses of condensed dyspepsia.

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The wedding-journeyers looked at each other with eyes of sad amaze. They bowed themselves for a moment to the viands, and then by an equal impulse refrained. They were sufficiently young, they were happy, they were hungry; nature is great and strong, but art is greater, and before these triumphs of the cook at the Albany depot appetite succumbed. By a terrible tour de force they swallowed the fierce and turbid liquor in their cups, and then speculated fantastically upon the character and history of the materials of that breakfast.

Presently Isabel paused, played a little with her knife, and, after a moment looked up at her husband with an arch regard and said: "I was just thinking of a small station somewhere in the South of France where our train once stopped for breakfast. I remember the freshness and brightness of everything on the little tables,—the plates, the napkins, the gleaming half-bottles of wine. They seemed to have been preparing that breakfast for us from the beginning of time, and we were hardly seated before they served us with great cups of 'cafe-au-lait', and the sweetest rolls and butter; then a delicate cutlet, with an unspeakable gravy, and potatoes,—such potatoes! Dear me, how little I ate of it! I wish, for once, I'd had your appetite, Basil; I do indeed."

She ended with a heartless laugh, in which, despite the tragical contrast her words had suggested, Basil finally joined. So much amazement had probably never been got before out of the misery inflicted in that place; but their lightness did not at all commend them. The waitress had not liked it from the first, and had served them with reluctance; and the proprietor did not like it, and kept his eye upon them as if he believed them about to escape without payment. Here, then, they had enforced a great fact of travelling,—that people who serve the public are kindly and pleasant in proportion as they serve it well. The unjust and the inefficient have always that consciousness of evil which will not let a man forgive his victim, or like him to be cheerful.

Our friends, however, did not heat themselves over the fact. There was already such heat from without, even at eight o'clock in the morning, that they chose to be as cool as possible in mind, and they placidly took their places in the train, which had been made up for departure. They had deliberately rejected the notion of a drawing-room car as affording a less varied prospect of humanity, and as being less in the spirit of ordinary American travel. Now, in reward, they found themselves quite comfortable in the common passenger-car, and disposed to view the scenery, into which they struck an hour after leaving the city, with much complacency. There was sufficient draught through the open window to make the heat tolerable, and the great brooding warmth gave to the landscape the charm which it alone can impart. It is a landscape that I greatly love for its mild beauty and tranquil

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picturesqueness, and it is in honor of our friends that I say they enjoyed it. There are nowhere any considerable hills, but everywhere generous slopes and pleasant hollows and the wide meadows of a grazing country, with the pretty brown Mohawk River rippling down through all, and at frequent intervals the life of the canal, now near, now far away, with the lazy boats that seem not to stir, and the horses that the train passes with a whirl, and, leaves slowly stepping forward and swiftly slipping backward. There are farms that had once, or still have, the romance to them of being Dutch farms,—if there is any romance in that,—and one conjectures a Dutch thrift in their waving grass and grain. Spaces of woodland here and there dapple the slopes, and the cozy red farm-houses repose by the side of their capacious red barns. Truly, there is no ground on which to defend the idleness, and yet as the train strives furiously onward amid these scenes of fertility and abundance, I like in fancy to loiter behind it, and to saunter at will up and down the landscape. I stop at the farm-yard gates, and sit upon the porches or thresholds, and am served with cups of buttermilk by old Dutch ladies who have done their morning's work and have leisure to be knitting or sewing; or if there are no old ladies, with decent caps upon their gray hair, then I do not complain if the drink is brought me by some red-cheeked, comely young girl, out of Washington Irving's pages, with no cap on her golden braids, who mirrors my diffidence, and takes an attitude of pretty awkwardness while she waits till I have done drinking. In the same easily contented spirit as I lounge through the barn-yard, if I find the old hens gone about their family affairs, I do not mind a meadow-lark's singing in the top of the elm-tree beside the pump. In these excursions the watch-dogs know me for a harmless person, and will not open their eyes as they lie coiled up in the sun before the gate. At all the places, I have the people keep bees, and, in the garden full of worthy pot-herbs, such idlers in the vegetable world as hollyhocks and larkspurs and four-o'clocks, near a great bed in which the asparagus has gone to sleep for the season with a dream of delicate spray hanging over it. I walk unmolested through the farmer's tall grass, and ride with him upon the perilous seat of his voluble mowing-machine, and learn to my heart's content that his name begins with Van, and that his family has owned that farm ever since the days of the Patroon; which I dare say is not true. Then I fall asleep in a corner of the hayfield, and wake up on the tow-path of the canal beside that wonderfully lean horse, whose bones you cannot count only, because they are so many. He never wakes up, but, with a faltering under-lip and half-shut eyes, hobbles stiffly on, unconscious of his anatomical interest. The captain hospitably asks me on board, with a twist of the rudder swinging the stern of the boat up to the path, so that I can

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step on. She is laden with flour from the valley of the Genesee, and may have started on her voyage shortly after the canal was made. She is succinctly manned by the captain, the driver, and the cook, a fiery-haired lady of imperfect temper; and the cabin, which I explore, is plainly furnished with a cook-stove and a flask of whiskey. Nothing but profane language is allowed on board; and so, in a life of wicked jollity and ease, we glide imperceptibly down the canal, unvexed by the far-off future of arrival.

Such, I say, are my own unambitious mental pastimes, but I am aware that less superficial spirits could not be satisfied with them, and I can not pretend that my wedding-journeyers were so.

They cast an absurd poetry over the landscape; they invited themselves to be reminded of passages of European travel by it; and they placed villas and castles and palaces upon all the eligible building-sites. Ashamed of these devices, presently, Basil patriotically tried to reconstruct the Dutch and Indian past of the Mohawk Valley, but here he was foiled by the immense ignorance of his wife, who, as a true American woman, knew nothing of the history of her own country, and less than nothing of the barbarous regions beyond the borders of her native province. She proved a bewildering labyrinth of error concerning the events which Basil mentioned; and she had never even heard of the massacres by the French and Indians at Schenectady, which he in his boyhood had known so vividly that he was scalped every night in his dreams, and woke up in the morning expecting to see marks of the tomahawk on the head-board. So, failing at last to extract any sentiment from the scenes without, they turned their faces from the window, and looked about them for amusement within the car.

It was in all respects an ordinary carful of human beings, and it was perhaps the more worthy to be studied on that account. As in literature the true artist will shun the use even of real events if they are of an improbable character, so the sincere observer of man will not desire to look upon the heroic or occasional phases, but will seek him in his habitual moods of vacancy and tiresomeness. To me, at any rate, he is at such times very precious; and I never perceive him to be so much a man and a brother as when I feel the pressure of his vast, natural, unaffected dullness. Then I am able to enter confidently into his life and inhabit there, to think his shallow and feeble thoughts, to be moved by his dumb, stupid desires, to be dimly illumined by his stinted inspirations, to share his foolish prejudices, to practice his obtuse selfishness. Yes, it is a very amusing world, if you do not refuse to be amused; and our friends were very willing to be entertained. They delighted in the precise, thick-fingered old ladies who bought sweet apples of the boys come aboard with baskets, and who were so long in finding the right change, that our travellers, leaping in thought with the boys

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from the moving train, felt that they did so at the peril of their lives. Then they were interested in people who went out and found their friends waiting for them, or else did not find them, and wandered disconsolately up and down before the country stations, carpet-bag in hand; in women who came aboard, and were awkwardly shaken hands with or sheepishly kissed by those who hastily got seats for them, and placed their bags or their babies in their laps, and turned for a nod at the door; in young ladies who were seen to places by young men the latter seemed not to care if the train did go off with them, and then threw up their windows and talked with girl-friends, on the platform without, till the train began to move, and at last turned with gleaming eyes and moist red lips, and panted hard in the excitement of thinking about it, and could not calm themselves to the dull level of the travel around them; in the conductor, coldly and inaccessibly vigilant, as he went his rounds, reaching blindly for the tickets with one hand while he bent his head from time, to time, and listened with a faint, sarcastic smile to the questions of passengers who supposed they were going to get some information out of him; in the trainboy, who passed through on his many errands with prize candies, gum-drops, pop-corn, papers and magazines, and distributed books and the police journals with a blind impartiality, or a prodigious ignorance, or a supernatural perception of character in those who received them.

A through train from East to West presents some peculiar features as well as the traits common to all railway travel; and our friends decided that this was not a very well-dressed company, and would contrast with the people on an express-train between Boston and New York to no better advantage than these would show beside the average passengers between London and Paris. And it seems true that on a westering' line, the blacking fades gradually from the boots, the hat softens and sinks, the coat loses its rigor of cut, and the whole person lounges into increasing informality of costume. I speak of the undressful sex alone: woman, wherever she is, appears in the last attainable effects of fashion, which are now all but telegraphic and universal. But most of the passengers here were men, and they mere plainly of the free-and easy West rather than the dapper East. They wore faces thoughtful with the problem of buying cheap and selling dear, and they could be known by their silence from the loquacious, acquaintance-making way-travellers. In these, the mere coming aboard seemed to beget an aggressively confidential mood. Perhaps they clutched recklessly at any means of relieving their ennui; or they felt that they might here indulge safely in the pleasures of autobiography, so dear to all of us; or else, in view of the many possible catastrophes, they desired to leave some little memory of themselves behind. At any rate, whenever the train stopped, the wedding-journeyers caught fragments of the personal

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histories of their fellow-passengers which had been rehearsing to those that sat next the narrators. It was no more than fair that these should somewhat magnify themselves, and put the best complexion on their actions and the worst upon their sufferings; that they should all appear the luckiest or the unluckiest, the healthiest or the sickest, people that ever were, and should all have made or lost the most money. There was a prevailing desire among them to make out that they came from or were going to same very large place; and our friends fancied an actual mortification in the face of a modest gentleman who got out at Penelope (or some other insignificant classical station, in the ancient Greek and Roman part of New York State), after having listened to the life of a somewhat rustic-looking person who had described himself as belonging near New York City.

Basil also found diversion in the tender couples, who publicly comported themselves as if in a sylvan solitude, and, as it had been on the bank of some umbrageous stream, far from the ken of envious or unsympathetic eyes, reclined upon each other's shoulders and slept; but Isabel declared that this behavior was perfectly indecent. She granted, of course, that they were foolish, innocent people, who meant no offense, and did not feel guilty of an impropriety, but she said that this sort of thing was a national reproach. If it were merely rustic lovers, she should not care so much; but you saw people who ought to know better, well-dressed, stylish people, flaunting their devotion in the face of the world, and going to sleep on each other's shoulders on every railroad train. It was outrageous, it was scandalous, it was really infamous. Before she would allow herself to do such a thing she would—well, she hardly knew what she would not do; she would have a divorce, at any rate. She wondered that Basil could laugh at it; and he would make her hate him if he kept on.

From the seat behind their own they were now made listeners to the history of a ten weeks' typhoid fever, from the moment when the narrator noticed that he had not felt very well for a day or two back, and all at once a kind of shiver took him, till he lay fourteen days perfectly insensible, and could eat nothing but a little pounded ice—and his wife—a small woman, too—used to lift him back and forth between the bed and sofa like a feather, and the neighbors did not know half the time whether he was dead or alive. This history, from which not the smallest particular or the least significant symptom of the case was omitted, occupied an hour in recital, and was told, as it seemed, for the entertainment of one who had been five minutes before it began a stranger to the historian.

At last the train came to a stand, and Isabel wailed forth in accents of desperation the words, "O, disgusting!" The monotony of the narrative in the seat behind, fatally combining with the heat of the day, had lulled her into slumbers from which she awoke at the stopping of the train, to find her head resting tenderly upon her husband's shoulder.

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She confronted his merriment with eyes of mournful rebuke; but as she could not find him, or the harshest construction, in the least to blame, she was silent.

“Never mind, dear, never mind,” he coaxed, “you were really not responsible. It was fatigue, destiny, the spite of fortune,—whatever you like. In the case of the others, whom you despise so justly, I dare say it is sheer, disgraceful affection. But see that ravishing placard, swinging from the roof: ’This train stops twenty minutes for dinner at Utica.’ In a few minutes more we shall be at Utica. If they have anything edible there, it shall never contract my powers. I could dine at the Albany station, even.”

In a little while they found themselves in an airy, comfortable dining-room, eating a dinner, which it seemed to them France in the flush of her prosperity need not have blushed to serve; for if it wanted a little in the last graces of art, it redeemed itself in abundance, variety, and wholesomeness. At the elbow of every famishing passenger stood a beneficent coal-black glossy fairy, in a white linen apron and jacket, serving him with that alacrity and kindliness and grace which make the negro waiter the master, not the slave of his calling, which disenthrall it of servility, and constitute him your eager host, not your menial, for the moment. From table to table passed a calming influence in the person of the proprietor, who, as he took his richly earned money, checked the rising fears of the guests by repeated proclamations that there was plenty of time, and that he would give them due warning before the train started. Those who had flocked out of the cars, to prey with beak and claw, as the vulture-like fashion is, upon everything in reach, remained to eat like Christians; and even a poor, scantily-Englished Frenchman, who wasted half his time in trying to ask how long the cars stopped and in looking at his watch, made a good dinner in spite of himself.

“O Basil, Basil!” cried Isabel, when the train was again in motion, “have we really dined once more? It seems too good to be true. Cleanliness, plenty, wholesomeness, civility! Yes, as you say, they cannot be civil where they are not just; honesty and courtesy go together; and wherever they give you outrageous things to eat, they add indigestible insults. Basil, dear, don’t be jealous; I shall never meet him again; but I’m in love with that black waiter at our table. I never saw such perfect manners, such a winning and affectionate politeness. He made me feel that every mouthful I ate was a personal favor to him. What a complete gentleman. There ought never to be a white waiter. None but negroes are able to render their service a pleasure and distinction to you.”

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So they prattled on, doing, in their eagerness to be satisfied, a homage perhaps beyond its desert to the good dinner and the decent service of it. But here they erred in the right direction, and I find nothing more admirable in their behavior throughout a wedding journey which certainly had its trials, than their willingness to make the very heat of whatever would suffer itself to be made anything at all of. They celebrated its pleasures with magnanimous excess, they passed over its griefs with a wise forbearance. That which they found the most difficult of management was the want of incident for the most part of the time; and I who write their history might also sink under it, but that I am supported by the fact that it is so typical, in this respect. I even imagine that ideal reader for whom one writes as yawning over these barren details with the life-like weariness of an actual travelling companion of theirs. Their own silence often sufficed my wedded lovers, or then, when there was absolutely nothing to engage them, they fell back upon the story of their love, which they were never tired of hearing as they severally knew it. Let it not be a reproach to human nature or to me if I say that there was something in the comfort of having well dined which now touched the springs of sentiment with magical effect, and that they had never so rejoiced in these tender reminiscences.

They had planned to stop over at Rochester till the morrow, that they might arrive at Niagara by daylight, and at Utica they had suddenly resolved to make the rest of the day's journey in a drawing-room car. The change gave them an added reason for content; and they realized how much they had previously sacrificed to the idea of travelling in the most American manner, without achieving it after all, for this seemed a touch of Americanism beyond the old-fashioned car. They reclined in luxury upon the easy-cushioned, revolving chairs; they surveyed with infinite satisfaction the elegance of the flying-parlor in which they sat, or turned their contented regard through the broad plate-glass windows upon the landscape without. They said that none but Americans or enchanted princes in the "Arabian Nights" ever travelled in such state; and when the stewards of the car came round successively with tropical fruits, ice-creams, and claret-punches, they felt a heightened assurance that they were either enchanted princes—or Americans. There were more ladies and more fashion than in the other cars; and prettily dressed children played about on the carpet; but the general appearance of the passengers hardly suggested greater wealth than elsewhere; and they were plainly in that car because they were of the American race, which finds nothing too good for it that its money can buy.

V. THE ENCHANTED CITY, AND BEYOND.

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They knew none of the hotels in Rochester, and they had chosen a certain one in reliance upon their handbook. When they named it, there stepped forth a porter of an incredibly cordial and pleasant countenance, who took their travelling-bags, and led them to the omnibus. As they were his only passengers, the porter got inside with them, and seeing their interest in the streets through which they rode, he descanted in a strain of cheerful pride upon the city's prosperity and character, and gave the names of the people who lived in the finer houses, just as if it had been an Old-World town, and he some eager historian expecting reward for his comment upon it. He cast quite a glamour over Rochester, so that in passing a body of water, bordered by houses, and overlooked by odd balconies and galleries, and crossed in the distance by a bridge upon which other houses were built, they boldly declared, being at their wit's end for a comparison, and taken with the unhoped-for picturesqueness, that it put them in mind of Verona. Thus they reached their hotel in almost a spirit of foreign travel, and very willing to verify the pleasant porter's assurance that they would like it, for everybody liked it; and it was with a sudden sinking of the heart that Basil beheld presiding over the register the conventional American hotel clerk. He was young, he had a neat mustache and well-brushed hair; jeweled studs sparkled in his shirt-front, and rings on his white hands; a gentle disdain of the travelling public breathed from his person in the mystical odors of Ihlang ihlang. He did not lift his haughty head to look at the wayfarer who meekly wrote his name in the register; he did not answer him when he begged for a cool room; he turned to the board on which the keys hung, and, plucking one from it, slid it towards Basil on the marble counter, touched a bell for a call-boy, whistled a bar of Offenbach, and as he wrote the number of the room against Basil's name, said to a friend lounging near him, as if resuming a conversation, "Well, she's a mighty pooty gul, any way, Chawley!"

When I reflect that this was a type of the hotel clerk throughout the United States, that behind unnumbered registers at this moment he is snubbing travellers into the dust, and that they are suffering and perpetuating him, I am lost in wonder at the national meekness. Not that I am one to refuse the humble pie his jeweled fingers offer me. Abjectly I take my key, and creep off up stairs after the call-boy, and try to give myself the genteel air of one who has not been stepped upon. But I think homicidal things all the same, and I rejoice that in the safety of print I can cry out against the despot, whom I have not the presence to defy. "You vulgar and cruel little soul," I say, and I imagine myself breathing the words to his teeth, "why do you treat a weary stranger with this ignominy? I am to pay well for what I get, and I shall not complain of that. But look at me, and own my humanity; confess by some civil action, by some decent phrase, that I have rights and that they shall be respected. Answer my proper questions; respond to my fair demands. Do not slide my key at me; do not deny me the poor politeness of a nod as you give it in my hand. I am not your equal; few men are; but I shall not presume upon your clemency. Come, I also am human!"

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Basil found that, for his sin in asking for a cool room, the clerk had given them a chamber into which the sun had been shining the whole afternoon; but when his luggage had been put in it seemed useless to protest, and like a true American, like you, like me, he shrank from asserting himself. When the sun went down it would be cool enough; and they turned their thoughts to supper, not venturing to hope that, as it proved, the handsome clerk was the sole blemish of the house.

Isabel viewed with innocent surprise the evidences of luxury afforded by all the appointments of a hotel so far west of Boston, and they both began to feel that natural ease and superiority which an inn always inspires in its guests, and which our great hotels, far from impairing, enhance in flattering degree; in fact, the clerk once forgotten, I protest, for my own part, I am never more conscious of my merits and riches in any other place. One has there the romance of being a stranger and a mystery to every one else, and lives in the alluring possibility of not being found out a most ordinary person.

They were so late in coming to the supper-room, that they found themselves alone in it. At the door they had a bow from the head-waiter, who ran before them and drew out chairs for them at a table, and signaled waiters to serve them, first laying before them with a gracious flourish the bill of fare.

A force of servants flocked about them, as if to contest the honor of ordering their supper; one set upon the table a heaping vase of strawberries, another flanked it with flagons of cream, a third accompanied it with Gates of varied flavor and device; a fourth obsequiously smoothed the table-cloth; a fifth, the youngest of the five, with folded arms stood by and admired the satisfaction the rest were giving. When these had been dispatched for steak, for broiled white-fish of the lakes,—noblest and delicatest of the fish that swim,—for broiled chicken, for fried potatoes, for mums, for whatever the lawless fancy, and ravening appetites of the wayfarers could suggest, this fifth waiter remained to tempt them to further excess, and vainly proposed some kind of eggs,—-fried eggs, poached eggs, scrambled eggs, boiled eggs, or omelette.

“O, you’re sure, dearest, that this isn’t a vision of fairy-land, which will vanish presently, and leave us empty and forlorn?” plaintively murmured Isabel, as the menial train reappeared, bearing the supper they had ordered and set it smoking down.

Suddenly a look of apprehension dawned upon her face, and she let fall her knife and fork. “You don’t think, Basil,” she faltered, “that they could have found out we’re a bridal party, and that they’re serving us so magnificently because—because—O, I shall be miserable every moment we’re here!” she concluded desperately.

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She looked, indeed, extremely wretched for a woman with so much broiled white-fish on her plate, and such a banquet array about her; and her husband made haste to reassure her. “You’re still demoralized, Isabel, by our sufferings at the Albany depot, and you exaggerate the blessings we enjoy, though I should be sorry to undervalue them. I suspect it’s the custom to use people well at this hotel; or if we are singled out for uncommon favor, I think: I can explain the cause. It has been discovered by the register that we are from Boston, and we are merely meeting the reverence, affection, and homage which the name everywhere commands!

“It ’s our fortune to represent for the time being the intellectual and moral virtue of Boston. This supper is not a tribute to you as a bride, but as a Bostonian.”

It was a cheap kind of raillery, to be sure, but it served. It kindled the local pride of Isabel to self-defense, and in the distraction of the effort she forgot her fears; she returned with renewed appetite to the supper, and in its excellence they both let fall their dispute,—which ended, of course, in Basil’s abject confession that Boston was the best place in the world, and nothing but banishment could make him live elsewhere,—and gave themselves up, as usual, to the delight of being just what and where they were. At last, the natural course brought them to the strawberries, and when the fifth waiter approached from the corner of the table at which he stood, to place the vase near them, he did not retire at once, but presently asked if they were from the West.

Isabel smiled, and Basil answered that they were from the East.

He faltered at this, as if doubtful of the result if he went further, but took heart, then, and asked, “Don’t you think this is a pretty nice hotel”—hastily adding as a concession of the probable existence of much finer things at the East—“for a small hotel?”

They imagined this waiter as new to his station in life, as perhaps just risen to it from some country tavern, and unable to repress his exultation in what seemed their sympathetic presence. They were charmed to have invited his guileless confidence, to have evoked possibly all the simple poetry of his soul; it was what might have happened in Italy, only there so much naivete would have meant money; they looked at each other with rapture and Basil answered warmly while the waiter flushed as at a personal compliment: “Yes, it ’s a nice hotel; one of the best I ever saw, East or West, in Europe or America.”

They rose and left the room, and were bowed out by the head-waiter.

“How perfectly idyllic!” cried Isabel. “Is this Rochester, New York, or is it some vale of Arcady? Let’s go out and see.”

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They walked out into the moonlit city, up and down streets that seemed very stately and fine, amidst a glitter of shop-window lights; and then, Less of their own motion than of mere error, they quitted the business quarter, and found themselves in a quiet avenue of handsome residences,—the Beacon Street of Rochester, whatever it was called. They said it was a night and a place for lovers, for none but lovers, for lovers newly plighted, and they made believe to bemoan themselves that, hold each other dear as they would, the exaltation, the thrill, the glory of their younger love was gone. Some of the houses had gardened spaces about them, from which stole, like breaths of sweetest and saddest regret, the perfume of midsummer flowers,—the despair of the rose for the bud. As they passed a certain house, a song fluttered out of the open window and ceased, the piano warbled at the final rush of fingers over its chords, and they saw her with her fingers resting lightly on the keys, and her graceful head lifted to look into his; they saw him with his arm yet stretched across to the leaves of music he had been turning, and his face lowered to meet her gaze.

“Ah, Basil, I wish it was we, there!”

And if they knew that we, on our wedding journey, stood outside, would not they wish it was they, here?”

“I suppose so, dearest, and yet, once-upon-a-time was sweet. Pass on; and let us see what charm we shall find next in this enchanted city.”

“Yes, it is an enchanted city to us,” mused Basil, aloud, as they wandered on, “and all strange cities are enchanted. What is Rochester to the Rochesterese? A place of a hundred thousand people, as we read in our guide, an immense flour interest, a great railroad entrepot, an unrivaled nursery trade, a university, two commercial colleges, three collegiate institutes, eight or ten newspapers, and a free library. I dare say any respectable resident would laugh at us sentimentalizing over his city. But Rochester is for us, who don’t know it at all, a city of any time or country, moonlit, filled with lovers hovering over piano-fortes, of a palatial hotel with pastoral waiters and porter,—a city of handsome streets wrapt in beautiful quiet and dreaming of the golden age. The only definite association with it in our minds is the tragically romantic thought that here Sam Patch met his fate.”

“And who in the world was Sam Patch?

“Isabel, your ignorance of all that an American woman should be proud of distresses me. Have you really, then, never heard of the man who invented the saying, ‘Some things can be done as well as others,’ and proved it by jumping over Niagara Falls twice? Spurred on by this belief, he attempted the leap of the Genesee Falls. The leap was easy enough, but the coming up again was another matter. He failed in that. It was the one thing that could not be done as well as others.”

“Dreadful!” said Isabel, with the cheerfullest satisfaction. “But what has all that to do with Rochester?”

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“Now, my dear, You don’t mean to say you didn’t know that the Genesee Falls were at Rochester? Upon my word, I’m ashamed. Why, we’re within ten minutes’ walk of them now.”

“Then walk to them at once!” cried Isabel, wholly unabashed, and in fact unable to see what he had to be ashamed of. “Actually, I believe you would have allowed me to leave Rochester without telling me the falls were here, if you hadn’t happened to think of Sam Patch.”

Saying this, she persuaded herself that a chief object of their journey had been to visit the scene of Sam Patch’s fatal exploit, and she drew Basil with a nervous swiftness in the direction of the railroad station, beyond which he said were the falls. Presently, after threading their way among a multitude of locomotives, with and without trains attached, that backed and advanced, or stood still, hissing impatiently on every side, they passed through the station to a broad planking above the river on the other side, and thence, after encounter of more locomotives, they found, by dint of much asking, a street winding up the hill-side to the left, and leading to the German Bierhaus that gives access to the best view of the cataract.

The Americans have characteristically bordered the river with manufactures, making every drop work its passage to the brink; while the Germans have as characteristically made use of the beauty left over, and have built a Bierhaus where they may regale both soul and sense in the presence of the cataract. Our travellers might, in another mood and place, have thought it droll to arrive at that sublime spectacle through a Bierhaus, but in this enchanted city it seemed to have a peculiar fitness.

A narrow corridor gave into a wide festival space occupied by many tables, each of which was surrounded by a group of clamorous Germans of either sex and every age, with tall beakers of beaded lager before them, and slim flasks of Rhenish; overhead flamed the gas in globes of varicolored glass; the walls were painted like those of such haunts in the fatherland; and the wedding-journeyers were fair to linger on their way, to dwell upon that scene of honest enjoyment, to inhale the mingling odors of beer and of pipes, and of the pungent cheeses in which the children of the fatherland delight. Amidst the inspiriting clash of plates and glasses, the rattle of knives and forks, and the hoarse rush of gutturals, they could catch the words Franzosen, Kaiser, Konig, and Schlacht, and they knew that festive company to be exulting in the first German triumphs of the war, which were then the day’s news; they saw fists shaken at noses in fierce exchange of joy, arms tossed abroad in wild congratulation, and health-pouring goblets of beer lifted in air. Then they stepped into the moonlight again, and heard only the solemn organ stops of the cataract. Through garden-ground they were led by the little maid, their guide, to a small pavilion that stood on the edge of the precipitous

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shore, and commanded a perfect view of the falls. As they entered this pavilion, a youth and maiden, clearly lovers, passed out, and they were left alone with that sublime presence. Something of definiteness was to be desired in the spectacle, but there was ample compensation in the mystery with which the broad effulgence and the dense unluminous shadows of the moonshine invested it. The light touched all the tops of the rapids, that seemed to writhe sway from the brink of the cataract, and then desperately breaking and perishing to fall, the white disembodied ghosts of rapids, down to the bottom of the vast and deep ravine through which the river rushed away. Now the waters seemed to mass themselves a hundred feet high in a wall of snowy compactness, now to disperse into their multitudinous particles and hang like some vaporous cloud from the cliff. Every moment renewed the vision of beauty in some rare and fantastic shape; and its loveliness isolated it, in spite of the great town on the other shore, the station with its bridge and its trains, the mills that supplied their feeble little needs from the cataract's strength.

At last Basil pointed out the table-rock in the middle of the fall, from which Sam Patch had made his fatal leap; but Isabel refused to admit that tragical figure to the honors of her emotions. "I don't care for him!" she said fiercely. "Patch! What a name to be linked in our thoughts with this superb cataract."

"Well, Isabel, I think you are very unjust. It's as good a name as Leander, to my thinking, and it was immortalized in support of a great idea, the feasibility of all things; while Leander's has come down to us as that of the weak victim of a passion. We shall never have a poetry of our own till we get over this absurd reluctance from facts, till we make the ideal embrace and include the real, till we consent to face the music in our simple common names, and put Smith into a lyric and Jones into a tragedy. The Germans are braver than we, and in them you find facts and dreams continually blended and confronted. Here is a fortunate illustration. The people we met coming out of this pavilion were lovers, and they had been here sentimentalizing on this superb cataract, as you call it, with which my heroic Patch is not worthy to be named. No doubt they had been quoting Uhland or some other of their romantic poets, perhaps singing some of their tender German love-songs,—the tenderest, unearthliest love-songs in the world. At the same time they did not disdain the matter-of-fact corporeity in which their sentiment was enshrined; they fed it heartily and abundantly with the banquet whose relics we see here."

On a table before them stood a pair of beer-glasses, in the bottoms of which lurked scarce the foam of the generous liquor lately brimming them; some shreds of sausage, some rinds of Swiss cheese, bits of cold ham, crusts of bread, and the ashes of a pipe.

Isabel shuddered at the spectacle, but made no comment, and Basil went on: "Do you suppose they scorned the idea of Sam Patch as they gazed upon the falls? On the

contrary, I've no doubt that he recalled to her the ballad which a poet of their language made about him. It used to go the rounds of the German newspapers, and I translated it, a long while ago, when I thought that I too was in 'Arkadien geboren'.

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’In the Bierhauagarten I linger
By the Falls of the Geneses:
From the Table-Rock in the middle
Leaps a figure bold and free.

Aloof in the air it rises
O’er the rush, the plunge, the death;
On the thronging banks of the river
There is neither pulse nor breath.

Forever it hovers and poises
Aloof in the moonlit air;
As light as mist from the rapids,
As heavy as nightmare.

In anguish I cry to the people,
The long-since vanished hosts;
I see them stretch forth in answer,
The helpless hands of ghosts.’”

“I once met the poet who wrote this. He drank too much beer.”

“I don’t see that he got in the name of Sam Patch, after all,” said Isabel.

“O yes; he did; but I had to yield to our taste, and where he said, I ‘Springt der Sam Patsch kuhn and frei’,’ I made it ’Leaps a figure bold and free.’”

As they passed through the house on their way out, they saw the youth and maiden they had met at the pavilion door. They were seated at a table; two glasses of beer towered before them; on their plates were odorous crumbs of Limburger cheese. They both wore a pensive air.

The next morning the illusion that had wrapt the whole earth was gone with the moonlight. By nine o’clock, when the wedding-journeyers resumed their way toward Niagara, the heat had already set in with the effect of ordinary midsummer’s heat at high noon. The car into which they got had come the past night from Albany, and had an air of almost conscious shabbiness, griminess, and over-use. The seats were covered with cinders, which also crackled under foot. Dust was on everything, especially the persons of the crumpled and weary passengers of overnight. Those who came aboard at Rochester failed to lighten the spiritual gloom, and presently they sank into the common bodily wretchedness. The train was somewhat belated, and as it drew nearer Buffalo they knew the conductor to have abandoned himself to that blackest of the arts, making time. The long irregular jolt of the ordinary progress was reduced to an incessant shudder and a quick lateral motion. The air within the cars was deadly; if a

window was raised, a storm of dust and cinders blew in and quick gusts caught away the breath. So they sat with closed windows, sweltering and stifling, and all the faces on which a lively horror was not painted were dull and damp with apathetic misery.

The incidents were in harmony with the abject physical tone of the company. There was a quarrel between a thin, shrill-voiced, highly dressed, much-bedizened Jewess, on the one side, and a fat, greedy old woman, half asleep, and a boy with large pink transparent ears that stood out from his head like the handles of a jar, on the other side, about a seat which the Hebrew wanted, and which the others had kept filled with packages on the pretense that it was engaged. It was a loud and fierce quarrel enough, but it won no sort of favor; and when the Jewess had given a final opinion that the greedy old woman was no lady, and the boy, who disputed in an ironical temper, replied, “Highly complimentary, I must say,” there was no sign of relief or other acknowledgment in any of the spectators, that there had been a quarrel.

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There was a little more interest taken in the misfortune of an old purblind German and his son, who were found by the conductor to be a few hundred miles out of the direct course to their destination, and were with some trouble and the aid of an Americanized fellow-countryman made aware of the fact. The old man then fell back in the prevailing apathy, and the child naturally cared nothing. By and by came the unsparing train-boy on his rounds, bestrewing the passengers successively with papers, magazines, fine-cut tobacco, and packages of candy. He gave the old man a package of candy, and passed on. The German took it as the bounty of the American people, oddly manifested in a situation where he could otherwise have had little proof of their care. He opened it and was sharing it with his son when the train-boy came back, and metallically, like a part of the machinery, demanded, “Ten cents!” The German stared helplessly, and the boy repeated, “Ten cents! ten cents!” with tiresome patience, while the other passengers smiled. When it had passed through the alien’s head that he was to pay for this national gift and he took with his tremulous fingers from the recesses of his pocket-book a ten-cent note and handed it to his tormentor, some of the people laughed. Among the rest, Basil and Isabel laughed, and then looked at each other with eyes of mutual reproach.

“Well, upon my word, my dear,” he said, “I think we’ve fallen pretty low. I’ve never felt such a poor, shabby ruffian before. Good heavens! To think of our immortal souls being moved to mirth by such a thing as this,—so stupid, so barren of all reason of laughter. And then the cruelty of it! What ferocious imbeciles we are! Whom have I married? A woman with neither heart nor brain!”

“O Basil, dear, pay him back the money-do.”

“I can’t. That’s the worst of it. He ’s money enough, and might justly take offense. What breaks my heart is that we could have the depravity to smile at the mistake of a friendless stranger, who supposed he had at last met with an act of pure kindness. It’s a thing to weep over. Look at these grinning wretches! What a fiendish effect their smiles have, through their cinders and sweat! O, it’s the terrible weather; the despotism of the dust and heat; the wickedness of the infernal air. What a squalid and loathsome company!”

At Buffalo, where they arrived late, they found themselves with several hours’ time on their hands before the train started for Niagara, and in the first moments of tedium, Isabel forgot herself into saying, “Don’t you think we’d have done better to go directly from Rochester to the Falls, instead of coming this way?”

“Why certainly. I didn’t propose coming this way.”

“I know it, dear. I was only asking,” said Isabel, meekly. “But I should think you’d have generosity enough to take a little of the blame, when I wanted to come out of a romantic feeling for you.”

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This romantic feeling referred to the fact that, many years before, when Basil made his first visit to Niagara, he had approached from the west by way of Buffalo; and Isabel, who tenderly begrudged his having existed before she knew him, and longed to ally herself retrospectively with his past, was resolved to draw near the great cataract by no other route.

She fetched a little sigh which might mean the weather or his hard-heartedness. The sigh touched him, and he suggested a carriage-ride through the city; she assented with eagerness, for it was what she had been thinking of. She had never seen a lakeside city before, and she was taken by surprise. "If ever we leave Boston," she said, "we will not live at Rochester, as I thought last night; we'll come to Buffalo." She found that the place had all the picturesqueness of a sea-port, without the ugliness that attends the rising and falling tides. A delicious freshness breathed from the lake, which lying so smooth, faded into the sky at last, with no line between sharper than that which divides drowsing from dreaming. But the color was the most charming thing, that delicate blue of the lake, without the depth of the sea-blue, but infinitely softer and lovelier. The nearer expanses rippled with dainty waves, silver and lucent; the further levels made, with the sun-dimmed summer sky, a vague horizon of turquoise and amethyst, lit by the white sails of ships, and stained by the smoke of steamers.

"Take me away now," said Isabel, when her eyes had feasted upon all this, "and don't let me see another thing till I get to Niagara. Nothing less sublime is worthy the eyes that have beheld such beauty."

However, on the way to Niagara she consented to glimpses of the river which carries the waters of the lake for their mighty plunge, and which shows itself very nobly from time to time as you draw toward the cataract, with wooded or cultivated islands, and rich farms along its low shores, and at last flashes upon the eye the shining white of the rapids,—a hint, no more, of the splendor and awfulness to be revealed.

VI. NIAGARA.

As the train stopped, Isabel's heart beat with a child-like exultation, as I believe every one's heart must who is worthy to arrive at Niagara. She had been trying to fancy, from time to time, that she heard the roar of the cataract, and now, when she alighted from the car, she was sure she should have heard it but for the vulgar little noises that attend the arrival of trains at Niagara as well as everywhere else. "Never mind, dearest; you shall be stunned with it before you leave," promised her husband; and, not wholly disconsolate, she rode through the quaint streets of the village, where it remains a question whether the lowliness of the shops and private houses makes the hotels look so vast, or the bigness of the hotels dwarfs all the other buildings. The immense caravansaries swelling

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up from among the little bazaars (where they sell feather fans, and miniature bark canoes, and jars and vases and bracelets and brooches carved out of the local rocks), made our friends with their trunks very conscious of their disproportion to the accommodations of the smallest. They were the sole occupants of the omnibus, and they were embarrassed to be received at their hotel with a burst of minstrelsy from a whole band of music. Isabel felt that a single stringed instrument of some timid note would have been enough; and Basil was going to express his own modest preference for a jew's-harp, when the music ceased with a sudden clash of the cymbals. But the next moment it burst out with fresh sweetness, and in alighting they perceived that another omnibus had turned the corner and was drawing up to the pillared portico of the hotel. A small family dismounted, and the feet of the last had hardly touched the pavement when the music again ended as abruptly as those flourishes of trumpets that usher player-kings upon the stage. Isabel could not help laughing at this melodious parsimony. "I hope they don't let on the cataract and shut it off in this frugal style; do they, Basil?" she asked, and passed jesting through a pomp of unoccupied porters and tallboys. Apparently there were not many people stopping at this hotel, or else they were all out looking at the Falls or confined to their rooms. However, our travellers took in the almost weird emptiness of the place with their usual gratitude to fortune for all queerness in life, and followed to the pleasant quarters assigned them. There was time before supper for a glance at the cataract, and after a brief toilet they sallied out again upon the holiday street, with its parade of gay little shops, and thence passed into the grove beside the Falls, enjoying at every instant their feeling of arrival at a sublime destination.

In this sense Niagara deserves almost to rank with Rome, the metropolis of history and religion; with Venice, the chief city of sentiment and fantasy. In either you are at once made at home by a perception of its greatness, in which there is no quality of aggression, as there always seems to be in minor places as well as in minor men, and you gratefully accept its sublimity as a fact in no way contrasting with your own insignificance.

Our friends were beset of course by many carriage-drivers, whom they repelled with the kindly firmness of experienced travel. Isabel even felt a compassion for these poor fellows who had seen Niagara so much as to have forgotten that the first time one must see it alone or only with the next of friendship. She was voluble in her pity of Basil that it was not as new to him as to her, till between the trees they saw a white cloud of spray, shot through and through with sunset, rising, rising, and she felt her voice softly and steadily beaten down by the diapason of the cataract.

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I am not sure but the first emotion on viewing Niagara is that of familiarity. Ever after, its strangeness increases; but in that earliest moment when you stand by the side of the American fall, and take in so much of the whole as your giants can compass, an impression of having seen it often before is certainly very vivid. This may be an effect of that grandeur which puts you at your ease in its presence; but it also undoubtedly results in part from lifelong acquaintance with every variety of futile picture of the scene. You have its outward form clearly in your memory; the shores, the rapids, the islands, the curve of the Falls, and the stout rainbow with one end resting on their top and the other lost in the mists that rise from the gulf beneath. On the whole I do not account this sort of familiarity a misfortune. The surprise is none the less a surprise because it is kept till the last, and the marvel, making itself finally felt in every nerve, and not at once through a single sense, all the more fully possesses you. It is as if Niagara reserved her magnificence, and preferred to win your heart with her beauty; and so Isabel, who was instinctively prepared for the reverse, suffered a vague disappointment, for a little instant, as she looked along the verge from the water that caressed the shore at her feet before it flung itself down, to the wooded point that divides the American from the Canadian Fall, beyond which showed dimly through its veil of golden and silver mists the emerald wall of the great Horse-Shoe. “How still it is!” she said, amidst the roar that shook the ground under their feet and made the leaves tremble overhead, and “How lonesome!” amidst the people lounging and sauntering about in every direction among the trees. In fact that prodigious presence does make a solitude and silence round every spirit worthy to perceive it, and it gives a kind of dignity to all its belongings, so that the rocks and pebbles in the water’s edge, and the weeds and grasses that nod above it, have a value far beyond that of such common things elsewhere. In all the aspects of Niagara there seems a grave simplicity, which is perhaps a reflection of the spectator’s soul for once utterly dismantled of affectation and convention. In the vulgar reaction from this, you are of course as trivial, if you like, at Niagara, as anywhere.

Slowly Isabel became aware that the sacred grove beside the fall was profaned by some very common presences indeed, that tossed bits of stone and sticks into the consecrated waters, and struggled for handkerchiefs and fans, and here and there put their arms about each other’s waists, and made a show of laughing and joking. They were a picnic party of rude, silly folks of the neighborhood, and she stood pondering them in sad wonder if anything could be worse, when she heard a voice saying to Basil, “Take you next, Sir? Plenty of light yet, and the wind’s down the river, so the spray won’t interfere.

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Make a capital picture of you; falls in the background." It was the local photographer urging them to succeed the young couple he had just posed at the brink: the gentleman was sitting down, with his legs crossed and his hands elegantly disposed; the lady was standing at his side, with one arm thrown lightly across his shoulder, while with the other hand she thrust his cane into the ground; you could see it was going to be a splendid photograph.

Basil thanked the artist, and Isabel said, trusting as usual to his sympathy for perception of her train of thought, "Well, I'll never try to be high-strung again. But shouldn't you have thought, dearest, that I might expect to be high-strung with success at Niagara if anywhere?" She passively followed him into the long, queer, downward-sloping edifice on the border of the grove, unflinchingly mounted the car that stood ready, and descended the incline. Emerging into the light again, she found herself at the foot of the fall by whose top she had just stood. At first she was glad there were other people down there, as if she and Basil were not enough to bear it alone, and she could almost have spoken to the two hopelessly pretty brides, with parasols and impertinent little boots, whom their attendant husbands were helping over the sharp and slippery rocks, so bare beyond the spray, so green and mossy within the fall of mist. But in another breath she forgot them; as she looked on that dizzied sea, hurling itself from the high summit in huge white knots, and breaks and masses, and plunging into the gulf beside her, while it sent continually up a strong voice of lamentation, and crawled away in vast eddies, with somehow a look of human terror, bewilderment, and pain. It was bathed in snowy vapor to its crest, but now and then heavy currents of air drew this aside, and they saw the outline of the Falls almost as far as the Canada side. They remembered afterwards how they were able to make use of but one sense at a time, and how when they strove to take in the forms of the descending flood, they ceased to hear it; but as soon as they released their eyes from this service, every fibre in them vibrated to the sound, and the spectacle dissolved away in it. They were aware, too, of a strange capriciousness in their senses, and of a tendency of each to palter with the things perceived. The eye could no longer take truthful note of quality, and now beheld the tumbling deluge as a Gothic wall of careen marble, white, motionless, and now as a fall of lightest snow, with movement in all its atoms, and scarce so much cohesion as would hold them together; and again they could not discern if this course were from above or from beneath, whether the water rose from the abyss or dropped from the height. The ear could give the brain no assurance of the sound that felled it, and whether it were great or little; the prevailing softness of the cataract's tone seemed so much opposed to ideas of prodigious force or of prodigious volume. It was only when the sight, so idle in its own behalf, came to the aid of the other sense, and showed them the mute movement of each other's lips, that they dimly appreciated the depth of sound that involved them.

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“I think you might have been high-strung there, for a second or two,” said Basil, when, ascending the incline; he could make himself heard. “We will try the bridge next.”

Over the river, so still with its oily eddies and delicate wreaths of foam, just below the Falls they have in late years woven a web of wire high in air, and hung a bridge from precipice to precipice. Of all the bridges made with hands it seems the lightest, most ethereal; it is ideally graceful, and droops from its slight towers like a garland. It is worthy to command, as it does, the whole grandeur of Niagara, and to show the traveller the vast spectacle, from the beginning of the American Fall to the farthest limit of the Horse-Shoe, with all the awful pomp of the rapids, the solemn darkness of the wooded islands, the mystery of the vaporous gulf, the indomitable wildness of the shores, as far as the eye can reach up or down the fatal stream.

To this bridge our friends now repaired, by a path that led through another of those groves which keep the village back from the shores of the river on the American side, and greatly help the sight-seer’s pleasure in the place. The exquisite structure, which sways so tremulously from its towers, and seems to lay so slight a hold on earth where its cables sink into the ground, is to other bridges what the blood horse is to the common breed of roadsters; ant now they felt its sensitive nerves quiver under them and sympathetically through them as they advanced farther and farther toward the centre. Perhaps their sympathy with the bridge’s trepidation was too great for unalloyed delight, and yet the thrill was a glorious one, to be known only there; and afterwards, at least, they would not have had their airy path seem more secure.

The last hues of sunset lingered in the mists that sprung from the base of the Falls with a mournful, tremulous grace, and a movement weird as the play of the northern lights. They were touched with the most delicate purples and crimsons, that darkened to deep red, and then faded from them at a second look, and they flew upward, swiftly upward, like troops of pale, transparent ghosts; while a perfectly clear radiance, better than any other for local color, dwelt upon the scene. Far under the bridge the river smoothly swam, the undercurrents forever unfolding themselves upon the surface with a vast rose-like evolution, edged all round with faint lines of white, where the air that filled the water freed itself in foam. What had been clear green on the face of the cataract was here more like rich verd-antique, and had a look of firmness almost like that of the stone itself. So it showed beneath the bridge, and down the river till the curving shores hid it. These, springing abruptly prom the water’s brink, and shagged with pine and cedar, displayed the tender verdure of grass and bushes intermingled with the dark evergreens that comb from ledge to ledge, till they point their speary tops above the crest of bluffs.

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In front, where tumbled rocks and expanses of caked clay varied the gloomier and gayer green, sprung those spectral mists; and through them loomed out, in its manifold majesty, Niagara, with the seemingly immovable white Gothic screen of the American Fall, and the green massive curve of the Horseshoe, solid and simple and calm as an Egyptian wall; while behind this, with their white and black expanses broken by dark foliaged little isles, the steep Canadian rapids billowed down between their heavily wooded shores.

The wedding-journeyers hung, they knew not how long, in rapture on the sight; and then, looking back from the shore to the spot where they had stood, they felt relieved that unreality should possess itself of all, and that the bridge should swing there in mid-air like a filmy web, scarce more passable than the rainbow that flings its arch above the mists.

On the portico of the hotel they found half a score of gentlemen smoking, and creating together that collective silence which passes for sociality on our continent. Some carriages stood before the door, and within, around the base of a pillar, sat a circle of idle call-boys. There were a few trunks heaped together in one place, with a porter standing guard over them; a solitary guest was buying a cigar at the newspaper stand in one corner; another friendless creature was writing a letter in the reading-room; the clerk, in a seersucker coat and a lavish shirt-bosom, tried to give the whole an effect of watering-place gayety and bustle, as he provided a newly arrived guest with a room.

Our pair took in these traits of solitude and repose with indifference. If the hotel had been thronged with brilliant company, they would have been no more and no less pleased; and when, after supper, they came into the grand parlor, and found nothing there but a marble-topped centre. table, with a silver-plated ice-pitcher and a small company of goblets, they sat down perfectly content in a secluded window-seat. They were not seen by the three people who entered soon after, and halted in the centre of the room.

“Why, Kitty!” said one of the two ladies who must; be in any travelling-party of three, “this is more inappropriate to your gorgeous array than the supper-room, even.”

She who was called Kitty was armed, as for social conquest, in some kind of airy evening-dress, and was looking round with bewilderment upon that forlorn waste of carpeting and upholstery. She owned, with a smile, that she had not seen so much of the world yet as she had been promised; but she liked Niagara very much, and perhaps they should find the world at breakfast.

“No,” said the other lady, who was as unquiet as Kitty was calm, and who seemed resolved to make the most of the worst, “it isn’t probable that the hotel will fill up

overnight; and I feel personally responsible for this state of things. Who would ever have supposed that Niagara would be so empty? I thought the place was thronged the whole summer long. How do you account for it, Richard?"

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The gentleman looked fatigued, as from a long-continued discussion elsewhere of the matter in hand, and he said that he had not been trying to account for it.

“Then you don’t care for Kitty’s pleasure at all, and you don’t want her to enjoy herself. Why don’t you take some interest in the matter?”

“Why, if I accounted for the emptiness of Niagara in the most satisfactory way, it wouldn’t add a soul to the floating population. Under the circumstances I prefer to leave it unexplained.”

“Do you think it’s because it’s such a hot summer? Do you suppose it’s not exactly the season? Didn’t you expect there’d be more people? Perhaps Niagara isn’t as fashionable as it used to be.”

“It looks something like that.”

“Well, what under the sun do you think is the reason?”

“I don’t know.”

“Perhaps,” interposed Kitty, placidly, “most of the visitors go to the other hotel, now.”

“It ’s altogether likely,” said the other lady, eagerly. “There are just such caprices.”

“Well,” said Richard, “I wanted you to go there.”

“But you said that you always heard this was the a most fashionable.”

“I know it. I didn’t want to come here for that reason. But fortune favors the brave.”

“Well, it’s too bad! Here we’ve asked Kitty to come to Niagara with us, just to give her a little peep into the world, and you’ve brought us to a hotel where we’re—”

“Monarchs of all we survey,” suggested Kitty.

“Yes, and start at the sound of our own,” added the other lady, helplessly.

“Come now, Fanny,” said the gentleman, who was but too clearly the husband of the last speaker. “You know you insisted, against all I could say or do, upon coming to this house; I implored you to go to the other, and now you blame me for bringing you here.”

“So I do. If you’d let me have my own way without opposition about coming here, I dare my I should have gone to the other place. But never mind. Kitty knows whom to blame, I hope. She ’s your cousin.”

Kitty was sitting with her hands quiescently folded in her lap. She now rose and said that she did not know anything about the other hotel, and perhaps it was just as empty as this.

“It can’t be. There can’t be two hotels so empty,” said Fanny. “It don’t stand to reason.”

“If you wish Kitty to see the world so much,” said the gentleman, “why don’t you take her on to Quebec, with us?”

Kitty had left her seat beside Fanny, and was moving with a listless content about the parlor.

“I wonder you ask, Richard, when you know she’s only come for the night, and has nothing with her but a few cuffs and collars! I certainly never heard of anything so absurd before!”

The absurdity of the idea then seemed to cast its charm upon her, for, after a silence, “I could lend her some things,” she said musingly. “But don’t speak of it to-night, please. It’s too ridiculous. Kitty!” she called out, and, as the young lady drew near, she continued, “How would you like to go to Quebec, with us?”

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“O Fanny!” cried Kitty, with rapture; and then, with dismay, “How can I?”

“Why, very well, I think. You’ve got this dress, and your travelling-suit; and I can lend you whatever you want. Come!” she added joyously, “let’s go up to your room, and talk it over!”

The two ladies vanished upon this impulse, and the gentleman followed. To their own relief the guiltless eaves-droppers, who found no moment favorable for revealing themselves after the comedy began, issued from their retiracy.

“What a remarkable little lady!” said Basil, eagerly turning to Isabel for sympathy in his enjoyment of her inconsequence.

“Yes, poor thing!” returned his wife; “it’s no light matter to invite a young lady to take a journey with you, and promise her all sorts of gayety, and perhaps beaux and flirtations, and then find her on your hands in a desolation like this. It’s dreadful, I think.”

Basil stared. “O, certainly,” he said. “But what an amusingly illogical little body!”

“I don’t understand what you mean, Basil. It was the only thing that she could do, to invite the young lady to go on with them. I wonder her husband had the sense to think of it first. Of course she’ll have to lend her things.”

“And you didn’t observe anything peculiar in her way of reaching her conclusions?”

“Peculiar? What do you mean?”

“Why, her blaming her husband for letting her have her own way about the hotel; and her telling him not to mention his proposal to Kitty, and then doing it herself, just—after she’d pronounced it absurd and impossible.” He spoke with heat at being forced to make what he thought a needless explanation.

“O!” said Isabel, after a moment’s reflection. “That! Did you think it so very odd?”

Her husband looked at her with the gravity a man must feel when he begins to perceive that he has married the whole mystifying world of womankind in the woman of his choice, and made no answer. But to his own soul he said: “I supposed I had the pleasure of my wife’s acquaintance. It seems I have been flattering myself.”

The next morning they went out as they had planned, for an exploration of Goat Island, after an early breakfast. As they sauntered through the village’s contrasts of pigmy and colossal in architecture, they praisefully took in the unalloyed holiday character of the place, enjoying equally the lounging tourists at the hotel doors, the drivers and their carriages to let, and the little shops, with nothing but mementos of Niagara, and Indian beadwork, and other trumpery, to sell. Shops so useless, they agreed, could not be

found outside the Palms Royale, or the Square of St. Mark, or anywhere else in the world but here. They felt themselves once more a part of the tide of mere sight-seeing pleasure-travel, on which they had drifted in other days, and in an eddy of which their love itself had opened its white blossom, and lily-like dreamed upon the wave.

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They were now also part of the great circle of newly wedded bliss, which, involving the whole land during the season of bridal-tours, may be said to show richest and fairest at Niagara, like the costly jewel of a precious ring. The place is, in fact, almost abandoned to bridal couples, and any one out of his honey-moon is in some degree an alien there, and must discern a certain immodesty in him intrusion. Is it for his profane eyes to look upon all that blushing and trembling joy? A man of any sensibility must desire to veil his face, and, bowing his excuses to the collective rapture, take the first train for the wicked outside world to which he belongs. Everywhere, he sees brides and brides. Three or four with the benediction still on them, come down in the same car with him; he hands her travelling-shawl after one as she springs from the omnibus into her husband's arms; there are two or three walking back and forth with their new lords upon the porch of the hotel; at supper they are on every side of him, and he feels himself suffused, as it were, by a roseate atmosphere of youth and love and hope. At breakfast it is the same, and then, in his wanderings about the place he constantly meets them. They are of all manners of beauty, fair and dark, slender and plump, tall and short; but they are all beautiful with the radiance of loving and being loved. Now, if ever in their lives, they are charmingly dressed, and ravishing toilets take the willing eye from the objects of interest. How high the heels of the pretty boots, how small the tender. tinted gloves, how electrical the flutter of the snowy skirts! What is Niagara to these things?

Isabel was not willing to own her bridal sisterhood to these blessed souls; but she secretly rejoiced in it, even while she joined Basil in noting their number and smiling at their innocent abandon. She dropped his arm at encounter of the first couple, and walked carelessly at his side; she made a solemn vow never to take hold of his watch-chain in speaking to him; she trusted that she might be preserved from putting her face very close to his at dinner in studying the bill of fare; getting out of carriages, she forbade him ever to take her by the waist. All ascetic resolutions are modified by experiment; but if Isabel did not rigorously keep these, she is not the less to be praised for having formed them.

Just before they reached the bridge to Goat Island, they passed a little group of the Indians still lingering about Niagara, who make the barbaric wares in which the shops abound, and, like the woods and the wild faces of the cliffs and precipices, help to keep the cataract remote, and to invest it with the charm of primeval loneliness. This group were women, and they sat motionless on the ground, smiling sphinx-like over their laps full of bead-work, and turning their dark liquid eyes of invitation upon the passers. They wore bright kirtles, and red shawls fell from their heads over their plump brown cheeks and down

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their comfortable persons. A little girl with them was attired in like gayety of color. “What is her name?” asked Isabel, paying for a bead pincushion. “Daisy Smith,” said her mother, in distressingly good English. “But her Indian name?” “She has none,” answered the woman, who told Basil that her village numbered five hundred people, and that they were Protestants. While they talked they were joined by an Indian, whom the women saluted musically in their native tongue. This was somewhat consoling; but he wore trousers and a waistcoat, and it could have been wished that he had not a silk hat on.

“Still,” said Isabel, as they turned away, “I’m glad he hasn’t Lisle-thread gloves, like that chieftain we saw putting his forest queen on board the train at Oneida. But how shocking that they should be Christians, and Protestants! It would have been bad enough to have them Catholics. And that woman said that they were increasing. They ought to be fading away.”

On the bridge, they paused and looked up and down the rapids rushing down the slope in all their wild variety, with the white crests of breaking surf, the dark massiveness of heavy-climbing waves, the fleet, smooth sweep of currents over broad shelves of sunken rock, the dizzy swirl and suck of whirlpools.

Spell-bound, the journeyers pored upon the deathful course beneath their feet, gave a shudder to the horror of being cast upon it, and then hurried over the bridge to the island, in the shadow of whose wildness they sought refuge from the sight and sound.

There had been rain in the night; the air war full of forest fragrance, and the low, sweet voice of twittering birds. Presently they came to a bench set in a corner of the path, and commanding a pleasant vista of sunlit foliage, with a mere gleam of the foaming river beyond. As they sat down here loverwise, Basil, as in the early days of their courtship, began to recite a poem. It was one which had been haunting him since his first sight of the rapids, one of many that he used to learn by heart in his youth—the rhyme of some poor newspaper poet, whom the third or fourth editor copying his verses consigned to oblivion by carelessly clipping his name from the bottom. It had always lingered in Basil’s memory, rather from the interest of the awful fact it recorded, than from any merit of its own; and now he recalled it with a distinctness that surprised him.

Avery.

I.
All night long they heard in the houses beside the shore,
Heard, or seemed to hear, through the multitudinous roar,
Out of the hell of the rapids as ’twere a lost soul’s cries
Heard and could not believe; and the morning mocked their eyes,

Showing where wildest and fiercest the waters leaped up and ran
Raving round him and past, the visage of a man
Clinging, or seeming to cling, to the trunk of a tree that, caught
Fast in the rocks below, scarce out of the surges raught.
Was it a life, could it be, to yon slender hope that clung
Shrill, above all the tumult the answering terror rang.

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II.
Under the weltering rapids a boat from the bridge is drowned,
Over the rocks the lines of another are tangled and wound,
And the long, fateful hours of the morning have wasted soon,
As it had been in some blessed trance, and now it is noon.
Hurry, now with the raft! But O, build it strong and stanch,
And to the lines and the treacherous rocks look well as you launch
Over the foamy tops of the waves, and their foam-sprent sides,
Over the hidden reefs, and through the embattled tides,
Onward rushes the raft, with many a lurch and leap,—
Lord! if it strike him loose from the hold he scarce can keep!
No! through all peril unharmed, it reaches him harmless at least,
And to its proven strength he lashes his weakness fast.
Now, for the shore! But steady, steady, my men, and slow;
Taut, now, the quivering lines; now slack; and so, let her go!
Thronging the shores around stands the pitying multitude;
Wan as his own are their looks, and a nightmare seems to brood
Heavy upon them, and heavy the silence hangs on all,
Save for the rapids' plunge, and the thunder of the fall.
But on a sudden thrills from the people still and pale,
Chorussing his unheard despair, a desperate wail
Caught on a lurking point of rock it sways and swings,
Sport of the pitiless waters, the raft to which he clings.

III.
All the long afternoon it idly swings and sways;
And on the shore the crowd lifts up its hands and prays:
Lifts to heaven and wrings the hands so helpless to save,
Prays for the mercy of God on him whom the rock and the ways
Battle for, fettered betwixt them, and who amidst their strife
Straggles to help his helpers, and fights so hard for his life,
Tugging at rope and at reef, while men weep and women swoon.
Priceless second by second, so wastes the afternoon.
And it is sunset now; and another boat and the last
Down to him from the bridge through the rapids has safely passed.

IV.
Wild through the crowd comes flying a man that nothing can stay
Maddening against the gate that is locked athwart his way.
"No! we keep the bridge for them that can help him. You,
Tell us, who are you?" "His brother!" "God help you both! Pass through."
Wild, with wide arms of imploring he calls aloud to him,
Unto the face of his brother, scarce seen in the distance dim;
But in the roar of the rapids his fluttering words are lost

As in a wind of autumn the leaves of autumn are tossed.
And from the bridge he sees his brother sever the rope
Holding him to the raft, and rise secure in his hope;
Sees all as in a dream the terrible pageantry,
Populous shores, the woods, the sky, the birds flying free;
Sees, then, the form—that, spent with effort and fasting and fear,
Flings itself feebly and fails of the boat that is lying so near,
Caught in the long-baffled clutch of the rapids, and rolled and hurled
Headlong on to the cataract's brink, and out of the world.

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“O Basil!” said Isabel, with a long sigh breaking the hush that best praised the unknown poet’s skill, “it isn’t true, is it?”

“Every word, almost, even to the brother’s coming at the last moment. It’s a very well-known incident,” he added, and I am sure the reader whose memory runs back twenty years cannot have forgotten it.

Niagara, indeed, is an awful homicide; nearly every point of interest about the place has killed its man, and there might well be a deeper stain of crimson than it ever wears in that pretty bow overarching the falls. Its beauty is relieved against an historical background as gloomy as the lightest-hearted tourist could desire. The abominable savages, revering the cataract as a kind of august devil, and leading a life of demoniacal misery and wickedness, whom the first Jesuits found here two hundred years ago; the ferocious Iroquois bloodily driving out these squalid devil-worshippers; the French planting the fort that yet guards the mouth of the river, and therewith the seeds of war that fruited afterwards in murderous strifes throughout the whole Niagara country; the struggle for the military posts on the river, during the wars of France and England; the awful scene in the conspiracy of Pontiac, where a detachment of English troops was driven by the Indians over the precipice near the great Whirlpool; the sorrow and havoc visited upon the American settlements in the Revolution by the savages who prepared their attacks in the shadow of Fort Niagara; the battles of Chippewa and of Lundy’s Lane, that mixed the roar of their cannon with that of the fall; the savage forays with tomahawk and scalping-knife, and the blazing villages on either shore in the War of 1812,—these are the memories of the place, the links in a chain of tragical interest scarcely broken before our time since the white man first beheld the mist-veiled face of Niagara. The facts lost nothing of their due effect as Basil, in the ramble across Goat Island, touched them with the reflected light of Mr. Parkman’s histories,—those precious books that make our meagre past wear something of the rich romance of old European days, and illumine its savage solitudes with the splendor of mediaeval chivalry, and the glory of mediaeval martyrdom,—and then, lacking this light, turned upon them the feeble glimmer of the guide-books. He and Isabel enjoyed the lurid picture with all the zest of sentimentalists dwelling upon the troubles of other times from the shelter of the safe and peaceful present. They were both poets in their quality of bridal couple, and so long as their own nerves were unshaken they could transmute all facts to entertaining fables. They pleasantly exercised their sympathies upon those who every year perish at Niagara in the tradition of its awful power; only they refused their cheap and selfish compassion to the Hermit of Goat Island, who dwelt so many years in its conspicuous seclusion, and was finally carried over the cataract. This

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public character they suspected of design in his death as in his life, and they would not be moved by his memory; though they gave a sigh to that dream, half pathetic, half ludicrous, yet not ignoble, of Mordecai Noah, who thought to assemble all the Jews of the world, and all the Indians, as remnants of the lost tribes, upon Grand Island, there to rebuild Jerusalem, and who actually laid the corner-stone of the new temple there.

Goat Island is marvelously wild for a place visited by so many thousands every year. The shrubbery and undergrowth remain unravaged, and form a deceitful privacy, in which, even at that early hour of the day, they met many other pairs. It seemed incredible that the village and the hotels should be so full, and that the wilderness should also abound in them; yet on every embowered seat, and going to and from all points of interest and danger, were these new-wedded lovers with their interlacing arms and their fond attitudes, in which each seemed to support and lean upon the other. Such a pair stood prominent before them when Basil and Isabel emerged at last from the cover of the woods at the head of the island, and glanced up the broad swift stream to the point where it ran smooth before breaking into the rapids; and as a soft pastoral feature in the foreground of that magnificent landscape, they found them far from unpleasing. Some such pair is in the foreground of every famous American landscape; and when I think of the amount of public love-making in the season of pleasure-travel, from Mount Desert to the Yosemite, and from the parks of Colorado to the Keys of Florida, I feel that our continent is but a larger Arcady, that the middle of the nineteenth century is the golden age, and that we want very little of being a nation of shepherds and shepherdesses.

Our friends returned by the shore of the Canadian rapids, having traversed the island by a path through the heart of the woods, and now drew slowly near the Falls again. All parts of the prodigious pageant have an eternal novelty, and they beheld the ever-varying effect of that constant sublimity with the sense of discoverers, or rather of people whose great fortune it is to see the marvel in its beginning, and new from the creating hand. The morning hour lent its sunny charm to this illusion, while in the cavernous precipices of the shores, dark with evergreens, a mystery as of primeval night seemed to linger. There was a wild fluttering of their nerves, a rapture with an under-consciousness of pain, the exaltation of peril and escape, when they came to the three little isles that extend from Goat Island, one beyond another far out into the furious channel. Three pretty suspension-bridges connect them now with the larger island, and under each of these flounders a huge rapid, and hurls itself away to mingle with the ruin of the fall. The Three Sisters are mere fragments of wilderness, clumps of vine-tangled woods, planted upon masses of rock; but they are part of the fascination

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of Niagara which no one resists; nor could Isabel have been persuaded from exploring them. It wants no courage to do this, but merely submission to the local sorcery, and the adventurer has no other reward than the consciousness of having been where but a few years before no human being had perhaps set foot. She grossed from bridge to bridge with a quaking heart, and at last stood upon the outermost isle, whence, through the screen of vines and boughs, she gave fearful glances at the heaving and tossing flood beyond, from every wave of which at every instant she rescued herself with a desperate struggle. The exertion told heavily upon her strength unawares, and she suddenly made Basil another revelation of character. Without the slightest warning she sank down at the root of a tree, and said, with serious composure, that she could never go back on those bridges; they were not safe. He stared at her cowering form in blank amaze, and put his hands in his pockets. Then it occurred to his dull masculine sense that it must be a joke; and he said, “Well, I’ll have you taken off in a boat.”

“O do, Basil, do, have me taken off in a boat!” implored Isabel. “You see yourself the Midges are not safe. Do get a boat.”

“Or a balloon,” he suggested, humoring the pleasantry.

Isabel burst into tears; and now he went on his knees at her side, and took her hands in his. “Isabel! Isabel! Are you crazy?” he cried, as if he meant to go mad himself. She moaned and shuddered in reply; he said, to mend matters, that it was a jest, about the boat; and he was driven to despair when Isabel repeated, “I never can go back by the bridges, never.”

“But what do you propose to do?”

“I don’t know, I don’t know!”

He would try sarcasm. “Do you intend to set up a hermitage here, and have your meals sent out from the hotel? It’s a charming spot, and visited pretty constantly; but it’s small, even for a hermitage.”

Isabel moaned again with her hands still on her eyes, and wondered that he was not ashamed to make fun of her.

He would try kindness. “Perhaps, darling, you’ll let me carry you ashore.”

“No, that will bring double the weight on the bridge at once.”

“Couldn’t you shut your eyes, and let me lead you?”

“Why, it isn’t the sight of the rapids,” she said, looking up fiercely. “The bridges are not safe. I’m not a child, Basil. O, what shall we do?”

“I don’t know,” said Basil, gloomily. “It’s an exigency for which I wasn’t prepared.” Then he silently gave himself to the Evil One, for having probably overwrought Isabel’s nerves by repeating that poem about Avery, and by the ensuing talk about Niagara, which she had seemed to enjoy so much. He asked her if that was it; and she answered, “O no, it’s nothing but the bridges.” He proved to her that the bridges, upon all known principles, were perfectly safe, and that they could not give way. She shook her head, but made no answer, and he lost his patience.

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“Isabel,” he cried, “I’m ashamed of you!”

“Don’t say anything you’ll be sorry for afterwards, Basil,” she replied, with the forbearance of those who have reason and justice on their side.

The rapids beat and shouted round their little prison-isle, each billow leaping as if possessed by a separate demon. The absurd horror of the situation overwhelmed him. He dared not attempt to carry her ashore, for she might spring from his grasp into the flood. He could not leave her to call for help; and what if nobody came till she lost her mind from terror? Or, what if somebody should come and find them in that ridiculous affliction?

Somebody was coming!

“Isabel!” he shouted in her ear, “here come those people we saw in the parlor last night.”

Isabel dashed her veil over her face, clutched Basil’s with her icy hand, rose, drew her arm convulsively through his, and walked ashore without a word.

In a sheltered nook they sat down, and she quickly “repaired her drooping head and tricked her beams” again. He could see her tearfully smiling through her veil. “My dear,” he said, “I don’t ask an explanation of your fright, for I don’t suppose you could give it. But should you mind telling me why those people were so sovereign against it?”

“Why, dearest! Don’t you understand? That Mrs. Richard—whoever she is—is so much like me.”

She looked at him as if she had made the most satisfying statement, and he thought he had better not ask further then, but wait in hope that the meaning would come to him. They walked on in silence till they came to the Biddle Stairs, at the head of which is a notice that persons have been killed by pieces of rock from the precipice overhanging the shore below, and warning people that they descend at their peril. Isabel declined to visit the Cave of the Winds, to which these stairs lead, but was willing to risk the ascent of Terrapin Tower. “Thanks; no,” said her husband. “You might find it unsafe to come back the way you went up. We can’t count certainly upon the appearance of the lady who is so much like you; and I’ve no fancy for spending my life on Terrapin Tower.” So he found her a seat, and went alone to the top of the audacious little structure standing on the verge of the cataract, between the smooth curve of the Horse-Shoe and the sculptured front of the Central Fall, with the stormy sea of the Rapids behind, and the river, dim seen through the mists, crawling away between its lofty bluffs before. He knew again the awful delight with which so long ago he had watched the changes in the beauty of the Canadian Fall as it hung a mass of translucent green from the brink, and a pearly white seemed to crawl up from the abyss, and penetrate all its substance to the very crest, and then suddenly vanished from it, and perpetually renewed the same

effect. The mystery of the rising vapors veiled the gulf into which the cataract swooped; the sun shone, and a rainbow dreamed upon them.

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Near the foot of the tower, some loose rocks extend quite to the verge, and here Basil saw an elderly gentleman skipping from one slippery stone to another, and looking down from time to time into the abyss, who, when he had amused himself long enough in this way, clambered up on the plank bridge. Basil, who had descended by this time, made bold to say that he thought the diversion an odd one and rather dangerous. The gentleman took this in good part, and owned it might seem so, but added that a distinguished phrenologist had examined his head, and told him he had equilibrium so large that he could go anywhere.

“On your bridal tour, I presume,” he continued, as they approached the bench where Basil had left Isabel. She had now the company of a plain, middle-aged woman, whose attire hesitatingly expressed some inward festivity, and had a certain reluctant fashionableness. “Well, this is my third bridal tour to Niagara, and my wife ’s been here once before on the same business. We see a good many changes. I used to stand on Table Rock with the others. Now that’s all gone. Well, old lady, shall we move on?” he asked; and this bridal pair passed up the path, attended, haply, by the guardian spirits of those who gave the place so many sad yet pleasing associations.

At dinner, Mr. Richard’s party sat at the table next Basil’s, and they were all now talking cheerfully over the emptiness of the spacious dining-hall.

“Well, Kitty,” the married lady was saying, you can tell the girls what you please about the gayeties of Niagara, when you get home. They’ll believe anything sooner than the truth.”

“O yes, indeed,” said Kitty, “I’ve got a good deal of it made up already. I’ll describe a grand hop at the hotel, with fashionable people from all parts of the country, and the gentlemen I danced with the most. I’m going to have had quite a flirtation with the gentleman of the long blond mustache, whom we met on the bridge this morning and he’s got to do duty in accounting for my missing glove. It’ll never do to tell the girls I dropped it from the top of Terrapin Tower. Then you know, Fanny, I really can say something about dining with aristocratic Southerners, waited upon by their black servants.”

This referred to the sad-faced patrician whom Basil and Isabel had noted in the cars from Buffalo as a Southerner probably coming North for the first time since the war. He had an air at once fierce and sad, and a half-barbaric, homicidal gentility of manner fascinating enough in its way. He sat with his wife at a table farther down the room, and their child was served in part by a little tan-colored nurse-maid. The fact did not quite answer to the young lady’s description of it, and get it certainly afforded her a ground-work. Basil fancied a sort of bewilderment in the Southerner, and explained it upon the theory that he used to come every year to Niagara before the war, and was now puzzled to find it so changed.

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“Yes,” he said, “I can’t account for him except as the ghost of Southern travel, and I can’t help feeling a little sorry for him. I suppose that almost any evil commends itself by its ruin; the wrecks of slavery are fast growing a fungus crop of sentiment, and they may yet outflourish the remains of the feudal system in the kind of poetry they produce. The impoverished slave-holder is a pathetic figure, in spite of all justice and reason, the beaten rebel does move us to compassion, and it is of no use to think of Andersonville in his presence. This gentleman, and others like him, used to be the lords of our summer resorts. They spent the money they did not earn like princes; they held their heads high; they trampled upon the Abolitionist in his lair; they received the homage of the doughface in his home. They came up here from their rice-swamps and cotton-fields, and bullied the whole busy civilization of the North. Everybody who had merchandise or principles to sell truckled to them, and travel amongst us was a triumphal progress. Now they’re moneyless and subjugated (as they call it), there’s none so poor to do them reverence, and it’s left for me, an Abolitionist from the cradle, to sigh over their fate. After all, they had noble traits, and it was no great wonder they got, to despise us, seeing what most of us were. It seems to me I should like to know our friend. I can’t help feeling towards him as towards a fallen prince, heaven help my craven spirit! I wonder how our colored waiter feels towards him. I dare say he admires him immensely.”

There were not above a dozen other people in the room, and Basil contrasted the scene with that which the same place formerly presented. “In the old time,” he said, “every table was full, and we dined to the music of a brass band. I can’t say I liked the band, but I miss it. I wonder if our Southern friend misses it? They gave us a very small allowance of brass band when we arrived, Isabel. Upon my word, I wonder what’s come over the place,” he said, as the Southern party, rising from the table, walked out of the dining-room, attended by many treacherous echoes in spite of an ostentatious clatter of dishes that the waiters made.

After dinner they drove on the Canada shore up past the Clifton House, towards the Burning Spring, which is not the least wonder of Niagara. As each bubble breaks upon the troubled surface, and yields its flash of infernal flame and its whiff of sulphurous stench, it seems hardly strange that the Neutral Nation should have revered the cataract as a demon; and another subtle spell (not to be broken even by the business-like composure of the man who shows off the hell-broth) is added to those successive sorceries by which Niagara gradually changes from a thing of beauty to a thing of terror. By all odds, too, the most tremendous view of the Falls is afforded by the point on the drive whence you look down upon the Horse-Shoe, and behold its three massive walls of sea rounding and sweeping into the gulf together, the color gone, and the smooth brink showing black and ridgy.

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Would they not go to the battle-field of Lundy's Lane? asked the driver at a certain point on their return; but Isabel did not care for battle-fields, and Basil preferred to keep intact the reminiscence of his former visit. "They have a sort of tower of observation built on the battle-ground," he said, as they drove on down by the river, "and it was in charge of an old Canadian militia-man, who had helped his countrymen to be beaten in the fight. This hero gave me a simple and unintelligible account of the battle, asking me first if I had ever heard of General Scott, and adding without flinching that here he got his earliest laurels. He seemed to go just so long to every listener, and nothing could stop him short, so I fell into a revery until he came to an end. It was hard to remember, that sweet summer morning, when the sun shone, and the birds sang, and the music of a piano and a girl's voice rose from a bowery cottage near, that all the pure air had once been tainted with battle-smoke, that the peaceful fields had been planted with cannon, instead of potatoes and corn, and that where the cows came down the farmer's lane, with tinkling bells, the shock of armed men had befallen. The blue and tranquil Ontario gleamed far away, and far away rolled the beautiful land, with farm-houses, fields, and woods, and at the foot of the tower lay the pretty village. The battle of the past seemed only a vagary of mine; yet how could I doubt the warrior at my elbow?—grieved though I was to find that a habit of strong drink had the better of his utterance that morning. My driver explained afterwards, that persons visiting the field were commonly so much pleased with the captain's eloquence, that they kept the noble old soldier in a brandy and-water rapture throughout the season, thereby greatly refreshing his memory, and making the battle bloodier and bloodier as the season advanced and the number of visitors increased. There my dear," he suddenly broke off, as they came in sight of a slender stream of water that escaped from the brow of a cliff on the American side below the Falls, and spun itself into a gauze of silvery mist, "that's the Bridal Veil; and I suppose you think the stream, which is making such a fine display, yonder, is some idle brooklet, ending a long course of error and worthlessness by that spectacular plunge. It's nothing of the kind; it's an honest hydraulio canal, of the most straightforward character, a poor but respectable mill-race which has devoted itself strictly to business, and has turned mill-wheels instead of fooling round water-lilies. It can afford that ultimate finery. What you behold in the Bridal Veil, my love, is the apotheosis of industry."

"What I can't help thinking of," said Isabel, who had not paid the smallest attention to the Bridal Veil, or anything about it, "is the awfulness of stepping off these places in the night-time." She referred to the road which, next the precipice, is unguarded by any sort of parapet. In Europe a strong wall would secure it, but we manage things differently on our continent, and carriages go running over the brink from time to time.

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“If your thoughts have that direction,” answered her husband, “we had better go back to the hotel, and leave the Whirlpool for to-morrow morning. It’s late for it to-day, at any rate.” He had treated Isabel since the adventure on the Three Sisters with a superiority which he felt himself to be very odious, but which he could not disuse.

“I’m not afraid,” she sighed, “but in the words of the retreating soldier, I—I’m awfully demoralized;” and added, “You know we must reserve some of the vital forces for shopping this evening.”

Part of their business also was to buy the tickets for their return to

Boston by way of Montreal and Quebec, and it was part of their pleasure to get these of the heartiest imaginable ticket-agent. He was a colonel or at least a major, and he made a polite feint of calling Basil by some military title. He commended the trip they were about to make as the most magnificent and beautiful on the whole continent, and he commended them for intending to make it. He said that was Mrs. General Bowdur of Philadelphia who just went out; did they know her? Somehow, the titles affected Basil as of older date than the late war, and as belonging to the militia period; and he imagined for the agent the romance of a life spent at a watering-place, in contact with rich money-spending, pleasure-taking people, who formed his whole jovial world. The Colonel, who included them in this world, and thereby brevetted them rich and fashionable, could not secure a state-room for them on the boat,—a perfectly splendid Lake steamer, which would take them down the rapids of the St. Lawrence, and on to Montreal without change,—but he would give them a letter to the captain, who was a very particular friend of his, and would be happy to show them as his friends every attention; and so he wrote a note ascribing peculiar merits to Basil, and in spite of all reason making him feel for the moment that he was privileged by a document which was no doubt part of every such transaction. He spoke in a loud cheerful voice; he laughed jollily at no apparent joke; he bowed very low and said, “*Good*-evening!” at parting, and they went away as if he had blessed them.

The rest of the evening they spent in wandering through the village, charmed with its bizarre mixture of quaintness and commonplaceness; in hanging about the shop-Windows with their monotonous variety of feather fans,—each with a violently red or yellow bird painfully sacrificed in its centre,—moccasons, bead-wrought work-bags, tobacco-pouches, bows and arrows, and whatever else the savage art of the neighboring squaws can invent; in sauntering through these gay booths, pricing many things, and in hanging long and undecidedly over cases full of feldspar crosses, quartz bracelets and necklaces, and every manner of vase, inoperative pitcher, and other vessel that can be fashioned out of the geological

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formations at Niagara, tormented meantime by the heat of the gas-lights and the persistence of the mosquitoes. There were very few people besides themselves in the shops, and Isabel's purchases were not lavish. Her husband had made up his mind to get her some little keepsake; and when he had taken her to the hotel he ran back to one of the shops, and hastily bought her a feather fan,—a magnificent thing of deep magenta dye shading into blue, with a whole yellow-bird transfixed in the centre. When he triumphantly displayed it in their room, "Who's that for, Basil?" demanded his wife; "the cook?" But seeing his ghastly look at this, she fell upon his neck, crying, "O you poor old tasteless darling! You've got it for me!" and seemed about to die of laughter.

"Didn't you start and throw up your hands," he stammered, "when you came to that case of fans?"

"Yes,—in horror! Did you think I liked the cruel things, with their dead birds and their hideous colors? O Basil, dearest! You are incorrigible. Can't you learn that magenta is the vilest of all the hues that the perverseness of man has invented in defiance of nature? Now, my love, just promise me one thing," she said pathetically. "We're going to do a little shopping in Montreal, you know; and perhaps you'll be wanting to surprise me with something there. Don't do it. Or if you must, do tell me all about it beforehand, and what the color of it's to be; and I can say whether to get it or not, and then there'll be some taste about it, and I shall be truly surprised and pleased."

She turned to put the fan into her trunk, and he murmured something about exchanging it. "No," she said, "we'll keep it as a—a—monument." And she deposed him, with another peal of laughter, from the proud height to which he had climbed in pity of her nervous fears of the day. So completely were their places changed, that he doubted if it were not he who had made that scene on the Third Sister; and when Isabel said, "O, why won't men use their reasoning faculties?" he could not for himself have claimed any, and he could not urge the truth: that he had bought the fan more for its barbaric brightness than for its beauty. She would not let him get angry, and he could say nothing against the half-ironical petting with which she soothed his mortification.

But all troubles passed with the night, and the next morning they spent a charming hour about Prospect Point, and in sauntering over Goat Island, somewhat daintily tasting the flavors of the place on whose wonders they had so hungrily and indiscriminately feasted at first. They had already the feeling of veteran visitors, and they loftily marveled at the greed with which newer-comers plunged at the sensations. They could not conceive why people should want to descend the inclined railway to the foot of the American Fall; they smiled at the idea of going up Terrapin Tower; they derided the vulgar daring of those who went out upon the Three Weird Sisters; for some whom they saw about to go down the Biddle Stairs to the Cave of the Winds, they had no words to express their contempt.

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Then they made their excursion to the Whirlpool, mistakenly going down on the American side, for it is much better seen from the other, though seen from any point it is the most impressive feature of the whole prodigious spectacle of Niagara.

Here within the compass of a mile, those inland seas of the North, Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie, and the multitude of smaller lakes, all pour their floods, where they swirl in dreadful vortices, with resistless under-currents boiling beneath the surface of that mighty eddy. Abruptly from this scene of secret power, so different from the thunderous splendors of the cataract itself, rise lofty cliffs on every side, to a height of two hundred feet, clothed from the water's edge almost to their create with dark cedars. Noiselessly, so far as your senses perceive, the lakes steal out of the whirlpool, then, drunk and wild, with brawling rapids roar away to Ontario through the narrow channel of the river. Awful as the scene is, you stand so far above it that you do not know the half of its terribleness; for those waters that look so smooth are great ridges and rings, forced, by the impulse of the currents, twelve feet higher in the centre than at the margin. Nothing can live there, and with what is caught in its hold, the maelstrom plays for days, and whirls and tosses round and round in its toils, with a sad, maniacal patience. The guides tell ghastly stories, which even their telling does not wholly rob of ghastliness, about the bodies of drowned men carried into the whirlpool and made to enact upon its dizzy surges a travesty of life, apparently floating there at their pleasure, diving and frolicking amid the waves, or frantically struggling to escape from the death that has long since befallen them.

On the American side, not far below the railway suspension bridge, is an elevator more than a hundred and eighty feet high, which is meant to let people down to the shore below, and to give a view of the rapids on their own level. From the cliff opposite, it looks a terribly frail structure of pine sticks, but is doubtless stronger than it looks; and at any rate, as it has never yet fallen to pieces, it may be pronounced perfectly safe.

In the waiting-room at the top, Basil and Isabel found Mr. Richard and his ladies again, who got into the movable chamber with them, and they all silently descended together. It was not a time for talk of any kind, either when they were slowly and not quite smoothly dropping through the lugubrious upper part of the structure, where it was darkened by a rough weatherboarding, or lower down, where the unobstructed light showed the grim tearful face of the cliff, bedrabbled with oozy springs, and the audacious slightness of the elevator.

An abiding distrust of the machinery overhead mingled in Isabel's heart with a doubt of the value of the scene below, and she could not look forward to escape from her present perils by the conveyance which had brought her into them, with any satisfaction. She wanly smiled, and shrank closer to Basil; while the other matron made nothing of seizing her husband violently by the arm and imploring him to stop it whenever they experienced a rougher jolt than usual.

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At the bottom of the cliff they were helped out of their prison by a humid young Englishman, with much clay on him, whose face was red and bathed in perspiration, for it was very hot down there in his little inclosure of baking pine boards, and it was not much cooler out on the rocks upon which the party issued, descending and descending by repeated and desultory flights of steps, till at last they stood upon a huge fragment of stone right abreast of the rapids. Yet it was a magnificent sight, and for a moment none of them were sorry to have come. The surges did not look like the gigantic ripples on a river's course as they were, but like a procession of ocean billows; they arose far aloft in vast bulks of clear green, and broke heavily into foam at the crest. Great blocks and shapeless fragments of rock strewed the margin of the awful torrent; gloomy walls of dark stone rose naked from these, bearded here and there with cedar, and everywhere frowning with shaggy brows of evergreen. The place is inexpressibly lonely and dreadful, and one feels like an alien presence there, or as if he had intruded upon some mood or haunt of Nature in which she had a right to be forever alone. The slight, impudent structure of the elevator rises through the solitude, like a thing that merits ruin, yet it is better than something more elaborate, for it looks temporary, and since there must be an elevator, it is well to have it of the most transitory aspect. Some such quality of rude impermanence consoles you for the presence of most improvements by which you enjoy Niagara; the suspension bridges for their part being saved from offensiveness by their beauty and unreality.

Ascending, none of the party spoke; Isabel and the other matron blanched in each other's faces; their husbands maintained a stolid resignation. When they stepped out of their trap into the waiting room at the top, "What I like about these little adventures," said Mr. Richard to Basil, abruptly, "is getting safely out of them. Good-morning, sir." He bowed slightly to Isabel, who returned his politeness, and exchanged faint nods, or glances, with the ladies. They got into their separate carriages, and at that safe distance made each other more decided obeisances.

"Well," observed Basil, "I suppose we're introduced now. We shall be meeting them from time to time throughout our journey. You know how the same faces and the same trunks used to keep turning up in our travels on the other side. Once meet people in travelling, and you can't get rid of them."

"Yes," said Isabel, as if continuing his train of thought, "I'm glad we're going to-day."

"O dearest!"

"Truly. When we first arrived I felt only the loveliness of the place. It seemed more familiar, too, then; but ever since, it's been growing stranger and dreadfuller. Somehow it's begun to pervade me and possess me in a very uncomfortable way; I'm tossed upon rapids, and flung from cataract brinks, and dizzied in whirlpools; I'm no longer yours, Basil; I'm most unhappily married to Niagara. Fly with me, save me from my awful lord!"

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She lightly burlesqued the woes of a prima donna, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes.

“That’ll do very well,” Basil commented, “and it implies a reality that can’t be quite definitely spoken. We come to Niagara in the patronizing spirit in which we approach everything nowadays, and for a few hours we have it our own way, and pay our little tributes of admiration with as much complacency as we feel in acknowledging the existence of the Supreme Being. But after a while we are aware of some potent influence undermining our self-satisfaction; we begin to conjecture that the great cataract does not exist by virtue of our approval, and to feel that it will not cease when we go away. The second day makes us its abject slaves, and on the third we want to fly from it in terror. I believe some people stay for weeks, however, and hordes of them have written odes to Niagara.”

“I can’t understand it, at all,” said Isabel. “I don’t wonder now that the town should be so empty this season, but that it should ever be full. I wish we’d gone after our first look at the Falls from the suspension bridge. How beautiful that was! I rejoice in everything that I haven’t done. I’m so glad I haven’t been in the Cave of the Winds; I’m so happy that Table Rock fell twenty years ago! Basil, I couldn’t stand another rainbow today. I’m sorry we went out on the Three Weird Sisters. O, I shall dream about it! and the rush, and the whirl, and the dampness in one’s face, and the everlasting chirr-r-r-r of everything!”

She dipped suddenly upon his shoulder for a moment’s oblivion, and then rose radiant with a question: “Why in the world, if Niagara is really what it seems to us now, do so many bridal parties come here?”

“Perhaps they’re the only people who’ve the strength to bear up against it, and are not easily dispersed and subjected by it.”

“But we’re dispersed and subjected.”

“Ah, my dear, we married a little late. Who knows how it would be if you were nineteen instead of twenty-seven, and I twenty-five and not turned of thirty?”

“Basil, you’re very cruel.”

“No, no. But don’t you see how it is? We’ve known too much of life to desire any gloomy background for our happiness. We’re quite contented to have things gay and bright about us. Once we couldn’t have made the circle dark enough. Well, my dear, that’s the effect of age. We’re superannuated.”

“I used to think I was before we were married,” answered Isabel simply; “but now,” she added triumphantly, “I’m rescued from all that. I shall never be old again, dearest; never, as long as you love me!”

They were about to enter the village, and he could not make any open acknowledgment of her tenderness; but her silken mantle (or whatever) slipped from her shoulder, and he embracingly replaced it, flattering himself that he had delicately seized this chance of an unavowed caress and not allowing (O such is the blindness of our sex!) that the opportunity had been yet more subtly afforded him, with the art which women never disuse in this world, and which I hope they will not forget in the next.

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They had an early dinner, and looked their last upon the nuptial gayety of the otherwise forlorn hotel. Three brides sat down with them in travelling-dress; two occupied the parlor as they passed out; half a dozen happy pairs arrived (to the music of the band) in the omnibus that was to carry our friends back to the station; they caught sight of several about the shop windows, as that drove through the streets. Thus the place perpetually renews itself in the glow of love as long as the summer lasts. The moon which is elsewhere so often of wormwood, or of the ordinary green cheese at the best, is of lucent honey there from the first of June to the last of October; and this is a great charm in Niagara. I think with tenderness of all the lives that have opened so fairly there; the hopes that have reigned in the glad young hearts; the measureless tide of joy that ebbs and flows with the arriving and departing trains. Elsewhere there are carking cares of business and of fashion, there are age, and sorrow, and heartbreak: but here only youth, faith, rapture. I kiss my hand to Niagara for that reason, and would I were a poet for a quarter of an hour.

Isabel departed in almost a forgiving mood towards the weak sisterhood of evident brides, and both our friends felt a lurking fondness for Niagara at the last moment. I do not know how much of their content was due to the fact that they had suffered no sort of wrong there, from those who are apt to prey upon travellers. In the hotel a placard warned them to have nothing to do with the miscreant hackmen on the streets, but always to order their carriage at the office; on the street the hackmen whispered to them not to trust the exorbitant drivers in league with the landlords; yet their actual experience was great reasonableness and facile contentment with the sum agreed upon.

This may have been because the hackmen so far outnumbered the visitors, that the latter could dictate terms; but they chose to believe it a triumph of civilization; and I will never be the cynic to sneer at their faith. Only at the station was the virtue of the Niagarans put in doubt, by the hotel porter who professed to find Basil's trunk enfeebled by travel, and advised a strap for it, which a friend of his would sell for a dollar and a half. Yet even he may have been a benevolent nature unjustly suspected.

DOWN THE ST. LAWRENCE.

They were to take the Canadian steamer at Charlotte, the port of Rochester, and they rattled uneventfully down from Niagara by rail. At the broad, low-banked river-mouth the steamer lay beside the railroad station; and while Isabel disposed of herself on board, Basil looked to the transfer of the baggage, novelly comforted in the business by the respectfulness of the young Canadian who took charge of the trunks for the boat. He was slow, and his system was not good,—he did not give checks for the pieces, but marked them

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with the name of their destination; and there was that indefinable something in his manner which hinted his hope that you would remember the porter; but he was so civil that he did not snub the meekest and most vexatious of the passengers, and Basil mutely blessed his servile soul. Few white Americans, he said to himself, would behave so decently in his place; and he could not conceive of the American steamboat clerk who would use the politeness towards a waiting crowd that the Canadian purser showed when they all wedged themselves in about his window to receive their stateroom keys. He was somewhat awkward, like the porter, but he was patient, and he did not lose his temper even when some of the crowd, finding he would not bully them, made bold to bully him. He was three times as long in serving them as an American would have been, but their time was of no value there, and he served them well. Basil made a point of speaking him fair, when his turn came, and the purser did not trample on him for a base truckler, as an American jack-in-office would have done.

Our tourists felt at home directly on this steamer, which was very comfortable, and in every way sufficient for its purpose, with a visible captain, who answered two or three questions very pleasantly, and bore himself towards his passengers in some sort like a host.

In the saloon Isabel had found among the passengers her semi-acquaintances of the hotel parlor and the Rapids-elevator, and had glanced tentatively towards them. Whereupon the matron of the party had made advances that ended in their all sitting down together and wondering when the boat would start, and what time they would get to Montreal next evening, with other matters that strangers going upon the same journey may properly marvel over in company. The introduction having thus accomplished itself, they exchanged addresses, and it appeared that Richard was Colonel Ellison, of Milwaukee, and that Fanny was his wife. Miss Kitty Ellison was of Western New York, not far from Erie. There was a diversion presently towards the different state-rooms; but the new acquaintances sat vis-a-vis at the table, and after supper the ladies drew their chairs together on the promenade deck, and enjoyed the fresh evening breeze. The sun set magnificent upon the low western shore which they had now left an hour away, and a broad stripe of color stretched behind the steamer. A few thin, luminous clouds darkened momently along the horizon, and then mixed with the land. The stars came out in a clear sky, and a light wind softly buffeted the cheeks, and breathed life into nerves that the day's heat had wasted. It scarcely wrinkled the tranquil expanse of the lake, on which loomed, far or near, a full-sailed schooner, and presently melted into the twilight, and left the steamer solitary upon the waters. The company was small, and not remarkable enough in any way to take the thoughts of any one off his own comfort. A deep sense of the coziness

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of the situation possessed them all which was if possible intensified by the spectacle of the captain, seated on the upper deck, and smoking a cigar that flashed and fainted like a stationary fire-fly in the gathering dusk. How very distant, in this mood, were the most recent events! Niagara seemed a fable of antiquity; the ride from Rochester a myth of the Middle Ages. In this pool, happy world of quiet lake, of starry skies, of air that the soul itself seemed to breathe, there was such consciousness of repose as if one were steeped in rest and soaked through and through with calm.

The points of likeness between Isabel and Mrs. Ellison shortly made them mutually uninteresting, and, leaving her husband to the others, Isabel frankly sought the companionship of Miss Kitty, in whom she found a charm of manner which puzzled at first, but which she presently fancied must be perfect trust of others mingling with a peculiar self-reliance.

“Can’t you see, Basil, what a very flattering way it is?” she asked of her husband, when, after parting with their friends for the night, she tried to explain the character to him. “Of course no art could equal such a natural gift; for that kind of belief in your good-nature and sympathy makes you feel worthy of it, don’t you know; and so you can’t help being good-natured and sympathetic. This Miss Ellison, why, I can tell you, I shouldn’t be ashamed of her anywhere.” By anywhere Isabel meant Boston, and she went on to praise the young lady’s intelligence and refinement, with those expressions of surprise at the existence of civilization in a westerner which westerners find it so hard to receive graciously. Happily, Miss Ellison had not to hear them. “The reason she happened to come with only two dresses is, she lives so near Niagara that she could come for one day, and go back the next. The colonel’s her cousin, and he and his wife go East every year, and they asked her this time to see Niagara with them. She told me all over again what we eavesdropped so shamefully in the hotel parlor;—and I don’t know whether she was better pleased with the prospect of what’s before her, or with the notion of making the journey in this original way. She didn’t force her confidence upon me, any more than she tried to withhold it. We got to talking in the most natural manner; and she seemed to tell these things about herself because they amused her and she liked me. I had been saying how my trunk got left behind once on the French side of Mont Cenis, and I had to wear aunt’s things at Turin till it could be sent for.”

“Well, I don’t see but Miss Ellison could describe you to her friends very much as you’ve described her to me,” said Basil. “How did these mutual confidences begin? Whose trustfulness first flattered the other’s? What else did you tell about yourself?”

“I said we were on our wedding journey,” guiltily admitted Isabel.

“O, you did!”

“Why, dearest! I wanted to know, for once, you see, whether we seemed honeymoon-struck.”

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“And do we?”

“No,” came the answer, somewhat ruefully. “Perhaps, Basil,” she added, “we’ve been a little too successful in disguising our bridal character. Do you know,” she continued, looking him anxiously in the face, “this Miss Ellison took me at first for—your sister!”

Basil broke forth in outrageous laughter. “One more such victory,” he said, “and we are undone;” and he laughed again, immoderately. “How sad is the fruition of human wishes! There ’s nothing, after all, like a good thorough failure for making people happy.”

Isabel did not listen to him. Safe in a dim corner of the deserted saloon, she seized him in a vindictive embrace; then, as if it had been he who suggested the idea of such a loathsome relation, hissed out the hated words, “Your sister!” and released him with a disdainful repulse.

A little after daybreak the steamer stopped at the Canadian city of Kingston, a handsome place, substantial to the water’s edge, and giving a sense of English solidity by the stone of which it is largely built. There was an accession of many passengers here, and they and the people on the wharf were as little like Americans as possible. They were English or Irish or Scotch, with the healthful bloom of the Old World still upon their faces, or if Canadians they looked not less hearty; so that one must wonder if the line between the Dominion and the United States did not also sharply separate good digestion and dyspepsia. These provincials had not our regularity of features, nor the best of them our careworn sensibility of expression; but neither had they our complexions of adobe; and even Isabel was forced to allow that the men were, on the whole, better dressed than the same number of average Americans would have been in a city of that size and remoteness. The stevedores who were putting the freight aboard were men of leisure; they joked in a kindly way with the orange-women and the old women picking up chips on the pier; and our land of hurry seemed beyond the ocean rather than beyond the lake.

Kingston has romantic memories of being Fort Frontenac two hundred years ago; of Count Frontenac’s splendid advent among the Indians; of the brave La Salle, who turned its wooden walls to stone; of wars with the savages and then with the New York colonists, whom the French and their allies harried from this point; of the destruction of La Salle’s fort in the Old French War; and of final surrender a few years later to the English. It is as picturesque as it is historical. All about the city, the shores are beautifully wooded, and there are many lovely islands,—the first indeed of those Thousand Islands with which the head of the St. Lawrence is filled, and among which the steamer was presently threading her way. They are still as charming and still almost as wild as when, in 1673, Frontenac’s flotilla of canoes passed through their labyrinth and issued upon the lake. Save for a light-house

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upon one of them, there is almost nothing to show that the foot of man has ever pressed the thin grass clinging to their rocky surfaces, and keeping its green in the eternal shadow of their pines and cedars. In the warm morning light they gathered or dispersed before the advancing vessel, which some of them almost touched with the plumage of their evergreens; and where none of them were large, some were so small that it would not have been too bold to figure them as a vaster race of water-birds assembling and separating in her course. It is curiously affecting to find them so unclaimed yet from the solitude of the vanished wilderness, and scarcely touched even by tradition. But for the interest left them by the French, these tiny islands have scarcely any associations, and must be enjoyed for their beauty alone. There is indeed about them a faint light of legend concerning the Canadian rebellion of 1837, for several patriots are said to have taken refuge amidst their lovely multitude; but this episode of modern history is difficult for the imagination to manage, and somehow one does not take sentimentally even to that daughter of a lurking patriot, who long baffled her father's pursuers by rowing him from one island to another, and supplying him with food by night.

Either the reluctance is from the natural desire that so recent a heroine should be founded on fact, or it is mere perverseness. Perhaps I ought to say; in justice to her, that it was one of her own sex who refused to be interested in her, and forbade Basil to care for her. When he had read of her exploit from the guide-book, Isabel asked him if he had noticed that handsome girl in the blue and white striped Garibaldi and Swiss hat, who had come aboard at Kingston. She pointed her out, and courageously made him admire her beauty, which was of the most bewitching Canadian type. The young girl was redeemed by her New World birth from the English heaviness; a more delicate bloom lighted her cheeks; a softer grace dwelt in her movement; yet she was round and full, and she was in the perfect flower of youth. She was not so ethereal in her loveliness as an American girl, but she was not so nervous and had none of the painful fragility of the latter. Her expression was just a little vacant, it must be owned; but so far as she went she was faultless. She looked like the most tractable of daughters, and as if she would be the most obedient of wives. She had a blameless taste in dress, Isabel declared; her costume of blue and white striped Garibaldi and Swiss hat (set upon heavy masses of dark brown hair) being completed by a black silk skirt. "And you can see," she added, "that it's an old skirt made over, and that she's dressed as cheaply as she is prettily." This surprised Basil, who had imputed the young lady's personal sumptuousness to her dress, and had thought it enormously rich. When she got off with her chaperone at one of the poorest-looking country landings, she left them in

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hopeless conjecture about her. Was she visiting there, or was the interior of Canada full of such stylish and exquisite creatures? Where did she get her taste, her fashions, her manners? As she passed from sight towards the shadow of the woods, they felt the poorer for her going; yet they were glad to have seen her, and on second thoughts they felt that they could not justly ask more of her than to have merely existed for a few hours in their presence. They perceived that beauty was not only its own excuse for being, but that it flattered and favored and profited the world by consenting to be.

At Prescott, the boat on which they had come from Charlotte, and on which they had been promised a passage without change to Montreal, stopped, and they were transferred to a smaller steamer with the uncomfortable name of Banshee. She was very old, and very infirm and dirty, and in every way bore out the character of a squalid Irish goblin. Besides, she was already heavily laden with passengers, and, with the addition of the other steamer's people had now double her complement; and our friends doubted if they were not to pass the Rapids in as much danger as discomfort. Their fellow-passengers were in great variety, however, and thus partly atoned for their numbers. Among them of course there was a full force of brides from Niagara and elsewhere, and some curious forms of the prevailing infatuation appeared. It is well enough, if she likes, and it may even be very noble for a passably good-looking young lady to marry a gentleman of venerable age; but to intensify the idea of self-devotion by furtively caressing his wrinkled front seems too reproachful of the general public; while, on the other hand, if the bride is very young and pretty, it enlists in behalf of the white-haired husband the unwilling sympathies of the spectator to see her the centre of a group of young people, and him only acknowledged from time to time by a Parthian snub. Nothing, however, could have been more satisfactory than the sisterly surrounding of this latter bride. They were of a better class of Irish people; and if it had been any sacrifice for her to marry so old a man, they were doing their best to give the affair at least the liveliness of a wake. There were five or six of those great handsome girls, with their generous curves and wholesome colors, and they were every one attended by a good-looking colonial lover, with whom they joked in slightly brogued voices, and laughed with careless Celtic laughter. One of the young fellows presently lost his hat overboard, and had to wear the handkerchief of his lady about his head; and this appeared to be really one of the best things in the world, and led to endless banter. They were well dressed, and it could be imagined that the ancient bridegroom had come in for the support of the whole good-looking, healthy, light-hearted family. In some degree he looked it, and wore but a rueful countenance for a bridegroom; so that a very young newly married couple, who sat next the jolly sister-and-loverhood could not keep their pitying eyes off his downcast face. "What if he, too, were young at heart!" the kind little wife's regard seemed to say.

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For the sake of the slight air that was stirring, and to have the best view of the Rapids, the Banshee's whole company was gathered upon the forward promenade, and the throng was almost as dense as in a six-o'clock horse-car out from Boston. The standing and sitting groups were closely packed together, and the expanded parasols and umbrellas formed a nearly unbroken roof. Under this Isabel chatted at intervals with the Ellisons, who sat near; but it was not an atmosphere that provoked social feeling, and she was secretly glad when after a while they shifted their position.

It was deadly hot, and most of the people saddened and silenced in the heat. From time to time the clouds idling about overhead met and sprinkled down a cruel little shower of rain that seemed to make the air less breathable than before. The lonely shores were yellow with drought; the islands grew wilder and barrener; the course of the river was for miles at a stretch through country which gave no signs of human life. The St. Lawrence has none of the bold picturesqueness of the Hudson, and is far more like its far-off cousin the Mississippi. Its banks are low like the Mississippi's, its current, swift, its way through solitary lands. The same sentiment of early adventure hangs about each: both are haunted by visions of the Jesuit in his priestly robe, and the soldier in his mediaeval steel; the same gay, devout, and dauntless race has touched them both with immortal romance. If the water were of a dusky golden color, instead of translucent green, and the shores and islands were covered with cottonwoods and willows instead of dark cedars, one could with no great effort believe one's self on the Mississippi between Cairo and St. Louis, so much do the great rivers strike one as kindred in the chief features of their landscape. Only, in tracing this resemblance you do not know just what to do with the purple mountains of Vermont, seen vague against the horizon from the St. Lawrence, or with the quaint little French villages that begin to show themselves as you penetrate farther down into Lower Canada. These look so peaceful, with their dormer-windowed cottages clustering about their church-spires, that it seems impossible they could once have been the homes of the savages and the cruel peasants who, with fire-brand and scalping-knife and tomahawk, harassed the borders of New England for a hundred years. But just after you descend the Long Sault you pass the hamlet of St. Regis, in which was kindled the torch that wrapt Deerfield in flames, waking her people from their sleep to meet instant death or taste the bitterness of a captivity. The bell which was sent out from France for the Indian converts of the Jesuits, and was captured by an English ship and carried into Salem, and thence sold to Deerfield, where it called the Puritans to prayer, till at last it also summoned the priest-led Indians and 'habitans' across hundreds of miles of winter and of wilderness

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to reclaim it from that desecration,—this fateful bell still hangs in the church-tower of St. Regis, and has invited to matins and vespers for nearly two centuries the children of those who fought so pitilessly and dared and endured so much for it. Our friends would fair have heard it as they passed, hoping for some mournful note of history in its sound; but it hung silent over the silent hamlet, which, as it lay in the hot afternoon sun by the river's side, seemed as lifeless as the Deerfield burnt long ago.

They turned from it to look at a gentleman who had just appeared in a mustard-colored linen duster, and Basil asked, "Shouldn't you like to know the origin, personal history, and secret feelings of a gentleman who goes about in a duster of that particular tint? Or, that gentleman yonder with his eye tied up in a wet handkerchief, do you suppose he's travelling for pleasure? Look at those young people from Omaha: they haven't ceased flirting or cackling since we left Kingston. Do you think everybody has such spirits out at Omaha? But behold a yet more surprising figure than any we have yet seen among this boat-load of nondescripts."

This was a tall, handsome young man, with a face of somewhat foreign cast, and well dressed, with a certain impressive difference from the rest in the cut of his clothes. But what most drew the eye to him was a large cross, set with brilliants, and surmounted by a heavy double-headed eagle in gold. This ornament dazzled from a conspicuous place on the left lappet of his coat; on his hand shone a magnificent diamond ring, and he bore a stately opera-glass, with which, from time to time, he imperiously, as one may say, surveyed the landscape. As the imposing apparition grew upon Isa-bel, "O here," she thought, "is something truly distinguished. Of course, dear," she added aloud to Basil, "he's some foreign nobleman travelling here"; and she ran over in her mind the newspaper announcements of patrician visitors from abroad and tried to identify him with some one of them. The cross must be the decoration of a foreign order, and Basil suggested that he was perhaps a member of some legation at Washington, who had ran up there for his summer vacation. The cross puzzled him, but the double-headed eagle, he said, meant either Austria or Russia; probably Austria, for the wearer looked a trifle too civilized for a Russian.

"Yes, indeed! What an air he has. Never tell me. Basil, that there's nothing in blood!" cried Isabel, who was a bitter aristocrat at heart, like all her sex, though in principle she was democratic enough. As she spoke, the object of her regard looked about him on the different groups, not with pride, not with hauteur, but with a glance of unconscious, unmistakable superiority. "O, that stare!" she added; nothing but high birth and long descent can give it! Dearest, he's becoming a great affliction to me. I want to know who he is. Couldn't you invent some pretext for speaking to him?"

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“No, I couldn’t do it decently; and no doubt he’d snub me as I deserved if I intruded upon him. Let’s wait for fortune to reveal him.”

“Well, I suppose I must, but it’s dreadful; it’s really dreadful. You can easily see that’s distinction,” she continued, as her hero moved about the promenade and gently but loftily made a way for himself among the other passengers and favored the scenery through his opera-glass from one point and another. He spoke to no one, and she reasonably supposed that he did not know English.

In the mean time it was drawing near the hour of dinner, but no dinner appeared. Twelve, one, two came and went, and then at last came the dinner, which had been delayed, it seemed, till the cook could recruit his energies sufficiently to meet the wants of double the number he had expected to provide for. It was observable of the officers and crew of the Banshee, that while they did not hold themselves aloof from the passengers in the disdainful American manner, they were of feeble mind, and not only did everything very slowly (in the usual Canadian fashion), but with an inefficiency that among us would have justified them in being insolent. The people sat down at several successive tables to the worst dinner that ever was cooked; the ladies first, and the gentlemen afterwards, as they made conquest of places. At the second table, to Basil’s great satisfaction, he found a seat, and on his right hand the distinguished foreigner.

“Naturally, I was somewhat abashed,” he said in the account he was presently called to give Isabel of the interview, “but I remembered that I was an American citizen, and tried to maintain a decent composure. For several minutes we sat silent behind a dish of flabby cucumbers, expecting the dinner, and I was wondering whether I should address him in French or German,—for I knew you’d never forgive me if I let slip such a chance,—when he turned and spoke himself.”

“O what did he say, dearest?”

He said, “Pretty tejious waitin,’ ain’t it? in she best New York State accent.”

“You don’t mean it!” gasped Isabel.

“But I do. After that I took courage to ask what his cross and double-headed eagle meant. He showed the condescension of a true nobleman. ‘O,’ says he, ’I ’m glad you like it, and it ’s not the least offense to ask,’ and he told me. Can you imagine what it is? It ’s the emblem of the fifty-fourth degree in the secret society he belongs to!”

“I don’t believe it!”

“Well, ask him yourself, then,” returned Basil; “he ’s a very good fellow. ’O, that stare! nothing but high birth and long descent could give it!’” he repeated, abominably implying that he had himself had no share in their common error.

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What retort Isabel might have made cannot now be known, for she was arrested at this moment by a rumor amongst the passengers that they were coming to the Long Sault Rapids. Looking forward she saw the tossing and flashing of surges that, to the eye, are certainly as threatening as the rapids above Niagara. The steamer had already passed the Deplau and the Galopes, and they had thus had a foretaste of whatever pleasure or terror there is in the descent of these nine miles of stormy sea. It is purely a matter of taste, about shooting the rapids of the St. Lawrence. The passengers like it better than the captain and the pilot, to guesses by their looks, and the women and children like it better than the men. It is no doubt very thrilling and picturesque and wildly beautiful: the children crow and laugh, the women shout forth their delight, as the boat enters the seething current; great foaming waves strike her bows, and brawl away to the stern, while she dips, and rolls, and shoots onward, light as a bird blown by the wind; the wild shores and islands whirl out of sight; you feel in every fibre the career of the vessel. But the captain sits in front of the pilothouse smoking with a grave face, the pilots tug hard at the wheel; the hoarse roar of the waters fills the air; beneath the smoother sweeps of the current you can see the brown rocks; as you sink from ledge to ledge in the writhing and twisting steamer, you have a vague sense that all this is perhaps an achievement rather than an enjoyment. When, descending the Long Sault, you look back up hill, and behold those billows leaping down the steep slope after you, “No doubt,” you confide to your soul, “it is magnificent; but it is not pleasure.” You greet with silent satisfaction the level river, stretching between the Long Sault and the Coteau, and you admire the delightful tranquillity of that beautiful Lake St. Francis into which it expands. Then the boat shudders into the Coteau Rapids, and down through the Cedars and Cascades. On the rocks of the last lies the skeleton of a steamer wrecked upon them, and gnawed at still by the white-tusked wolfish rapids. No one, they say, was lost from her. “But how,” Basil thought, “would it fare with all these people packed here upon her bow, if the Banshee should swing round upon a ledge?” As to Isabel, she looked upon the wrecked steamer with indifference, as did all the women; but then they could not swim, and would not have to save themselves. “The La Chine’s to come yet,” they exulted, “and that ’s the awfullest of all!”

They passed the Lake St. Louis; the La Chin; rapids flashed into sight. The captain rose up from his seat, took his pipe from his mouth, and waved a silence with it. “Ladies and gentlemen,” said he, “it’s very important in passing these rapids to keep the boat perfectly trim. Please to remain just as you are.”

It was twilight, for the boat was late. From the Indian village on the shore they signaled to know if he wanted the local pilot; the captain refused; and then the steamer plunged into the leaping waves. From rock to rock she swerved and sank; on the last ledge she scraped with a deadly touch that went to the heart.

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Then the danger was passed, and the noble city of Montreal was in full sight, lying at the foot of her dark green mountain, and lifting her many spires into the rosy twilight air: massive and grand showed the sister towers of the French cathedral.

Basil had hoped to approach this famous city with just associations. He had meant to conjure up for Isabel's sake some reflex, however faint, of that beautiful picture Mr. Parkman has painted of Maisonneuve founding and consecrating Montreal. He flushed with the recollection of the historian's phrase; but in that moment there came forth from the cabin a pretty young person who gave every token of being a pretty young actress, even to the duenna-like, elderly female companion, to be detected in the remote background of every young actress. She had flirted audaciously during the day with some young Englishmen and Canadians of her acquaintance, and after passing the La Chine Rapids she had taken the hearts of all the men by springing suddenly to her feet, apostrophizing the tumult with a charming attitude, and warbling a delicious bit of song. Now as they drew near the city the Victoria Bridge stretched its long tube athwart the river, and looked so low because of its great length that it seemed to bar the steamer's passage.

"I wonder," said one of the actress's adorers, a Canadian, whose face was exactly that of the beaver on the escutcheon of his native province, and whose heavy gallantries she had constantly received with a gay, impertinent nonchalance,—"I wonder if we can be going right under that bridge?"

"No, sir!" answered the pretty young actress with shocking promptness, "we're going right over it!"

> "'Three groans and a guggle,
> And an awful struggle,
> And over we go!'"

At this witless, sweet impudence the Canadian looked very sheepish—for a beaver; and all the other people laughed; but the noble historical shades of Basil's thought vanished in wounded dignity beyond recall, and left him feeling rather ashamed,—for he had laughed too.

THE SENTIMENT OF MONTREAL.

The feeling of foreign travel for which our tourists had striven throughout their journey, and which they had known in some degree at Kingston and all the way down the river, was intensified from the first moment in Montreal; and it was so welcome that they were almost glad to lose money on their greenbacks, which the conductor of the omnibus would take only at a discount of twenty cents. At breakfast next morning they could hardly tell on what country they had fallen. The waiters had but a thin varnish of English

speech upon their native French, and they spoke their own tongue with each other; but most of the meats were cooked to the English taste, and the whole was a poor imitation of an American hotel. During their stay the same commingling of usages and races bewildered

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them; the shops were English and the clerks were commonly French; the carriage-drivers were often Irish, and up and down the streets with their pious old-fashioned names, tinkled American horse-cars. Everywhere were churches and convents that recalled the ecclesiastical and feudal origin of the city; the great tubular bridge, the superb water-front with its long array of docks only surpassed by those of Liverpool, the solid blocks of business houses, and the substantial mansions on the quieter streets, proclaimed the succession of Protestant thrift and energy.

Our friends cared far less for the modern splendor of Montreal than for the remnants of its past, and for the features that identified it with another faith and another people than their own. Isabel would almost have confessed to any one of the black-robed priests upon the street; Basil could easily have gone down upon his knees to the white-hooded, pale-faced nuns gliding among the crowd. It was rapture to take a carriage, and drive, not to the cemetery, not to the public library, not to the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association, or the grain elevators, or the new park just tricked out with rockwork and sprigs of evergreen,—not to any of the charming resorts of our own cities, but as in Europe to the churches, the churches of a pitiless superstition, the churches with their atrocious pictures and statues, their lingering smell of the morning's incense, their confessionals, their fee-taking sacristans, their worshippers dropped here and there upon their knees about the aisles and saying their prayers with shut or wandering eyes according as they were old women or young! I do not defend the feeble sentimentality,—call it wickedness if you like,—but I understand it, and I forgive it from my soul.

They went first, of course, to the French cathedral, pausing on their way to alight and walk through the Bonsecours Market, where the habitans have all come in their carts, with their various stores of poultry, fruit, and vegetables, and where every cart is a study. Here is a simple-faced young peasant-couple with butter and eggs and chickens ravishingly displayed; here is a smooth-checked, blackeyed, black-haired young girl, looking as if an infusion of Indian blood had darkened the red of her cheeks, presiding over a stock of onions, potatoes, beets, and turnips; there an old woman with a face carven like a walnut, behind a flattering array of cherries and pears; yonder a whole family trafficking in loaves of brown-bread and maple-sugar in many shapes of pious and grotesque device. There are gay shows of bright scarfs and kerchiefs and vari-colored yarns, and sad shows of old clothes and second-hand merchandise of other sorts; but above all prevails the abundance of orchard and garden, while within the fine edifice are the stalls of the butchers, and in the basement below a world of household utensils, glass-ware, hard-ware, and wooden-ware. As in other Latin countries,

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each peasant has given a personal interest to his wares, but the bargains are not clamored over as in Latin lands abroad. Whatever protest and concession and invocation of the saints attend the transacting of business at Bonsecours Market are in a subdued tone. The fat huckster-women drowsing beside their wares, scarce send their voices beyond the borders of their broad-brimmed straw hats, as they softly haggle with purchasers, or tranquilly gossip together.

At the cathedral there are, perhaps, the worst paintings in the world, and the massive pine-board pillars are unscrupulously smoked to look like marble; but our tourists enjoyed it as if it had been St. Peter's; in fact it has something of the barnlike immensity and impressiveness of St. Peter's. They did not ask it to be beautiful or grand; they desired it only to recall the beloved ugliness, the fondly cherished hideousness and incongruity of the average Catholic churches of their remembrance, and it did this and more: it added an effect of its own; it offered the spectacle of a swarthy old Indian kneeling before the high altar, telling his beads, and saying with many sighs and tears the prayers which it cost so much martyrdom and heroism to teach his race. "O, it is only a savage man," said the little French boy who was showing them the place, impatient of their interest in a thing so unworthy as this groaning barbarian. He ran swiftly about from object to object, rapidly lecturing their inattention. "It is now time to go up into the tower," said he, and they gladly made that toilsome ascent, though it is doubtful if the ascent of towers is not too much like the ascent of mountains ever to be compensatory. From the top of Notre Dame is certainly to be had a prospect upon which, but for his fluttered nerves and trembling muscles and troubled respiration, the traveller might well look with delight, and as it is must behold with wonder. So far as the eye reaches it dwells only upon what is magnificent. All the features of that landscape are grand. Below you spreads the city, which has less that is merely mean in it than any other city of our continent, and which is everywhere ennobled by stately civic edifices, adorned by tasteful churches, and skirted by full foliaged avenues of mansions and villas. Behind it rises the beautiful mountain, green with woods and gardens to its crest, and flanked on the east by an endless fertile plain, and on the west by another expanse, through which the Ottawa rushes, turbid and dark, to its confluence with the St. Lawrence. Then these two mighty streams commingled flow past the city, lighting up the vast Champaign country to the south, while upon the utmost southern verge, as on the northern, rise the cloudy summits of far-off mountains.

As our travellers gazed upon all this grandeur, their hearts were humbled to the tacit admission that the colonial metropolis was not only worthy of its seat, but had traits of a solid prosperity not excelled by any of the abounding and boastful cities of the Republic. Long before they quitted Montreal they had rallied from this weakness, but they delighted still to honor her superb beauty.

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The tower is naturally bescribbled to its top with the names of those who have climbed it, and most of these are Americans, who flock in great numbers to Canada in summer. They modify its hotel life, and the objects of interest thrive upon their bounty. Our friends met them at every turn, and knew them at a glance from the native populations, who are also easily distinguishable from each other. The French Canadians are nearly always of a peasant-like commonness, or where they rise above this have a bourgeois commonness of face and manner, and the English Canadians are to be known from the many English sojourners by the effort to look much more English than the latter. The social heart of the colony clings fast to the mother-country, that is plain, whatever the political tendency may be; and the public monuments and inscriptions celebrate this affectionate union.

At the English cathedral the effect is deepened by the epitaphs of those whose lives were passed in the joint service of England and her loyal child; and our travellers, whatever their want of sympathy with the sentiment, had to own to a certain beauty in that attitude of proud reverence. Here, at least, was a people not cut off from its past, but holding, unbroken in life and death, the ties which exist for us only in history. It gave a glamour of olden time to the new land; it touched the prosaic democratic present with the waning poetic light of the aristocratic and monarchical tradition. There was here and there a title on the tablets, and there was everywhere the formal language of loyalty and of veneration for things we have tumbled into the dust. It is a beautiful church, of admirable English Gothic; if you are so happy, you are rather curtly told you may enter by a burly English figure in some kind of sombre ecclesiastical drapery, and within its quiet precincts you may feel yourself in England if you like,—which, for my part, I do not. Neither did our friends enjoy it so much as the Church of the Jesuits, with its more than tolerable painting, its coldly frescoed ceiling, its architectural taste of subdued Renaissance, and its black-eyed peasant-girl telling her beads before a side altar, just as in the enviably deplorable countries we all love; nor so much even as the Irish cathedral which they next visited. That is a very gorgeous cathedral indeed, painted and gilded ‘a merveille’, and everywhere stuck about with big and little saints and crucifixes, and pictures incredibly bad—but for those in the French cathedral. There is, of course, a series representing Christ’s progress to Calvary; and there was a very tattered old man,—an old man whose voice had been long ago drowned in whiskey, and who now spoke in a ghostly whisper,—who, when he saw Basil’s eye fall upon the series, made him go the round of them, and tediously explained them.

“Why did you let that old wretch bore you, and then pay him for it?” Isabel asked.

“O, it reminded me so sweetly of the swindles of other lands and days, that I couldn’t help it,” he answered; and straightway in the eyes of both that poor, whiskeyfied, Irish tatterdemalion stood transfigured to the glorious likeness of an Italian beggar.

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They were always doing something of this kind, those absurdly sentimental people, whom yet I cannot find it in my heart to blame for their folly, though I could name ever so many reasons for rebuking it. Why, in fact, should we wish to find America like Europe? Are the ruins and impostures and miseries and superstitions which beset the traveller abroad so precious, that he should desire to imagine them at every step in his own hemisphere? Or have we then of our own no effective shapes of ignorance and want and incredibility, that we must forever seek an alien contrast to our native intelligence and comfort? Some such questions this guilty couple put to each other, and then drove off to visit the convent of the Gray Nuns with a joyful expectation which I suppose the prospect of the finest public-school exhibition in Boston could never have inspired. But, indeed, since there must be Gray Nuns, is it not well that there are sentimentalists to take a mournful pleasure in their sad, pallid existence?

The convent is at a good distance from the Irish cathedral, and in going to it the tourists made their driver carry them through one of the few old French streets which still remain in Montreal. Fires and improvements had made havoc among the quaint horses since Basil's first visit; but at last they came upon a narrow, ancient Rue Saint Antoine,—or whatever other saint it was called after,—in which there was no English face or house to be seen. The doors of the little one-story dwellings opened from the pavement, and within you saw fat madame the mother moving about her domestic affairs, and spare monsieur the elderly husband smoking beside the open window; French babies crawled about the tidy floors; French martyrs (let us believe Lalement or Brebeuf, who gave up their heroic lives for the conversion of Canada) sifted their eyes in high-colored lithographs on the wall; among the flower-pots in the dormer-window looking from every tin roof sat and sewed a smooth haired young girl, I hope,—the romance of each little mansion. The antique and foreign character of the place was accented by the inscription upon a wall of "Sirop adoucissant de Madame Winslow."

Ever since 1692 the Gray Nuns have made refuge within the ample borders of their convent for infirm old people and for foundling children, and it is now in the regular course of sight-seeing for the traveller to visit their hospital at noonday, when he beholds the Sisters at their devotions in the chapel. It is a bare, white-walled, cold-looking chapel, with the usual paraphernalia of pictures and crucifixes. Seated upon low benches on either side of the aisle were the curious or the devout; the former in greater number and chiefly Americans, who were now and then whispered silent by an old pauper zealous for the sanctity of the place. At the stroke of twelve the Sisters entered two by two, followed by the lady-superior with a prayerbook in her hand. She clapped the

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leaves of this together in signal for them to kneel, to rise, to kneel again and rise, while they repeated in rather harsh voices their prayers, and then clattered out of the chapel as they had clattered in, with resounding shoes. The two young girls at the head were very pretty, and all the pale faces had a corpse-like peace. As Basil looked at their pensive sameness, it seemed to him that those prettiest girls might very well be the twain that he had seen here so many years ago, stricken forever young in their joyless beauty. The ungraceful gowns of coarse gray, the blue checked aprons, the black crape caps, were the same; they came and went with the same quick tread, touching their brows with holy water and kneeling and rising now as then with the same constrained and ordered movements. Would it be too cruel if they were really the same persons? or would it be yet more cruel if every year two girls so young and fair were self-doomed to renew the likeness of that youthful death?

The visitors went about the hospital, and saw the old men and the little children to whom these good pure lives were given, and they could only blame the system, not the instruments or their work. Perhaps they did not judge wisely of the amount of self-sacrifice involved, for they judged from hearts to which love was the whole of earth and heaven; but nevertheless they pitied the Gray Nuns amidst the unhomelike comfort of their convent, the unnatural care of those alien little ones. Poor 'Soeurs Grises' in their narrow cells; at the bedside of sickness and age and sorrow; kneeling with clasped hands and yearning eyes before the bloody spectacle of the cross!—the power of your Church is shown far more subtly and mightily in such as you, than in her grandest fanes or the sight of her most august ceremonies, with praying priests, swinging censers, tapers and pictures and images, under a gloomy heaven of cathedral arches. There, indeed, the faithful have given their substance; but here the nun has given up the most precious part of her woman's nature, and all the tenderness that clings about the thought of wife and mother.

"There are some things that always greatly afflict me in the idea of a new country," said Basil, as they loitered slowly through the grounds of the convent toward the gate. "Of course, it's absurd to think of men as other than men, as having changed their natures with their skies; but a new land always does seem at first thoughts like a new chance afforded the race for goodness and happiness, for health and life. So I grieve for the earliest dead at Plymouth more than for the multitude that the plague swept away in London; I shudder over the crime of the first guilty man, the sin of the first wicked woman in a new country; the trouble of the first youth or maiden crossed in love there is intolerable. All should be hope and freedom and prosperous life upon that virgin soil. It never was so since Eden; but none the less I feel it ought to be; and

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I am oppressed by the thought that among the earliest walls which rose upon this broad meadow of Montreal were those built to immure the innocence of such young girls as these and shut them from the life we find so fair. Wouldn't you like to know who was the first that took the veil in this wild new country? Who was she, poor soul, and what was her deep sorrow or lofty rapture? You can fancy her some Indian maiden lured to the renunciation by the splendor of symbols and promises seen vaguely through the lingering mists of her native superstitions; or some weary soul, sick from the vanities and vices, the bloodshed and the tears of the Old World, and eager for a silence profounder than that of the wilderness into which she had fled. Well, the Church knows and God. She was dust long ago."

From time to time there had fallen little fitful showers during the morning. Now as the wedding-journeyers passed out of the convent gate the rain dropped soft and thin, and the gray clouds that floated through the sky so swiftly were as far-seen Gray Sisters in flight for heaven.

"We shall have time for the drive round the mountain before dinner," said Basil, as they got into their carriage again; and he was giving the order to the driver, when Isabel asked how far it was.

"Nine miles."

"O, then we can't think of going with one horse. You know," she added, "that we always intended to have two horses for going round the mountain."

"No," said Basil, not yet used to having his decisions reached without his knowledge. "And I don't see why we should. Everybody goes with one. You don't suppose we're too heavy, do you?"

"I had a party from the States, ma'am, yesterday," interposed the driver; "two ladies, real heavy apes, two gentlemen, weighin' two hundred apiece, and a stout young man on the box with me. You'd 'a' thought the horse was drawin' an empty carriage, the way she darted along."

"Then his horse must be perfectly worn out to-day," said Isabel, refusing to admit the pool fellow directly even to the honors of a defeat. He had proved too much, and was put out of court with no hope of repairing his error.

"Why, it seems a pity," whispered Basil, dispassionately, "to turn this man adrift, when he had a reasonable hope of being with us all day, and has been so civil and obliging."

"O yes, Basil, sentimentalize him, do! Why don't you sentimentalize his helpless, overworked horse?—all in a reek of perspiration."

“Perspiration! Why, my dear, it ’s the rain!”

“Well, rain or shine, darling, I don’t want to go round the mountain with one horse; and it ’s very unkind of you to insist now, when you’ve tacitly promised me all along to take two.”

“Now, this is a little too much, Isabel. You know we never mentioned the matter till this moment.”

“It ’s the same as a promise, your not saying you wouldn’t. But I don’t ask you to keep your word. I don’t want to go round the mountain. I’d much rather go to the hotel. I’m tired.”

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“Very well, then, Isabel, I’ll leave you at the hotel.”

In a moment it had come, the first serious dispute of their wedded life. It had come as all such calamities come, from nothing, and it was on them in full disaster ere they knew. Such a very little while ago, there in the convent garden, their lives had been drawn closer in sympathy than ever before; and now that blessed time seemed ages since, and they were further asunder than those who have never been friends. “I thought,” bitterly mused Isabel, “that he would have done anything for me.” “Who could have dreamed that a woman of her sense would be so unreasonable,” he wondered. Both had tempers, as I know my dearest reader has (if a lady), and neither would yield; and so, presently, they could hardly tell how, for they were aghast at it all, Isabel was alone in her room amidst the ruins of her life, and Basil alone in the one-horse carriage, trying to drive away from the wreck of his happiness. All was over; the dream was past; the charm was broken. The sweetness of their love was turned to gall; whatever had pleased them in their loving moods was loathsome now, and the things they had praised a moment before were hateful. In that baleful light, which seemed to dwell upon all they ever said or did in mutual enjoyment, how poor and stupid and empty looked their wedding-journey! Basil spent five minutes in arraigning his wife and convicting her of every folly and fault. His soul was in a whirl,

> “For to be wroth with one we love
> Doth work like madness in the brain.”

In the midst of his bitter and furious upbraidings he found himself suddenly become her ardent advocate, and ready to denounce her judge as a heartless monster. “On our wedding journey, too! Good heavens, what an incredible brute I am!” Then he said, “What an ass I am!” And the pathos of the case having yielded to its absurdity, he was helpless. In five minutes more he was at Isabel’s side, the one-horse carriage driver dismissed with a handsome pour-boire, and a pair of lusty bays with a glittering barouche waiting at the door below. He swiftly accounted for his presence, which she seemed to find the most natural thing that could be, and she met his surrender with the openness of a heart that forgives but does not forget, if indeed the most gracious art is the only one unknown to the sex.

She rose with a smile from the ruins of her life, amidst which she had heart-brokenly sat down with all her things on. “I knew you’d come back,” she said.

“So did I,” he answered. “I am much too good and noble to sacrifice my preference to my duty.”

“I didn’t care particularly for the two horses, Basil,” she said, as they descended to the barouche. “It was your refusing them that hurt me.”

“And I didn’t want the one-horse carriage. It was your insisting so that provoked me.”

“Do you think people ever quarreled before on a wedding journey?” asked Isabel as they drove gayly out of the city.

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“Never! I can’t conceive of it. I suppose if this were written down, nobody would believe it.”

“No, nobody could,” said Isabel, musingly, and she added after a pause, “I wish you would tell me just what you thought of me, dearest. Did you feel as you did when our little affair was broken off, long ago? Did you hate me?”

“I did, most cordially; but not half so much as I despised myself the next moment. As to its being like a lover’s quarrel, it wasn’t. It was more bitter, so much more love than lovers ever give had to be taken back. Besides, it had no dignity, and a lover’s quarrel always has. A lover’s quarrel always springs from a more serious cause, and has an air of romantic tragedy. This had no grace of the kind. It was a poor shabby little squabble.”

“O, don’t call it so, Basil! I should like you to respect even a quarrel of ours more than that. It was tragical enough with me, for I didn’t see how it could ever be made up. I knew I couldn’t make the advances. I don’t think it is quite feminine to be the first to forgive, is it?”

“I’m sure I can’t say. Perhaps it would be rather unladylike.”

“Well, you see, dearest, what I am trying to get at is this: whether we shall love each other the more or the less for it. I think we shall get on all the better for a while, on account of it. But I should have said it was totally out of character it’s something you might have expected of a very young bridal couple; but after what we’ve been through, it seems too improbable.”

“Very well,” said Basil, who, having made all the concessions, could not enjoy the quarrel as she did, simply because it was theirs; “let ’s behave as if it had never been.”

“O no, we can’t. To me, it’s as if we had just won each other.”

In fact it gave a wonderful zest and freshness to that ride round the mountain, and shed a beneficent glow upon the rest of their journey. The sun came out through the thin clouds, and lighted up the vast plain that swept away north and east, with the purple heights against the eastern sky. The royal mountain lifted its graceful mass beside them, and hid the city wholly from sight. Peasant-villages, in the shade of beautiful elms, dotted the plain in every direction, and at intervals crept up to the side of the road along which they drove. But these had been corrupted by a more ambitious architecture since Basil saw them last, and were no longer purely French in appearance. Then, nearly every house was a tannery in a modest way, and poetically published the fact by the display of a sheep’s tail over the front door, like a bush at a wine-shop. Now, if the tanneries still existed, the poetry of the cheeps’ tails had vanished from the portals. But our friends were consoled by meeting numbers of the

peasants jolting home from market in the painted carts, which are doubtless of the pattern of the carts first built there two hundred years ago. They were grateful for the immortal old wooden, crooked and brown with the labor of the fields, who abounded in these vehicles; when a huge girl jumped from the tail of her cart, and showed the thick, clumsy ankles of a true peasant-maid, they could only sigh out their unspeakable satisfaction.

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Gardens embowered and perfumed the low cottages, through the open doors of which they could see the exquisite neatness of the life within. One of the doors opened into a school-house, where they beheld with rapture the school-mistress, book in hand, and with a quaint cap on her gray head, and encircled by her flock of little boys and girls.

By and by it began to rain again; and now while their driver stopped to put up the top of the barouche, they entered a country church which had taken their fancy, and walked up the aisle with the steps that blend with silence rather than break it, while they heard only the soft whisper of the shower without. There was no one there but themselves. The urn of holy water seemed not to have been troubled that day, and no penitent knelt at the shrine, before which twinkled so faintly one lighted lamp. The white roof swelled into dim arches over their heads; the pale day like a visible hush stole through the painted windows; they heard themselves breathe as they crept from picture to picture.

A narrow door opened at the side of the high altar, and a slender young priest appeared in a long black robe, and with shaven head. He, too as he moved with noiseless feet, seemed a part of the silence; and when he approached with dreamy black eyes fixed upon them, and bowed courteously, it seemed impossible he should speak. But he spoke, the pale young priest, the dark-robed tradition, the tonsured vision of an age and a church that are passing.

“Do you understand French, monsieur?”

“A very little, monsieur.”

“A very little is more than my English,” he said, yet he politely went the round of the pictures with them, and gave them the names of the painters between his crossings at the different altars. At the high altar there was a very fair Crucifixion; before this the priest bent one knee. “Fine picture, fine altar, fine church,” he said in English. At last they stopped next the poor-box. As their coins clinked against those within, he smiled serenely upon the good heretics. Then he bowed, and, as if he had relapsed into the past, he vanished through the narrow door by which he had entered.

Basil and Isabel stood speechless a moment on the church steps. Then she cried,

“O, why didn’t something happen?”

“Ah, my dear! what could have keen half so good as the nothing that did happen? Suppose we knew him to have taken orders because of a disappointment in love: how common it would have made him; everybody has been crossed in love once or twice.” He bade the driver take them back to the hotel. “This is the very bouquet of adventure why should we care for the grosser body? I dare say if we knew all about yonder pale young priest, we should not think him half so interesting as we do now.”

At dinner they spent the intervals of the courses in guessing the nationality of the different persons, and in wondering if the Canadians did not make it a matter of conscientious loyalty to out-English the English even in the matter of pale-ale and sherry, and in rotundity of person and freshness of face, just as they emulated them in the cut of their clothes and whiskers. Must they found even their health upon the health of the mother-country?

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Our friends began to detect something servile in it all, and but that they were such amiable persons, the loyally perfect digestion of Montreal would have gone far to impair their own.

The loyalty, which had already appeared to them in the cathedral, suggested itself in many ways upon the street, when they went out after dinner to do that little shopping which Isabel had planned to do in Montreal. The booksellers' windows were full of Canadian editions of our authors, and English copies of English works, instead of our pirated editions; the dry-goods stores were gay with fabrics in the London taste and garments of the London shape; here was the sign of a photographer to the Queen, there of a hatter to H. R. H. the Prince of Wales; a barber was "under the patronage of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, H. E. the Duke of Cambridge, and the gentry of Montreal." 'Ich dien' was the motto of a restaurateur; a hosier had gallantly labeled his stock in trade with 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'. Again they noted the English solidity of the civic edifices, and already they had observed in the foreign population a difference from that at home. They saw no German faces on the streets, and the Irish faces had not that truculence which they wear sometimes with us. They had not lost their native simpleness and kindliness; the Irishmen who drove the public carriages were as civil as our own Boston hackmen, and behaved as respectfully under the shadow of England here, as they world have done under it in Ireland. The problem which vexes us seems to have been solved pleasantly enough in Canada. Is it because the Celt cannot brook equality; and where he has not an established and recognized caste above him, longs to trample on those about him; and if he cannot be lowest, will at least be highest?

However, our friends did not suffer this or any other advantage of the colonial relation to divert them from the opinion to which their observation was gradually bringing them,—-that its overweening loyalty placed a great country like Canada in s very silly attitude, the attitude of an overgrown, unmanly boy, clinging to the maternal skirts, and though spoilt and willful, without any character of his own. The constant reference of local hopes to that remote centre beyond seas, the test of success by the criterions of a necessarily different civilization, the social and intellectual dependence implied by traits that meet the most hurried glance in the Dominion, give an effect of meanness to the whole fabric. Doubtless it is a life of comfort, of peace, of irresponsibility they live there, but it lacks the grandeur which no sum of material prosperity can give; it is ignoble, like all voluntarily subordinate things. Somehow, one feels that it has no basis in the New World, and that till it is shaken loose from England it cannot have.

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It would be a pity, however, if it should be parted from the parent country merely to be joined to an unsympathetic half-brother like ourselves and nothing, fortunately, seems to be further from the Canadian mind. There are some experiments no longer possible to us which could still be tried there to the advantage of civilization, and we were better two great nations side by side than a union of discordant traditions and ideas. But none the less does the American traveller, swelling with forgetfulness of the shabby despots who govern New York, and the swindling railroad kings whose word is law to the whole land, feel like saying to the hulling young giant beyond St. Lawrence and the Lakes, "Sever the apron-strings of allegiance, and try to be yourself whatever you are."

Something of this sort Basil said, though of course not in apostrophic phrase, nor with Isabel's entire concurrence, when he explained to her that it was to the colonial dependence of Canada she owed the ability to buy things so cheaply there.

The fact is that the ladies' parlor at the hotel had been after dinner no better than a den of smugglers, in which the fair contrabandists had debated the best means of evading the laws of their country. At heart every man is a smuggler, and how much more every woman! She would have no scruple in ruining the silk and woolen interest throughout the United States. She is a free-trader by intuitive perception of right, and is limited in practice by nothing but fear of the statute. What could be taken into the States without detection, was the subject before that wicked conclave; and next, what it would pay to buy in Canada. It seemed that silk umbrellas were most eligible wares; and in the display of such purchases the parlor was given the appearance of a violent thunder-storm. Gloves it was not advisable to get; they were better at home, as were many kinds of fine woolen goods. But laces, which you could carry about you, were excellent; and so was any kind of silk. Could it be carried if simply cut, and not made up? There was a difference about this: the friend of one lady had taken home half a trunkful of cut silks; the friend of another had "run up the breadths" of one lone little silk skirt, and then lost it by the rapacity of the customs officers. It was pretty much luck, and whether the officers happened to be in good-humor or not. You must not try to take in anything out of season, however. One had heard of a Boston lady going home in July, who "had the furs taken off her back," in that inclement month. Best get everything seasonable, and put it on at once. "And then, you know, if they ask you, you can say it's been worn." To this black wisdom came the combined knowledge of those miscreants. Basil could not repress a shudder at the innate depravity of the female heart. Here were virgins nurtured in the most spotless purity of life, here were virtuous mothers of families, here were venerable matrons, patterns in society and the church,—smugglers to a woman, and eager for any guilty subterfuge! He glanced at Isabel to see what effect the evil conversation had upon her. Her eyes sparkled; her cheeks glowed; all the woman was on fire for smuggling. He sighed heavily and went out with her to do the little shopping.

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Shall I follow them upon their excursion? Shopping in Montreal is very much what it is in Boston or New York, I imagine, except that the clerks have a more honeyed sweetness of manners towards the ladies of our nation, and are surprisingly generous constructionists of our revenue laws. Isabel had profited by every word that she had heard in the ladies' parlor, and she would not venture upon unsafe ground; but her tender eyes looked her unutterable longing to believe in the charming possibilities that the clerks suggested. She bemoaned herself before the corded silks, which there was no time to have made up; the piece-velvets and the linens smote her to the heart. But they also stimulated her invention, and she bought and bought of the made-up wares in real or fancied needs, till Basil represented that neither their purses nor their trunks could stand any more. "O, don't be troubled about the trunks, dearest," she cried, with that gayety which nothing but shopping can kindle in a woman's heart; while he faltered on from counter to counter, wondering at which he should finally swoon from fatigue. At last, after she had declared repeatedly, "There, now, I am done," she briskly led the way back to the hotel to pack up her purchases.

Basil parted with her at the door. He was a man of high principle himself, and that scene in the smugglers' den, and his wife's preparation for transgression, were revelations for which nothing could have consoled him but a paragon umbrella for five dollars, and an excellent business suit of Scotch goods for twenty.

When some hours later he sat with Isabel on the forward promenade of the steamboat for Quebec, and summed up the profits of their shopping, they were both in the kindliest mood towards the poor Canadians, who had built the admirable city before them.

For miles the water front of Montreal is superbly faced with quays and locks of solid stone masonry, and thus she is clean and beautiful to the very feet. Stately piles of architecture, instead of the foul old tumble-down warehouses that dishonor the waterside in most cities, rise from the broad wharves; behind these spring the twin towers of Notre Dame, and the steeples of the other churches above the city roofs.

"It's noble, yes, it's noble, after the best that Europe can show," said Isabel, with enthusiasm; "and what a pleasant day we've had here! Doesn't even our quarrel show 'couleur de rose' in this light?"

"One side of it," answered Basil, dreamily, "but all the rest is black."

"What do you mean, my dear?"

"Why, the Nelson Monument, with the sunset on it at the head of the street there."

The affect was so fine that Isabel could not be angry with him for failing to heed what she had said, and she mused a moment with him.

“It seems rather far-fetched,” she said presently, “to erect a monument to Nelson in Montreal, doesn’t it? But then, it’s a very absurd monument when you’re near it,” she added, thoughtfully.

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Basil did not answer at once, for gazing on this Nelson column in Jacques Cartier Square, his thoughts wandered away, not to the hero of the Nile, but to the doughty old Breton navigator, the first white man who ever set foot upon that shore, and who more than three hundred years ago explored the St. Lawrence as far as Montreal, and in the splendid autumn weather climbed to the top of her green height and named it. The scene that Jacques Cartier then beheld, like a mirage of the fast projected upon the present, floated before him, and he saw at the mountain's foot the Indian city of Hochelaga, with its vast and populous lodges of bark, its encircling palisades, and its wide outlying fields of yellow maize. He heard with Jacques Cartier's sense the blare of his followers' trumpets down in the open square of the barbarous city, where the soldiers of many an Old-World fight, "with mustached lip and bearded chin, with arquebuse and glittering halberd, helmet, and cuirass," moved among the plumed and painted savages; then he lifted Jacques Cartier's eyes, and looked out upon the magnificent landscape. "East, wept, and north, the mantling forest was over all, and the broad blue ribbon of the great river glistened amid a realm of verdure. Beyond, to the bounds of Mexico, stretched a leafy desert, and the vast hive of industry, the mighty battle-ground of late; centuries, lay sunk in savage torpor, wrapped in illimitable woods."

A vaguer picture of Champlain, who, seeking a westward route to China and the East, some three quarters of a century later, had fixed the first trading-post at Montreal, and camped upon the spot where the convent of the Gray Nuns now stands, appeared before him, and vanished with all its fleets of fur-traders' boats and hunters' birch canoes, and the watch-fires of both; and then in the sweet light of the spring morning, he saw Maisonneuve leaping ashore upon the green meadows, that spread all gay with early flowers where Hochelaga once stood, and with the black-robed Jesuits, the high-born, delicately nurtured, and devoted nuns, and the steel-clad soldiers of his train, kneeling about the altar raised there in the wilderness, and silent amidst the silence of nature at the lifted Host.

He painted a semblance of all this for Isabel, using the colors of the historian who has made these scenes the beautiful inheritance of all dream era, and sketched the battles, the miracles, the sufferings, and the penances through which the pious colony was preserved and prospered, till they both grew impatient of modern Montreal, and would fain have had the ancient Villemarie back in its place.

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“Think of Maisonneuve, dearest, climbing in midwinter to the top of the mountain there, under a heavy cross set with the bones of saints, and planting it on the summit, in fulfillment of a vow to do so if Villemarie were saved from the freshet; and then of Madame de la Peltrie romantically receiving the sacrament there, while all Villemarie fell down adoring! Ah, that was a picturesque people! When did ever a Boston governor climb to the top of Beacon hill in fulfillment of a vow? To be sure, we may yet see a New York governor doing something of the kind—if he can find a hill. But this ridiculous column to Nelson, who never had anything to do with Montreal,” he continued; “it really seems to me the perfect expression of snobbish colonial dependence and sentimentality, seeking always to identify itself with the mother-country, and ignoring the local past and its heroic figures. A column to Nelson in Jacques Cartier Square, on the ground that was trodden by Champlain, and won for its present masters by the death of Wolfe”

The boat departed on her trip to Quebec. During supper they were served by French waiters, who, without apparent English of their own, miraculously understood that of the passengers, except in the case of the furious gentleman who wanted English breakfast tea; to so much English as that their inspiration did not reach, and they forced him to compromise on coffee. It was a French boat, owned by a French company, and seemed to be officered by Frenchmen throughout; certainly, as our tourists in the joy of their good appetites affirmed, the cook was of that culinarily delightful nation.

The boat was almost as large as those of the Hudson, but it was not so lavishly splendid, though it had everything that could minister to the comfort and self-respect of the passengers. These were of all nations, but chiefly Americans, with some French Canadians. The former gathered on the forward promenade, enjoying what little of the landscape the growing night left visible, and the latter made society after their manner in the saloon. They were plain-looking men and women, mostly, and provincial, it was evident, to their inmost hearts; provincial in origin, provincial by inheritance, by all their circumstances, social and political. Their relation with France was not a proud one, but it was not like submersion by the slip-slop of English colonial loyalty; yet they seem to be troubled by no memories of their hundred years’ dominion of the land that they rescued from, the wilderness, and that was wrested from them by war. It is a strange fate for any people thus to have been cut off from the parent-country, and abandoned to whatever destiny their conquerors chose to reserve for them; and if each of the race wore the sadness and strangeness of that fate in his countenance it would not be wonderful. Perhaps it is wonderful that none of them shows anything of the kind. In their desertion they have multiplied and prospered; they may have a national grief, but they hide it well; and probably they have none.

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Later, one of them appeared to Isabel in the person of the pale, slender young ecclesiastic who had shown her and Basil the pictures in the country church. She was confessing to the priest, and she was not at all surprised to find that he was Basil in a suit of medieval armor. He had an immense cross on his shoulder.

“To get this cross to the top of the mountain,” thought Isabel, “we must have two horses. Basil,” she added, aloud, “we must have two horses!”

“Ten, if you like, my dear,” answered his voice, cheerfully, “though I think we’d better ride up in the omnibus.”

She opened her eyes, and saw him smiling.

“We’re in sight of Quebec,” he said. “Come out as soon as you can,—come out into the seventeenth century.”

IX. QUEBEC.

Isabel hurried out upon the forward promenade, where all the other passengers seemed to be assembled, and beheld a vast bulk of gray and purple rock, swelling two hundred feet up from the mists of the river, and taking the early morning light warm upon its face and crown. Black-hulked, red-illumined Liverpool steamers, gay river-craft and ships of every sail and flag, filled the stream athwart which the ferries sped their swift traffic-laden shuttles; a lower town hung to the foot of the rock, and crept, populous and picturesque, up its sides; from the massive citadel on its crest flew the red banner of Saint George, and along its brow swept the gray wall of the famous, heroic, beautiful city, overtopped by many a gleaming spire and antique roof.

Slowly out of our work-day, business-suited, modern world the vessel steamed up to this city of an olden time and another ideal,—to her who was a lady from the first, devout and proud and strong, and who still, after two hundred and fifty years, keeps perfect the image and memory of the feudal past from which she sprung. Upon her height she sits unique; and when you say Quebec, having once beheld her, you invoke a sense of medieval strangeness and of beauty which the name of no other city could intensify.

As they drew near the steamboat wharf they saw, swarming over a broad square, a market beside which the Bonsecours Market would have shown as common as the Quincy, and up the odd wooden-sidewalked street stretched an aisle of carriages and those high swung calashes, which are to Quebec what the gondolas are to Venice. But the hand of destiny was upon our tourists, and they rode up town in an omnibus. They were going to the dear old Hotel Musty in Street, wanting which Quebec is not to be thought of without a pang. It is now closed, and Prescott Gate, through which they

drove into the Upper Town, has been demolished since the summer of last year. Swiftly whirled along the steep winding road, by those Quebec horses which expect to gallop up hill whatever they do going down, they turned a corner of the towering weed-grown rock, and shot in under the low arch of the gate,

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pierced with smaller doorways for the foot-passengers. The gloomy masonry dripped with damp, the doors were thickly studded with heavy iron spikes; old cannon, thrust endwise into the ground at the sides of the gate, protected it against passing wheels. Why did not some semi-forbidding commissary of police, struggling hard to overcome his native politeness, appear and demand their passports? The illusion was otherwise perfect, and it needed but this touch. How often in the adored Old World, which we so love and disapprove, had they driven in through such gates at that morning hour! On what perverse pretext, then, was it not some ancient town of Normandy?

“Put a few enterprising Americans in here, and they’d soon rattle this old wall down and let in a little fresh air!” said a patriotic voice at Isabel’s elbow, and continued to find fault with the narrow irregular streets, the huddling gables, the quaint roofs, through which and under which they drove on to the hotel.

As they dashed into a broad open square, “Here is the French Cathedral; there is the Upper Town Market; yonder are the Jesuit Barracks!” cried Basil; and they had a passing glimpse of gray stone towers at one side of the square, and a low, massive yellow building at the other, and, between the two, long ranks of carts, and fruit and vegetable stands, protected by canvas awnings and broad umbrellas. Then they dashed round the corner of a street, and drew up before the hotel door. The low ceilings, the thick walls, the clumsy wood-work, the wandering corridors, gave the hotel all the desired character of age, and its slovenly state bestowed an additional charm. In another place they might have demanded neatness, but in Quebec they would almost have resented it. By a chance they had the best room in the house, but they held it only till certain people who had engaged it by telegraph should arrive in the hourly expected steamer from Liverpool; and, moreover, the best room at Hotel Musty was consolingly bad. The house was very full, and the Ellisons (who had come on with them from Montreal) were bestowed in less state only on like conditions.

The travellers all met at breakfast, which was admirably cooked, and well served, with the attendance of those swarms of flies which infest Quebec. and especially infested the old Musty House, in summer. It had, of course, the attraction of broiled salmon, upon which the traveller breakfasts every day as long as he remains in Lower Canada; and it represented the abundance of wild berries in the Quebec market; and it was otherwise a breakfast worthy of the appetites that honored it.

There were not many other Americans besides themselves at this hotel, which seemed, indeed, to be kept open to oblige such travellers as had been there before, and could not persuade themselves to try the new Hotel St. Louis, whither the vastly greater number resorted. Most of the faces our tourists saw were English or English-Canadian, and the young people from Omaha; who had got here by some chance, were scarcely in harmony with the place. They appeared to be a bridal party, but which of the two

sisters, in buff linen ‘clad from head to foot’ was the bride, never became known. Both were equally free with the husband, and he was impartially fond of both: it was quite a family affair.

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For a moment Isabel harbored the desire to see the city in company with Miss Ellison; but it was only a passing weakness. She remembered directly the coolness between friends which she had seen caused by objects of interest in Europe, and she wisely deferred a more intimate acquaintance till it could have a purely social basis. After all, nothing is so tiresome as continual exchange of sympathy or so apt to end in mutual dislike,—except gratitude. So the ladies parted friends till dinner, and drove off in separate carriages.

As in other show cities, there is a routine at Quebec for travellers who come on Saturday and go on Monday, and few depart from it. Our friends necessarily, therefore, drove first to the citadel. It was raining one of those cold rains by which the scarce-banished winter reminds the Canadian fields of his nearness even in midsummer, though between the bitter showers the air was sultry and close; and it was just the light in which to see the grim strength of the fortress next strongest to Gibraltar in the world. They passed a heavy iron gateway, and up through a winding lane of masonry to the gate of the citadel, where they were delivered into the care of Private Joseph Drakes, who was to show them such parts of the place as are open to curiosity. But, a citadel which has never stood a siege, or been threatened by any danger more serious than Fenianism, soon becomes, however strong, but a dull piece of masonry to the civilian; and our tourists more rejoiced in the crumbling fragment of the old French wall which the English destroyed than in all they had built; and they valued the latter work chiefly for the glorious prospects of the St. Lawrence and its mighty valleys which it commanded. Advanced into the centre of an amphitheatre inconceivably vast, that enormous beak of rock overlooks the narrow angle of the river, and then, in every direction, immeasurable stretches of gardened vale, and wooded upland, till all melts into the purple of the encircling mountains. Far and near are lovely white villages nestling under elms, in the heart of fields and meadows; and everywhere the long, narrow, accurately divided farms stretch downward to the river-shores. The best roads on the continent make this beauty and richness accessible; each little village boasts some natural wonder in stream, or lake, or cataract: and this landscape, magnificent beyond any in eastern America, is historical and interesting beyond all others. Hither came Jacques Cartier three hundred and fifty years ago, and wintered on the low point there by the St. Charles; here, nearly a century after, but still fourteen years before the landing at Plymouth, Champlain founded the missionary city of Quebec; round this rocky beak came sailing the half-piratical armament of the Calvinist Kirks in 1629, and seized Quebec in the interest of the English, holding it three years; in the Lower Town, yonder, first landed the coldly welcomed Jesuits, who came with the returning French

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and made Quebec forever eloquent of their zeal, their guile, their heroism; at the foot of this rock lay the fleet of Sir William Phipps, governor of Massachusetts, and vainly assailed it in 1698; in 1759 came Wolfe and embattled all the region, on river and land, till at last the bravely defended city fell into his dying hand on the Plains of Abraham; here Montgomery laid down his life at the head of the boldest and most hopeless effort of our War of Independence.

Private Joseph Drakes, with the generosity of an enemy expecting drink-money, pointed out the sign, board on the face of the crag commemorating 'Montgomery's death'; and then showed them the officers' quarters and those of the common soldiers, not far from which was a line of hang-dog fellows drawn up to receive sentence for divers small misdemeanors, from an officer whose blond whiskers drooped Dundrearily from his fresh English cheeks. There was that immense difference between him and the men in physical grandeur and beauty, which is so notable in the aristocratically ordered military services of Europe, and which makes the rank seem of another race from the file. Private Drakes saluted his superior, and visibly deteriorated in his presence, though his breast was covered with medals, and he had fought England's battles in every part of the world. It was a gross injustice, the triumph of a thousand years of wrong; and it was touching to have Private Drakes say that he expected in three months to begin life for himself, after twenty years' service of the Queen; and did they think he could get anything to do in the States? He scarcely knew what he was fit for, but he thought—to so little in him came the victories he had helped to win in the Crimea, in China, and in India—that he coald take care of a gentleman's horse and work about his place. He looked inquiringly at Basil, as if he might be a gentleman with a horse to be taken care of and a place to be worked about, and made him regret that he was not a man of substance enough to provide for Private Drakes and Mrs. Drakes and the brood of Ducklings, who had been shown to him stowed away in one of those cavernous rooms in the earthworks where the married soldiers have their quarters. His regret enriched the reward of Private Drakes' service,—which perhaps answered one of Private Drakes' purposes, if not his chief aim. He promised to come to the States upon the pressing advice of Isabel, who, speaking from her own large experience, declared that everybody got on there,—and he bade our friends an affectionate farewell as they drove away to the Plains of Abraham.

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The fashionable suburban cottages and places of Quebec are on the St. Louis Road leading northward to the old battle-ground and beyond it; but, these face chiefly towards the rivers St. Lawrence and St. Charles, and lofty hedges and shrubbery hide them in an English seclusion from the highway; so that the visitor may uninterruptedly meditate whatever emotion he will for the scene of Wolfe's death as he rides along. His loftiest emotion will want the noble height of that heroic soul, who must always stand forth in history a figure of beautiful and singular distinction, admirable alike for the sensibility and daring, the poetic pensiveness, and the martial ardor that mingled in him and taxed his feeble frame with tasks greater than it could bear. The whole story of the capture of Quebec is full of romantic splendor and pathos. Her fall was a triumph for all the English-speaking race, and to us Americans, long scourged by the cruel Indian wars plotted within her walls or sustained by her strength, such a blessing as was hailed with ringing bells and blazing bonfires throughout the Colonies; yet now we cannot think without pity of the hopes extinguished and the labors brought to naught in her overthrow. That strange colony of priests and soldiers, of martyrs and heroes, of which she was the capital, willing to perish for an allegiance to which the mother-country was indifferent, and fighting against the armies with which England was prepared to outnumber the whole Canadian population, is a magnificent spectacle; and Montcalm laying down his life to lose Quebec is not less affecting than Wolfe dying to win her. The heart opens towards the soldier who recited, on the eve of his costly victory, the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," which he would "rather have written than beat the French to-morrow;" but it aches for the defeated general, who, hurt to death, answered, when told how brief his time was, "So much the better; then I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec."

In the city for which they perished their fame has never been divided. The English have shown themselves very generous victors; perhaps nothing could be alleged against them, but that they were victors. A shaft common to Wolfe and Montcalm celebrates them both in the Governor's Garden; and in the Chapel of the Ursuline Convent a tablet is placed, where Montcalm died, by the same conquerors who raised to Wolfe's memory the column on the battle-field.

A dismal prison covers the ground where the hero fell, and the monument stands on the spot where Wolfe breathed his last, on ground lower than the rest of the field; the friendly hollow that sheltered him from the fire of the French dwarfs his monument; yet it is sufficient, and the simple inscription, "Here died Wolfe victorious," gives it a dignity which many cubits of added stature could not bestow. Another of those bitter showers, which had interspersed the morning's sunshine, drove suddenly across the open plain, and our tourists comfortably sentimentalized the scene behind the close-drawn curtains of their carriage. Here a whole empire had been lost and won, Basil reminded Isabel; and she said, "Only think of it!" and looked to a wandering fold of her skirt, upon which the rain beat through a rent of the curtain.

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Do I pitch the pipe too low? We poor honest men are at a sad disadvantage; and now and then I am minded to give a loose to fancy, and attribute something really grand and fine to my people, in order to make them worthier the reader's respected acquaintance. But again, I forbid myself in a higher interest; and I am afraid that even if I were less virtuous, I could not exalt their mood upon a battle-field; for of all things of the past a battle is the least conceivable. I have heard men who fought in many battles say that the recollection was like a dream to them; and what can the merely civilian imagination do on the Plains of Abraham, with the fact that there, more than a century ago, certain thousands of Frenchmen marched out, on a bright September morning, to kill and maim as many Englishmen? This ground, so green and oft with grass beneath the feet, was it once torn with shot and soaked with the blood of men? Did they lie here in ranks and heaps, the miserable slain, for whom tender hearts away yonder over the sea were to ache and break? Did the wretches that fell wounded stretch themselves here, and writhe beneath the feet of friend and foe, or crawl array for shelter into little hollows, and behind gushes and fallen trees! Did he, whose soul was so full of noble and sublime impulses, die here, shot through like some ravening beast? The loathsome carnage, the shrieks, the hellish din of arms, the cries of victory,—I vainly strive to conjure up some image of it all now; and God be thanked, horrible spectre! that, fill the world with sorrow as thou wilt, thou still remainest incredible in its moments of sanity and peace. Least credible art thou on the old battle-fields, where the mother of the race denies thee with breeze and sun and leaf and bird, and every blade of grass! The red stain in Basil's thought yielded to the rain sweeping across the pasture-land from which it had long since faded, and the words on the monument, "Here died Wolfe victorious," did not proclaim his bloody triumph over the French, but his self-conquest, his victory over fear and pain and love of life. Alas! when shall the poor, blind, stupid world honor those who renounce self in the joy of their kind, equally with those who devote themselves through the anguish and loss of thousands? So old a world and groping still!

The tourists were better fitted for the next occasion of sentiment, which was at the Hotel Dieu whither they went after returning from the battlefield. It took all the mal-address of which travellers are masters to secure admittance, and it was not till they had rung various wrong bells, and misunderstood many soft nun-voices speaking French through grated doors, and set divers sympathetic spectators doing ineffectual services, that they at last found the proper entrance, and were answered in English that the porter would ask if they might see the chapel. They hoped to find there the skull of Brebeuf, one of those Jesuit martyrs who perished long ago for

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the conversion of a race that has perished, and whose relics they had come, fresh from their reading of Parkman, with some vague and patronizing intention to revere. An elderly sister with a pale, kind face led them through a ward of the hospital into the chapel, which they found in the expected taste, and exquisitely neat and cool, but lacking the martyr's skull. They asked if it were not to be seen. "Ah, yes, poor Pere Brebeuf!" sighed the gentle sister, with the tone and manner of having lost him yesterday; "we had it down only last week, showing it to some Jesuit fathers; but it's in the convent now, and isn't to be seen." And there mingled apparently in her regret for Pere Brebeuf a confusing sense of his actual state as a portable piece of furniture. She would not let them praise the chapel. It was very clean, yes, but there was nothing to see in it. She deprecated their compliments with many shrugs, but she was pleased; for when we renounce the pomps and vanities of this world, we are pretty sure to find them in some other,—if we are women. She, good and pure soul, whose whole life was given to self-denying toil, had yet something angelically coquettish in her manner, a spiritual-worldliness which was the clarified likeness of this-worldliness. O, had they seen the Hotel Dieu at Montreal? Then (with a vivacious wave of the hands) they would not care to look at this, which by comparison was nothing. Yet she invited them to go through the wards if they would, and was clearly proud to have them see the wonderful cleanness and comfort of the place. There were not many patients, but here and there a wan or fevered face looked at them from its pillow, or a weak form drooped beside a bed, or a group of convalescents softly talked together. They came presently to the last hall, at the end of which sat another nun, beside a window that gave a view of the busy port, and beyond it the landscape of village-lit plain and forest-darkened height. On a table at her elbow stood a rose-tree, on which hung two only pale tea-roses, so fair, so perfect, that Isabel cried out in wonder and praise. Ere she could prevent it, the nun, to whom there had been some sort of presentation, gathered one of the roses, and with a shy grace offered it to Isabel, who shrank back a little as from too costly a gift. "Take it," said the first nun, with her pretty French accent; while the other, who spoke no English at all, beamed a placid smile; and Isabel took it. The flower, lying light in her palm, exhaled a delicate odor, and a thrill of exquisite compassion for it trembled through her heart, as if it had been the white, cloistered life of the silent nun: with its pallid loveliness, it was as a flower that had taken the veil. It could never have uttered the burning passion of a lover for his mistress; the nightingale could have found no thorn on it to press his aching poet's heart against; but sick and weary eyes had dwelt gratefully upon it; at most it might have expressed, like a prayer, the nun's stainless love of some favorite saint in paradise. Cold, and pale, and sweet,—was it indeed only a flower, this cloistered rose of the Hotel Dieu?

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“Breathe it,” said the gentle Gray Sister; “sometimes the air of the hospital offends. Not us, no; we are used; but you come from the outside.” And she gave her rose for this humble use as lovingly as she devoted herself to her lowly taxes.

“It is very little to see,” she said at the end; “but if you are pleased, I am very glad. Goodby, good-by!” She stood with her arms folded, and watched them out of sight with her kind, coquettish little smile, and then the mute, blank life of the nun resumed her.

From Hotel Dieu to Hotel Musty it was but a step; both were in the same street; but our friends fancied themselves to have come an immense distance when they sat down at an early dinner, amidst the clash of crockery and cutlery, and looked round upon all the profane travelling world assembled. Their regard presently fixed upon one company which monopolized a whole table, and were defined from the other diners by peculiarities as marked as those of the Soeurs Grises themselves. There were only two men among some eight or ten women; one of the former had a bad amiable face, with eyes full of a merry deviltry; the other, clean. shaven, and dark, was demure and silent as a priest. The ladies were of various types, but of one effect, with large rolling eyes, and faces that somehow regarded the beholder as from a distance, and with an impartial feeling for him as for an element of publicity. One of them, who caressed a lapdog with one hand while she served herself with the other, was, as she seemed to believe, a blonde; she had pale blue eyes, and her hair was cut in front so as to cover her forehead with a straggling sandy-colored fringe. She had an English look, and three or four others, with dark complexion and black, unsteady eyes, and various abandon of back-hair, looked like Cockney houris of Jewish blood; while two of the lovely company were clearly of our own nation, as was the young man with the reckless laughing face. The ladies were dressed and jeweled with a kind of broad effectiveness, which was to the ordinary style of society what scene-painting is to painting, and might have borne close inspection no better. They seemed the best-humored people in the world, and on the kindliest terms with each other. The waiters shared their pleasant mood, and served them affectionately, and were now and then invited to join in the gay talk which babbled on over dislocated aspirates, and filled the air with a sentiment of vagabond enjoyment, of the romantic freedom of violated convention, of something Gil Blas-like, almost picaresque.

If they had needed explanation it would have been given by the announcement in the office of the hotel that a troupe of British blondes was then appearing in Quebec for one week only.

After dinner they took possession of the parlor, and while one strummed fitfully upon the ailing hotel piano, the rest talked, and talked shop, of course, as all of us do when several of a trade are got together.

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“W’at,” said the eldest of the dark-faced, black haired British blondes of Jewish race,—-“w’at are we going to give at Montrehal?”

“We’re going to give ‘Pygmalion,’ at Montrehal,” answered the British blonde of American birth, good-humoredly burlesquing the erring h of her sister.

“But we cahn’t, you know,” said the lady with the fringed forehead; “Hagnes is gone on to New York, and there’s nobody to do Wenus.”

“Yes, you know,” demanded the, first speaker, “oo’s to do Wenus?

“Bella’s to do Wenus,” said a third.

There was an outcry at this, and “’Ow ever would she get herself up for ’Venus?” and “W’at a guy she’ll look!” and “Nonsense! Bella’s too ’eavy for Venus!” came from different lively critics; and the debate threatened to become too intimate for the public ear, when one of their gentlemen came in and said, “Charley don’t seem so well this afternoon.” On this the chorus changed its note, and at the proposal, “Poor Charley, let ’s go and cheer ’im hop a bit,” the whole good-tempered company trooped out of the parlor together.

Our tourists meant to give the rest of the afternoon to that sort of aimless wandering to and fro about the streets which seizes a foreign city unawares, and best develops its charm of strangeness. So they went out and took their fill of Quebec with appetites keen through long fasting from the quaint and old, and only sharpened by Montreal, and impartially rejoiced in the crooked up-and-down hill streets; the thoroughly French domestic architecture of a place that thus denied having been English for a hundred years; the porte-cocheres beside every house; the French names upon the doors, and the oddity of the bellpulls; the rough-paved, rattling streets; the shining roofs of tin, and the universal dormer-windows; the littleness of the private houses, and the greatness of the high-walled and garden-girdled convents; the breadths of weather-stained city wall, and the shaggy cliff beneath; the batteries, with their guns peacefully staring through loop-holes of masonry, and the red-coated sergeants flirting with nursery-maids upon the carriages, while the children tumbled about over the pyramids of shot and shell; the sloping market-place before the cathedral, where yet some remnant of the morning’s traffic lingered under canvas canopies, and where Isabel bought a bouquet of marigolds and asters of an old woman peasant enough to have sold it in any market-place of Europe; the small, dark shops beyond the quarter invaded by English retail trade; the movement of all the strange figures of cleric and lay and military life; the sound of a foreign speech prevailing over the English; the encounter of other tourists, the passage back and forth through the different city gates; the public wooden stairways, dropping flight after flight from the Upper to the Lower Town; the bustle of the port, with its commerce and shipping and seafaring life huddled close in under the hill; the many desolate streets of the Lower Town, as black and ruinous as the last great fire left them;

and the marshy meadows beyond, memorable of Recollets and Jesuits, of Cartier and Montcalm.

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They went to the chapel of the Seminary at Laval University, and admired the Le Brun, and the other paintings of less merit, but equal interest through their suggestion of a whole dim religious world of paintings; and then they spent half an hour in the cathedral, not so much in looking at the Crucifixion by Vandyck which is there, as in reveling amid the familiar rococo splendors of the temple. Every swaggering statue of a saint, every rope-dancing angel, every cherub of those that on the carven and gilded clouds above the high altar float—

> "Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,"—

was precious to them; the sacristan dusting the sacred properties with a feather brush, and giving each shrine a business-like nod as he passed, was as a long-lost brother; they had hearts of aggressive tenderness for the young girls and old women who stepped in for a half-hour's devotion, and for the men with bourgeois or peasant faces, who stole a moment from affairs and crops, and gave it to the saints. There was nothing in the place that need remind them of America, and its taste was exactly that of a thousand other churches of the eighteenth century. They could easily have believed themselves in the farthest Catholic South, but for the two great porcelain stoves that stood on either side of the nave near the entrance, and that too vividly reminded them of the possibility of cold.

In fact, Quebec is a little painful in this and other confusions of the South and North, and one never quite reconciles himself to them. The Frenchmen, who expected to find there the climate of their native land, and ripen her wines in as kindly a sun, have perpetuated the image of home in so many things, that it goes to the heart with a painful emotion to find the sad, oblique light of the North upon them. As you ponder some characteristic aspect of Quebec,—a bit of street with heavy stone houses opening upon a stretch of the city wall, with a Lombardy poplar rising slim against it,—you say, to your satisfied soul, "Yes, it is the real thing!" and then all at once a sense of that Northern sky strikes in upon you, and makes the reality a mere picture. The sky is blue, the sun is often fiercely hot; you could not perhaps prove that the pathetic radiance is not an efflux of your own consciousness that summer is but hanging over the land, briefly poising on wings which flit at the first dash of rain, and will soon vanish in long retreat before the snow. But somehow, from without or from within, that light of the North is there.

It lay saddest, our travellers thought, upon the little circular garden near Durham Terrace, where every brightness of fall flowers abounded,—marigold, coxcomb, snap-dragon, dahlia, hollyhock, and sunflower. It was a substantial and hardy efflorescence, and they fancied that fainter-hearted plants would have pined away in that garden, where the little fountain, leaping up into the joyless light, fell back again with a

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musical shiver. The consciousness of this latent cold, of winter only held in abeyance by the bright sun, was not deeper even in the once magnificent, now neglected Governor's Garden, where there was actually a rawness in the late afternoon air, and whither they were strolling for the view from its height, and to pay their duty to the obelisk raised there to the common fame of Wolfe and Montcalm. The sounding Latin inscription celebrates the royal governor-general who erected it almost as much as the heroes to whom it was raised; but these spectators did not begrudge the space given to his praise, for so fine a thought merited praise. It enforced again the idea of a kind posthumous friendship between Wolfe and Montcalm, which gives their memory its rare distinction, and unites them, who fell in fight against each other, as closely as if they had both died for the same cause.

Some lasting dignity seems to linger about the city that has once been a capital; and this odor of fallen nobility belongs to Quebec, which was a capital in the European sense, with all the advantages of a small vice-regal court, and its social and political intrigues, in the French times. Under the English, for a hundred years it was the centre of Colonial civilization and refinement, with a governor-general's residence and a brilliant, easy, and delightful society, to which the large garrison of former days gave gayety and romance. The honors of a capital, first shared with Montreal and Toronto, now rest with half-savage Ottawa; and the garrison has dwindled to a regiment of rifles, whose presence would hardly be known, but for the natty sergeants lounging, stick in hand, about the streets and courting the nurse-maids. But in the days of old there were scenes of carnival pleasure in the Governor's Garden, and there the garrison band still plays once a week, when it is filled by the fashion and beauty of Quebec, and some semblance of the past is recalled. It is otherwise a lonesome, indifferently tended place, and on this afternoon there was no one there but a few loafing young fellows of low degree, French and English, and children that played screaming from seat to seat and path to path and over the too-heavily shaded grass. In spite of a conspicuous warning that any dog entering the garden would be destroyed, the place was thronged with dogs unmolested and apparently in no danger of the threatened doom. The seal of a disagreeable desolation was given in the legend rudely carved upon one of the benches, "Success to the Irish Republic!"

The morning of the next day our tourists gave to hearing mass at the French cathedral, which was not different, to their heretical senses, from any other mass, except that the ceremony was performed with a very full clerical force, and was attended by an uncommonly devout congregation. With Europe constantly in their minds, they were bewildered to find the worshippers not chiefly old and young women, but men also of all ages and of every degree, from the neat peasant in his Sabbath-day best to the modish young Quebecker, who spread his handkerchief on the floor to save his pantaloons during supplication. There was fashion and education in large degree among the men,

and there was in all a pious attention to the function in poetical keeping with the origin and history of a city which the zeal of the Church had founded.

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A magnificent beadle, clothed in a gold-laced coat aid bearing a silver staff, bowed to them when they entered, and, leading them to a pew, punched up a kneeling peasant, who mutely resumed his prayers in the aisle outside, while they took his place. It appeared to Isabel very unjust that their curiosity should displace his religion; but she consoled herself by making Basil give a shilling to the man who, preceded by the shining beadle, came round to take up a collection. The peasant could have given nothing but copper, and she felt that this restored the lost balance of righteousness in their favor. There was a sermon, very sweetly and gracefully delivered by a young priest of singular beauty, even among clergy whose good looks are so notable as those of Quebec; and then they followed the orderly crowd of worshippers out, and left the cathedral to the sacristan and the odor of incense.

They thought the type of French-Canadian better here than at Montreal, and they particularly noticed the greater number of pretty young girls. All classes were well dressed; for though the best dressed could not be called stylish according to the American standard, as Isabel decided, and had only a provincial gentility, the poorest wore garments that were clean and whole. Everybody, too, was going to have a hot Sunday dinner, if there was any truth in the odors that steamed out of every door and window; and this dinner was to be abundantly garnished with onions, for the dullest nose could not err concerning that savor.

Numbers of tourists, of a nationality that showed itself superior to every distinction of race, were strolling vaguely and not always quite happily about; but they made no impression on the proper local character, and the air throughout the morning was full of the sentiment of Sunday in a Catholic city. There was the apparently meaningless jangling of bells, with profound hushes between, and then more jubilant jangling, and then deeper silence; there was the devout trooping of the crowds to the churches; and there was the beginning of the long afternoon's lounging and amusement with which the people of that faith reward their morning's devotion. Little stands for the sale of knotty apples and choke-cherries and cakes and cider sprang magically into existence after service, and people were already eating and drinking at them. The carriage-drivers resumed their chase of the tourists, and the unvoiceful stir of the new week had begun again. Quebec, in fact, is but a pantomimic reproduction of France; it is as if two centuries in a new land, amidst the primeval silences of nature and the long hush of the Northern winters, had stilled the tongues of the lively folk and made them taciturn as we of a graver race. They have kept the ancestral vivacity of manner; the elegance of the shrug is intact; the talking hands take part in dialogue; the agitated person will have its share of expression. But the loud and eager tone is wanting, and their dumb show mystifies the beholder almost as much as the Southern architecture under the slanting Northern sun. It is not America; if it is not France, what is it?

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Of the many beautiful things to see in the neighborhood of Quebec, our wedding-journeyers were in doubt on which to bestow their one precious afternoon. Should it be Lorette, with its cataract and its remnant of bleached and fading Hurons, or the Isle of Orleans with its fertile farms and its primitive peasant life, or Montmorenci, with the unrivaled fall and the long drive through the beautiful village of Beauport? Isabel chose the last, because Basil had been there before, and it had to it the poetry of the wasted years in which she did not know him. She had possessed herself of the journal of his early travels, among the other portions and parcels recoverable from the dreadful past, and from time to time on this journey she had read him passages out of it, with mingled sentiment and irony, and, whether she was mocking or admiring, equally to his confusion. Now, as they smoothly bowled away from the city, she made him listen to what he had written of the same excursion long ago.

It was, to be sure, a sad farrago of sentiment about the village and the rural sights, and especially a girl tossing hay in the field. Yet it had touches of nature and reality, and Basil could not utterly despise himself for having written it. "Yes," he said, "life was then a thing to be put into pretty periods; now it's something that has risks and averages, and may be insured."

There was regret, fancied or expressed, in his tone, that made her sigh, "Ah! if I'd only had a little more money, you might have devoted yourself to literature;" for she was a true Bostonian in her honor of our poor craft.

"O, you're not greatly to blame," answered her husband, "and I forgive you the little wrong you've done me. I was quits with the Muse, at any rate, you know, before we were married; and I'm very well satisfied to be going back to my applications and policies to-morrow."

To-morrow? The word struck cold upon her. Then their wedding journey would begin to end tomorrow! So it would, she owned with another sigh; and yet it seemed impossible.

"There, ma'am," said the driver, rising from his seat and facing round, while he pointed with his whip towards Quebec, "that's what we call the Silver City."

They looked back with him at the city, whose thousands of tinned roofs, rising one above the other from the water's edge to the citadel, were all a splendor of argent light in the afternoon sun. It was indeed as if some magic had clothed that huge rock, base and steepy flank and crest, with a silver city. They gazed upon the marvel with cries of joy that satisfied the driver's utmost pride in it, and Isabel said, "To live there, there in that Silver City, in perpetual sojourn! To be always going to go on a morrow that never came! To be forever within one day of the end of a wedding journey that never ended!"

From far down the river by which they rode came the sound of a cannon, breaking the Sabbath repose of the air. “That’s the gun of the Liverpool steamer, just coming in,” said the driver.

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“O,” cried Isabel, “I’m thankful we’re only to stay one night more, for now we shall be turned out of our nice room by those people who telegraphed for it!”

There is a continuous village along the St. Lawrence from Quebec, almost to Montmorenci; and they met crowds of villagers coming from the church as they passed through Beauport. But Basil was dismayed at the change that had befallen them. They had their Sunday’s best on, and the women, instead of wearing the peasant costume in which he had first seen them, were now dressed as if out of “Harper’s Bazar” of the year before. He anxiously asked the driver if the broad straw hats and the bright sacks and kirtles were no more. “O, you’d see them on weekdays, sir,” was the answer, “but they’re not so plenty any time as they used to be.” He opened his store of facts about the habitans, whom he praised for every virtue,—for thrift, for sobriety, for neatness, for amiability; and his words ought to have had the greater weight, because he was of the Irish race, between which and the Canadians there is no kindness lost. But the looks of the passers-by corroborated him, and as for the little houses, open-doored beside the way, with the pleasant faces at window and portal, they were miracles of picturesqueness and cleanliness. From each the owner’s slim domain, narrowing at every successive division among the abundant generations, runs back to hill or river in well-defined lines, and beside the cottage is a garden of pot-herbs, bordered with a flame of bright autumn flowers; somewhere in decent seclusion grunts the fattening pig, which is to enrich all those peas and onions for the winter’s broth; there is a cheerfulness of poultry about the barns; I dare be sworn there is always a small girl driving a flock of decorous ducks down the middle of the street; and of the priest with a book under his arm, passing a way-side shrine, what possible doubt? The houses, which are of one model, are built by the peasants themselves with the stone which their land yields more abundantly than any other crop, and are furnished with galleries and balconies to catch every ray of the fleeting summer, and perhaps to remember the long-lost ancestral summers of Normandy. At every moment, in passing through this ideally neat and pretty village, our tourists must think of the lovely poem of which all French Canada seems but a reminiscence and illustration. It was Grand Pre, not Beauport; and they paid an eager homage to the beautiful genius which has touched those simple village aspects with an undying charm, and which, whatever the land’s political allegiance, is there perpetual Seigneur.

The village, stretching along the broad interval of the St. Lawrence, grows sparser as you draw near the Falls of Montmorenci, and presently you drive past the grove shutting from the road the country-house in which the Duke of Kent spent some merry days of his jovial youth, and come in sight of two lofty towers of stone,—monuments and witnesses of the tragedy of Montmorenci.

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Once a suspension-bridge, built sorely against the will of the neighboring habitans, hung from these towers high over the long plunge of the cataract. But one morning of the fatal spring after the first winter's frost had tried the hold of the cable on the rocks, an old peasant and his wife with their little grandson set out in their cart to pass the bridge. As they drew near the middle the anchoring wires suddenly lost their grip upon the shore, and whirled into the air; the bridge crashed under the hapless passengers and they were launched from its height, upon the verge of the fall and thence plunged, two hundred and fifty feet, into the ruin of the abyss.

The habitans rebuilt their bridge of wood upon low stone piers, so far up the river from the cataract that whoever fell from it would yet have many a chance for life; and it would have been perilous to offer to replace the fallen structure, which, in the belief of faithful Christians, clearly belonged to the numerous bridges built by the Devil, in times when the Devil did not call himself a civil engineer.

The driver, with just unction, recounted the sad tale as he halted his horses on the bridge; and as his passengers looked down the rock-fretted brown torrent towards the fall, Isabel seized the occasion to shudder that ever she had set foot on that suspension-bridge below Niagara, and to prove to Basil's confusion that her doubt of the bridges between the Three Sisters was not a case of nerves but an instinctive wisdom concerning the unsafety of all bridges of that design.

From the gate opening into the grounds about the fall two or three little French boys, whom they had not the heart to forbid, ran noisily before them with cries in their sole English, "This way, sir" and led toward a weather-beaten summer-house that tottered upon a projecting rock above the verge of the cataract. But our tourists shook their heads, and turned away for a more distant and less dizzy enjoyment of the spectacle, though any commanding point was sufficiently chasmal and precipitous. The lofty bluff was scooped inward from the St. Lawrence in a vast irregular semicircle, with cavernous hollows, one within another, sinking far into its sides, and naked from foot to crest, or meagrely wooded here and there with evergreen. From the central brink of these gloomy purple chasms the foamy cataract launched itself, and like a cloud,

> "Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem."

I say a cloud, because I find it already said to my hand, as it were, in a pretty verse, and because I must needs liken Montmorenci to something that is soft and light. Yet a cloud does not represent the glinting of the water in its downward swoop; it is like some broad slope of sun-smitten snow; but snow is coldly white and opaque, and this has a creamy warmth in its luminous mass; and so, there hangs the cataract unsaid as before. It is a mystery that anything so grand should be so lovely, that anything

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so tenderly fair in whatever aspect should yet be so large that one glance fails to comprehend it all. The rugged wildness of the cliffs and hollows about it is softened by its gracious beauty, which half redeems the vulgarity of the timber-merchant's uses in setting the river at work in his saw-mills and choking its outlet into the St. Lawrence with rafts of lumber and rubbish of slabs and shingles. Nay, rather, it is alone amidst these things, and the eye takes note of them by a separate effort.

Our tourists sank down upon the turf that crept with its white clover to the edge of the precipice, and gazed dreamily upon the fall, filling their vision with its exquisite color and form. Being wiser than I, they did not try to utter its loveliness; they were content to feel it, and the perfection of the afternoon, whose low sun slanting over the landscape gave, under that pale, greenish-blue sky, a pensive sentiment of autumn to the world. The crickets cried amongst the grass; the hesitating chirp of birds came from the tree overhead; a shaggy colt left off grazing in the field and stalked up to stare at them; their little guides, having found that these people had no pleasure in the sight of small boys scuffling on the verge of a precipice, threw themselves also down upon the grass and crooned a long, long ballad in a mournful minor key about some maiden whose name was La Belle Adeline. It was a moment of unmixed enjoyment for every sense, and through all their being they were glad; which considering, they ceased to be so, with a deep sigh, as one reasoning that he dreams must presently awake. They never could have an emotion without desiring to analyze it; but perhaps their rapture would have ceased as swiftly, even if they had not tried to make it a fact of consciousness.

"If there were not dinner after such experiences as these," said Isabel, as they sat at table that evening, "I don't know what would become of one. But dinner unites the idea of pleasure and duty, and brings you gently back to earth. You must eat, don't you see, and there's nothing disgraceful about what you're obliged to do; and so—it's all right."

"Isabel, Isabel," cried her husband, "you have a wonderful mind, and its workings always amaze me. But be careful, my dear; be careful. Don't work it too hard. The human brain, you know: delicate organ."

"Well, you understand what I mean; and I think it's one of the great charms of a husband, that you're not forced to express yourself to him. A husband," continued Isabel, sententiously, poising a bit of meringue between her thumb and finger,—for they had reached that point in the repast, "a husband is almost as good as another woman!"

In the parlor they found the Ellisons, and exchanged the history of the day with them.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Ellison, at the end, "it's been a pleasant day enough, but what of the night? You've been turned out, too, by those people who came on the steamer, and who might as well have stayed on board to-night; have you got another room?"

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“Not precisely,” said Isabel; “we have a coop in the fifth story, right under the roof.”

Mrs. Ellison turned energetically upon her husband and cried in tones of reproach, “Richard, Mrs. March has a room!”

“A coop, she said,” retorted that amiable Colonel, “and we’re too good for that. The clerk is keeping us in suspense about a room, because he means to surprise us with something palatial at the end. It ’s his joking way.”

“Nonsense!” said Mrs. Ellison. “Have you seen him since dinner?”

“I have made life a burden to him for the last half-hour,” returned the Colonel, with the kindliest smile.

“O Richard,” cried his wife, in despair of his amendment, “you wouldn’t make life a burden to a mouse!” And having nothing else for it, she laughed, half in sorrow, half in fondness.

“Well, Fanny,” the Colonel irrelevantly answered, “put on your hat and things, and let’s all go up to Durham Terrace for a promenade. I know our friends want to go. It’s something worth seeing; and by the time we get back, the clerk will have us a perfectly sumptuous apartment.”

Nothing, I think, more enforces the illusion of Southern Europe in Quebec than the Sunday-night promenading on Durham Terrace. This is the ample space on the brow of the cliff to the left of the citadel, the noblest and most commanding position in the whole city, which was formerly occupied by the old castle of Saint Louis, where dwelt the brave Count Frontenac and his splendid successors of the French regime. The castle went the way of Quebec by fire some forty years ago, and Lord Durham leveled the site and made it a public promenade. A stately arcade of solid masonry supports it on the brink of the rock, and an iron parapet incloses it; there are a few seats to lounge upon, and some idle old guns for the children to clamber over and play with. A soft twilight had followed the day, and there was just enough obscurity to hide from a willing eye the Northern and New World facts of the scene, and to bring into more romantic relief the citadel dark against the mellow evening, and the people gossiping from window to window across the narrow streets of the Lower Town. The Terrace itself was densely thronged, and there was a constant coming and going of the promenaders, who each formally paced back and forth upon the planking for a certain time, and then went quietly home, giving place to the new arrivals. They were nearly all French, and they were not generally, it seemed, of the first fashion, but rather of middling condition in life; the English being represented only by a few young fellows and now and then a redfaced old gentleman with an Indian scarf trailing from his hat. There were some fair American costumes and faces in the crowd, but it was essentially Quebecian. The young girls

walking in pairs, or with their lovers, had the true touch of provincial unstylishness, the young men the ineffectual excess of the second-rate

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Latin dandy, their elders the rich inelegance of a bourgeoisie in their best. A few, better-figured avocats or notaires (their profession was as unmistakable as if they had carried their well-polished brass doorplates upon their breasts) walked and gravely talked with each other. The non-American character of the scene was not less vividly marked in the fact that each person dressed according to his own taste and frankly indulged private preferences in shapes and colors. One of the promenaders was in white, even to his canvas shoes; another, with yet bolder individuality, appeared in perfect purple. It had a strange, almost portentous effect when these two startling figures met as friends and joined each other in the promenade with linked arms; but the evening was already beginning to darken round them, and presently the purple comrade was merely a sombre shadow beside the glimmering white.

The valleys and the heights now vanished; but the river defined itself by the varicolored lights of the ships and steamers that lay, dark, motionless bulks, upon its broad breast; the lights of Point Lewis swarmed upon the other shore; the Lower Town, two hundred feet below them, stretched an alluring mystery of clustering roofs and lamplit windows and dark and shining streets around the mighty rock, mural-crowned. Suddenly a spectacle peculiarly Northern and characteristic of Quebec revealed itself; a long arch brightened over the northern horizon; the tremulous flames of the aurora, pallid violet or faintly tinged with crimson, shot upward from it, and played with a weird apparition and evanescence to the zenith. While the strangers looked, a gun boomed from the citadel, and the wild sweet notes of the bugle sprang out upon the silence.

Then they all said, “How perfectly in keeping everything has been!” and sauntered back to the hotel.

The Colonel went into the office to give the clerk another turn on the rack, and make him confess to a hidden apartment somewhere, while Isabel left her husband to Mrs. Ellison in the parlor, and invited Miss Kitty to look at her coop in the fifth story. As they approached, light and music and laughter stole out of an open door next hers, and Isabel, distinguishing the voices of the theatrical party, divined that this was the sick-chamber, and that they were again cheering up the afflicted member of the troupe. Some one was heard to say, “Well, ’ow do you feel now, Charley?” and a sound of subdued swearing responded, followed by more laughter, and the twanging of a guitar, and a snatch of song, and a stir of feet and dresses as for departure.

The two listeners shrank together; as women they could not enjoy these proofs of the jolly camaraderie existing among the people of the troupe. They trembled as before the merriment of as many light-hearted, careless, good-natured young men: it was no harm, but it was dismaying; and, “Dear!” cried Isabel, “what shall we do?”

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“Go back,” said Miss Ellison, boldly, and back they ran to the parlor, where they found Basil and the Colonel and his wife in earnest conclave. The Colonel, like a shrewd strategist, was making show of a desperation more violent than his wife’s, who was thus naturally forced into the attitude of moderating his fury.

“Well, Fanny, that’s all he can do for us; and I do think it ’s the most outrageous thing in the world! It ’s real mean!”

Fanny perceived a bold parody of her own denunciatory manner, but just then she was obliged to answer Isabel’s eager inquiry whether they had got a room yet. “Yes, a room,” she said, “with two beds. But what are we to do with one room? That clerk—I don’t know what to call him”—("Call him a hotel-clerk, my dear; you can’t say anything worse,” interrupted her husband)—“seems to think the matter perfectly settled.”

“You see, Mrs. March,” added the Colonel, “he’s able to bully us in this way because he has the architecture on his side. There isn’t another room in the house.”

“Let me think a moment,” said Isabel not thinking an instant. She had taken a fancy to at least two of these people from the first, and in the last hour they had all become very well acquainted now she said, “I’ll tell you: there are two beds in our room also; we ladies will take one room, and you gentlemen the other!”

“Mrs. March, I bow to the superiority of the Boston mind,” said the Colonel, while his females civilly protested and consented; “and I might almost hail you as our preserver. If ever you come to Milwaukee,—which is the centre of the world, as Boston is,—we—I—shall be happy to have you call at my place of business.—I didn’t commit myself, did I, Fanny?—I am sometimes hospitable to excess, Mrs. March,” he said, to explain his aside. “And now, let us reconnoitre. Lead on, madam, and the gratitude of the houseless stranger will follow you.”

The whole party explored both rooms, and the ladies decided to keep Isabel’s. The Colonel was dispatched to see that the wraps and traps of his party were sent to this number, and Basil went with him. The things came long before the gentlemen returned, but the ladies happily employed the interval in talking over the excitements of the day, and in saying from time to time, “So very kind of you, Mrs. March,” and “I don’t know what we should have done,” and “Don’t speak of it, please,” and “I’m sure it ’s a great pleasure to me.”

In the room adjoining theirs, where the invalid actor lay, and where lately there had been minstrelsy and apparently dancing for his solace, there was now comparative silence. Two women’s voices talked together, and now and then a guitar was touched by a wandering hand. Isabel had just put up her handkerchief to conceal her first yawn, when the gentlemen, odorous of cigars, returned to say good-night.

“It’s the second door from this, isn’t it, Isabel?” asked her husband.

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“Yes, the second door. Good-night. Good-night.”

The two men walked off together; but in a minute afterwards they had returned and were knocking tremulously at the closed door.

“O, what has happened?” chorused the ladies in woeful tune, seeing a certain wildness in the face that confronted them.

“We don’t know!” answered the others in as fearful a key, and related how they had found the door of their room ajar, and a bright light streaming into the corridor. They did not stop to ponder this fact, but, with the heedlessness of their sex, pushed the door wide open, when they saw seated before the mirror a bewildering figure, with disheveled locks wandering down the back, and in dishabille expressive of being quite at home there, which turned upon them a pair of pale blue eyes, under a forehead remarkable for the straggling fringe of hair that covered it. They professed to have remained transfixed at the sight, and to have noted a like dismay on the visage before the glass, ere they summoned strength to fly. These facts Colonel Ellison gave at the command of his wife, with many protests and insincere delays amidst which the curiosity of his hearers alone prevented them from rending him in pieces.

“And what do you suppose it was?” demanded his wife, with forced calmness, when he had at last made an end of the story and his abominable hypoocisies.

“Well, I think it was a mermaid.”

“A mermaid!” said his wife, scornfully. “How do you know?”

“It had a comb in its hand, for one thing; and besides, my dear, I hope I know a mermaid when I see it.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Ellison, “it was no mermaid, it was a mistake; and I’m going to see about it. Will you go with me, Richard?”

“No money could induce me! If it’s a mistake, it isn’t proper for me to go; if it’s a mermaid, it’s dangerous.”

“O you coward!” said the intrepid little woman to a hero of all the fights on Sherman’s march to the sea; and presently they heard her attack the mysterious enemy with a lady-like courage, claiming the invaded chamber. The foe replied with like civility, saying the clerk had given her that room with the understanding that another lady was to be put there with her, and she had left the door unlocked to admit her. The watchers with the sick man next door appeared and confirmed this speech, a feeble voice from the bedclothes swore to it.

“Of course,” added the invader, “if I’d known ’ow it really was, I never would lave listened to such a thing, never. And there isn’t another ’ole in the louse to lay me ’ead,” she concluded.

“Then it’s the clerk’s fault,” said Mrs. Ellison, glad to retreat unharmed; and she made her husband ring for the guilty wretch, a pale, quiet young Frenchman, whom the united party, sallying into the corridor, began to upbraid in one breath, the lady in dishabille vanishing as often as she remembered it, and reappearing whenever some strong point of argument or denunciation occurred to her.

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The clerk, who was the Benjamin of his wicked tribe, threw himself upon their mercy and confessed everything: the house was so crowded, and he had been so crazed by the demands upon him, that he had understood Colonel Ellison's application to be for a bed for the young lady in his party, and he had done the very best he could. If the lady there—she vanished again—would give up the room to the two gentlemen, he would find her a place with the housekeeper. To this the lady consented without difficulty, and the rest dispersing, she kissed one of the sick man's watchers with "Isn't it a shame, Bella?" and flitted down the darkness of the corridor. The rooms upon it seemed all, save the two assigned our travellers, to be occupied by ladies of the troupe; their doors successively opened, and she was heard explaining to each as she passed. The momentary displeasure which she had shown at her banishment was over. She detailed the facts with perfect good-nature, and though the others appeared no more than herself to find any humorous cast in the affair, they received her narration with the same amiability. They uttered their sympathy seriously, and each parted from her with some friendly word. Then all was still.

"Richard," said Mrs. Ellison, when in Isabel's room the travellers had briefly celebrated these events, "I should think you'd hate to leave us alone up here."

"I do; but you can't think how I hate to go off alone. I wish you'd come part of the way with us, Ladies; I do indeed. Leave your door unlocked, at any rate."

This prayer, uttered at parting outside the room, was answered from within by a sound of turning keys and sliding bolts, and a low thunder as of bureaus and washstands rolled against the door. "The ladies are fortifying their position," said the Colonel to Basil, and the two returned to their own chamber. "I don't wish any intrusions," he said, instantly shutting himself in; "my nerves are too much shaken now. What an awfully mysterious old place this Quebec is, Mr. March! I'll tell you what: it's my opinion that this is an enchanted castle, and if my ribs are not walked over by a muleteer in the course of the night, it's all I ask."

In this and other discourse recalling the famous adventure of Don Quixote, the Colonel beguiled the labor of disrobing, and had got as far as his boots, when there came a startling knock at the door. With one boot in his hand and the other on his foot, the Colonel limped forward. "I suppose it's that clerk has sent to say he's made some other mistake," and he flung wide the door, and then stood motionless before it, dumbly staring at a figure on the threshold,—a figure with the fringed forehead and pale blue eyes of her whom they had so lately turned out of that room.

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Shrinking behind the side of the doorway, “Excuse me, gentlemen,” she said, with a dignity that recalled their scattered senses, “but will you ’ave the goodness to look if my beads are on your table—O thanks, thanks, thanks!” she continued, showing her face and one hand, as Basil blushingly advanced with a string of heavy black beads, piously adorned with a large cross. “I’m sure, I’m greatly obliged to you, gentlemen, and I hask a thousand pardons for troublin’ you,” she concluded in a somewhat severe tone, that left them abashed and culpable; and vanished as mysteriously as she had appeared.

“Now, see here,” said the Colonel, with a huge sigh as he closed the door again, and this time locked it, “I should like to know how long this sort of thing is to be kept up? Because, if it’s to be regularly repeated during the night, I’m going to dress again.” Nevertheless, he finished undressing and got into bed, where he remained for some time silent. Basil put out the light. “O, I’m sorry you did that, my dear fellow,” said the Colonel; “but never mind, it was an idle curiosity, no doubt. It’s my belief that in the landlord’s extremity of bedlinen, I’ve been put to sleep between a pair of tablecloths; and I thought I’d like to look. It seems to me that I make out a checkered pattern on top and a flowered or arabesque pattern underneath. I wish they had given me mates. It ’s pretty hard having to sleep between odd tablecloths. I shall complain to the landlord of this in the morning. I’ve never had to sleep between odd table-cloths at any hotel before.”

The Colonel’s voice seemed scarcely to have died away upon Basil’s drowsy ear, when suddenly the sounds of music and laughter from the invalid’s room startled him wide awake. The sick man’s watchers were coquetting with some one who stood in the little court-yard five stories below. A certain breadth of repartee was naturally allowable at that distance; the lover avowed his passion in ardent terms, and the ladies mocked him with the same freedom, now and then totally neglecting him while they sang a snatch of song to the twanging of the guitar, or talked professional gossip, and then returning to him with some tormenting expression of tenderness.

All this, abstractly speaking, was nothing to Basil; yet he could recollect few things intended for his pleasure that had given him more satisfaction. He thought, as he glanced out into the moonlight on the high-gabled silvery roofs around and on the gardens of the convents and the towers of the quaint city, that the scene wanted nothing of the proper charm of Spanish humor and romance, and he was as grateful to those poor souls as if they had meant him a favor. To us of the hither side of the foot-lights, there is always something fascinating in the life of the strange beings who dwell beyond them, and who are never so unreal as in their own characters. In their shabby bestowal in those mean upper rooms, their tawdry

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poverty, their merry submission to the errors and caprices of destiny, their mutual kindliness and careless friendship, these unprofitable devotees of the twinkling-footed burlesque seemed to be playing rather than living the life of strolling players; and their love-making was the last touch of a comedy that Basil could hardly accept as reality, it was so much more like something seen upon the stage. He would not have detracted anything from the commonness and cheapness of the 'mise en scene', for that, he reflected drowsily and confusedly, helped to give it an air of fact and make it like an episode of fiction. But above all, he was pleased with the natural eventlessness of the whole adventure, which was in perfect agreement with his taste; and just as his reveries began to lose shape in dreams, he was aware of an absurd pride in the fact that all this could have happened to him in our commonplace time and hemisphere. "Why," he thought, "if I were a student in Alcala, what better could I have asked?" And as at last his soul swung out from its moorings and lapsed down the broad slowly circling tides out in the sea of sleep, he was conscious of one subtle touch of compassion for those poor strollers,—a pity so delicate and fine and tender that it hardly seemed his own but rather a sense of the compassion that pities the whole world.

X. HOMEWARD AND HOME.

The travellers all met at breakfast and duly discussed the adventures of the night; and for the rest, the forenoon passed rapidly and slowly with Basil and Isabel, as regret to leave Quebec, or the natural impatience of travellers to be off, overcame them. Isabel spent part of it in shopping, for she had found some small sums of money and certain odd corners in her trunks still unappropriated, and the handsome stores on the Rue Fabrique were very tempting. She said she would just go in and look; and the wise reader imagines the result. As she knelt over her boxes, trying so to distribute her purchases as to make them look as if they were old,—old things of hers, which she had brought all the way round from Boston with her,—a fleeting touch of conscience stayed her hand.

"Basil," she said, "perhaps we'd better declare some of these things. What's the duty on those?" she asked, pointing to certain articles.

"I don't know. About a hundred per cent. ad valorem."

"C'est a dire—?"

"As much as they cost."

"O then, dearest," responded Isabel indignantly, "it can't be wrong to smuggle! I won't declare a thread!"

“That’s very well for you, whom they won’t ask. But what if they ask me whether there’s anything to declare?”

Isabel looked at her husband and hesitated. Then she replied in terms that I am proud to record in honor of American womanhood: “You mustn’t fib about—it, Basil” (heroically); “I couldn’t respect you if you did,” (tenderly); “but” (with decision) “you must slip out of it some way!”

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The ladies of the Ellison party, to whom she put the case in the parlor, agreed with her perfectly. They also had done a little shopping in Quebec, and they meant to do more at Montreal before they returned to the States. Mrs. Ellison was disposed to look upon Isabel's compunctions as a kind of treason to the sex, to be forgiven only because so quickly repented.

The Ellisons were going up the Saguenay before coming on to Boston, and urged our friends hard to go with them. "No, that must be for another time," said Isabel. "Mr. March has to be home by a certain day; and we shall just get back in season." Then she made them promise to spend a day with her in Boston, and the Colonel coming to say that he had a carriage at the door for their excursion to Lorette, the two parties bade good-by with affection and many explicit hopes of meeting soon again.

"What do you think of them, dearest?" demanded Isabel, as she sallied out with Basil for a final look at Quebec.

"The young lady is the nicest; and the other is well enough, too. She is a good deal like you, but with the sense of humor left out. You've only enough to save you."

"Well, her husband is jolly enough for both of them. He's funnier than you, Basil, and he hasn't any of your little languid airs and affectations. I don't know but I'm a bit disappointed in my choice, darling; but I dare say I shall work out of it. In fact, I don't know but the Colonel is a little too jolly. This drolling everything is rather fatiguing." And having begun, they did not stop till they had taken their friends to pieces. Dismayed, then, they hastily reconstructed them, and said that they were among the pleasantest people they ever knew, and they were really very sorry to part with them, and they should do everything to make them have a good time in Boston.

They were sauntering towards Durham Terrace where they leaned long upon the iron parapet and blest themselves with the beauty of the prospect. A tender haze hung upon the landscape and subdued it till the scene was as a dream before them. As in a dream the river lay, and dream-like the shipping moved or rested on its deep, broad bosom. Far off stretched the happy fields with their dim white villages; farther still the mellow heights melted into the low hovering heaven. The tinned roofs of the Lower Town twinkled in the morning sun; around them on every hand, on that Monday forenoon when the States were stirring from ocean to ocean in feverish industry, drowsed the gray city within her walls; from the flag-staff of the citadel hung the red banner of Saint George in sleep.

Their hearts were strangely and deeply moved. It seemed to them that they looked upon the last stronghold of the Past, and that afar off to the southward they could hear the marching hosts of the invading Present; and as no young and loving soul can relinquish old things without a pang, they sighed a long mute farewell to Quebec.

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Next summer they would come again, yes; but, ah me' every one knows what next summer is!

Part of the burlesque troupe rode down in the omnibus to the Grand Trunk

Ferry with them, and were good-natured to the last, having shaken hands all round with the waiters, chambermaids, and porters of the hotel. The young fellow with the bad amiable face came in a calash, and refused to overpay the driver with a gay decision that made him Basil's envy till he saw his tribulation in getting the troupe's luggage checked. There were forty pieces, and it always remained a mystery, considering the small amount of clothing necessary to those people on the stage, what could have filled their trunks. The young man and the two English blondes of American birth found places in the same car with our tourists, and enlivened the journey with their frolics. When the young man pretended to fall asleep, they wrapped his golden curly head in a shawl, and vexed him with many thumps and thrusts, till he bought a brief truce with a handful of almonds; and the ladies having no other way to eat them, one of them saucily snatched off her shoe, and cracked them hammerwise with the heel. It was all so pleasant that it ought to have been all right; and in their merry world of outlawry perhaps things are not so bad as we like to think them.

The country into which the train plunges as soon as Quebec is out of sight is very stupidly savage, and our friends had little else to do but to watch the gambols of the players, till they came to the river St. Francis, whose wandering loveliness the road follows through an infinite series of soft and beautiful landscapes, and finds everywhere glassing in its smooth current the elms and willows of its gentle shores. At one place, where its calm broke into foamy rapids, there was a huge saw mill, covering the stream with logs and refuse, and the banks with whole cities of lumber; which also they accepted as no mean elements of the picturesque. They clung the most tenderly to traces of the peasant life they were leaving. When some French boys came aboard with wild raspberries to sell in little birch-bark canoes, they thrilled with pleasure, and bought them, but sighed then, and said, "What thing characteristic of the local life will they sell us in Maine when we get there? A section of pie poetically wrapt in a broad leaf of the squash-vine, or pop-corn in its native tissue-paper, and advertising the new Dollar Store in Portland?" They saw the quaintness vanish from the farm-houses; first the dormer-windows, then the curve of the steep roof, then the steep roof itself. By and by they came to a store with a Grecian portico and four square pine pillars. They shuddered and looked no more.

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The guiltily dreaded examination of baggage at Island Pond took place at nine o'clock, without costing them a cent of duty or a pang of conscience. At that charming station the trunks are piled higgledy-piggledy into a room beside the track, where a few inspectors with stifling lamps of smoky kerosene await the passengers. There are no porters to arrange the baggage, and each lady and gentleman digs out his box, and opens it before the lordly inspector, who stirs up its contents with an unpleasant hand and passes it. He makes you feel that you are once more in the land of official insolence, and that, whatever you are collectively, you are nothing personally. Isabel, who had sent her husband upon this business with quaking meekness of heart, experienced the bold indignation of virtue at his account of the way people were made their own baggage-smashers, and would not be amused when he painted the vile terrors of each husband as he tremblingly unlocked his wife's store of contraband.

The morning light showed them the broad elmy meadows of western-looking Maine; and the Grand Trunk brought them, of course, an hour behind time into Portland. All breakfastless they hurried aboard the Boston train on the Eastern Road, and all along that line (which is built to show how uninteresting the earth can be when she is 'ennuyee' of both sea and land), Basil's life became a struggle to construct a meal from the fragmentary opportunities of twenty different stations where they stopped five minutes for refreshments. At one place he achieved two cups of shameless chickory, at another three sardines, at a third a dessert of elderly bananas.

"Home again, home again, from a foreign shore!"

they softly sang as the successive courses of this feast were disposed of.

The drouth and heat, which they had briefly escaped during their sojourn in Canada, brooded sovereign upon the tiresome landscape. The red granite rocks were as if red-hot; the banks of the deep cuts were like ash heaps; over the fields danced the sultry atmosphere; they fancied that they almost heard the grasshoppers sing above the rattle of the train. When they reached Boston at last, they were dustier than most of us would like to be a hundred years hence. The whole city was equally dusty; and they found the trees in the square before their own door gray with dust. The bit of Virginia-creeper planted under the window hung shriveled upon its trellis.

But Isabel's aunt met them with a refreshing shower of tears and kisses in the hall, throwing a solid arm about each of them. "O you dears!" the good soul cried, "you don't know how anxious I've been about you; so many accidents happening all the time. I've never read the 'Evening Transcript' till the next morning, for fear I should find your names among the killed and wounded."

"O aunty, you're too good, always!" whimpered Isabel; and neither of the women took note of Basil, who said, "Yes, it 's probably the only thing that preserved our lives."

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The little tinge of discontent, which had colored their sentiment of return faded now in the kindly light of home. Their holiday was over, to be sure, but their bliss had but began; they had entered upon that long life of holidays which is happy marriage. By the time dinner was ended they were both enthusiastic at having got back, and taking their aunt between them walked up and down the parlor with their arms round her massive waist, and talked out the gladness of their souls.

Then Basil said he really must run down to the office that afternoon, and he issued all aglow upon the street. He was so full of having been long away and of having just returned, that he unconsciously tried to impart his mood to Boston, and the dusty composure of the street and houses, as he strode along, bewildered him. He longed for some familiar face to welcome him, and in the horse-car into which he stepped he was charmed to see an acquaintance. This was a man for whom ordinarily he cared nothing, and whom he would perhaps rather have gone out upon the platform to avoid than have spoken to; but now he plunged at him with effusion, and wrung his hand, smiling from ear to ear.

The other remained coldly unaffected, after a first start of surprise at his cordiality, and then reviled the dust and heat. “But I’m going to take a little run down to Newport, to-morrow, for a week,” he said. “By the way, you look as if you needed a little change. Aren’t you going anywhere this summer?”

“So you see, my dear,” observed Basil, when he had recounted the fact to Isabel at tea, “our travels are incommunicably our own. We had best say nothing about our little jaunt to other people, and they won’t know we’ve been gone. Even if we tried, we couldn’t make our wedding-journey theirs.”

She gave him a great kiss of recompense and consolation. “Who wants it,” she demanded, “to be Their Wedding Journey?”

NIAGARA REVISITED, TWELVE YEARS AFTER THEIR WEDDING JOURNEY.

Life had not used them ill in this time, and the fairish treatment they had received was not wholly unmerited. The twelve years past had made them older, as the years must in passing. Basil was now forty-two, and his moustache was well sprinkled with gray. Isabel was thirty-nine, and the parting of her hair had thinned and retreated; but she managed to give it an effect of youthful abundance by combing it low down upon her forehead, and roughing it there with a wet brush. By gaslight she was still very pretty; she believed that she looked more interesting, and she thought Basil’s gray moustache distinguished. He had grown stouter; he filled his double-breasted frock coat compactly, and from time to time he had the buttons set forward; his hands were rounded up on the

backs, and he no longer wore his old number of gloves by two sizes; no amount of powder or manipulation from the young lady in the shop would induce them

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to go on. But this did not matter much now, for he seldom wore gloves at all. He was glad that the fashion suffered him to spare in that direction, for he was obliged to look somewhat carefully after the out-goes. The insurance business was not what it had been, and though Basil had comfortably established himself in it, he had not made money. He sometimes thought that he might have done quite as well if he had gone into literature; but it was now too late. They had not a very large family: they had a boy of eleven, who took after his father, and a girl of nine, who took after the boy; but with the American feeling that their children must have the best of everything, they made it an expensive family, and they spent nearly all Basil earned.

The narrowness of their means, as well as their household cares, had kept them from taking many long journeys. They passed their winters in Boston, and their summers on the South Shore, cheaper than the North Shore, and near enough for Basil to go up and down every day for business; but they promised themselves that some day they would revisit certain points on their wedding journey, and perhaps somewhere find their lost second-youth on the track. It was not that they cared to be young, but they wished the children to see them as they used to be when they thought themselves very old; and one lovely afternoon in June they started for Niagara.

It had been very hot for several days, but that morning the east wind came in, and crisped the air till it seemed to rustle like tinsel, and the sky was as sincerely and solidly blue as if it had been chromoed. They felt that they were really looking up into the roof of the world, when they glanced at it; but when an old gentleman hastily kissed a young woman, and commended her to the conductor as being one who was going all the way to San Francisco alone, and then risked his life by stepping off the moving train, the vastness of the great American fact began to affect Isabel disagreeably. “Is n’t it too big, Basil?” she pleaded, peering timidly out of the little municipal consciousness in which she had been so long housed.—In that seclusion she had suffered certain original tendencies to increase upon her; her nerves were more sensitive and electrical; her apprehensions had multiplied quite beyond the ratio of the dangers that beset her; and Basil had counted upon a tonic effect of the change the journey would make in their daily lives. She looked ruefully out of the window at the familiar suburbs whisking out of sight, and the continental immensity that advanced devouringly upon her. But they had the best section in the very centre of the sleeping-car,—she drew what consolation she could from the fact,—and the children’s premature demand for lunch helped her to forget her anxieties; they began to be hungry as soon as the train started. She found that she had not put up sandwiches enough; and when she told Basil that he would have to get out somewhere and buy some cold chicken, he asked her what in the world had become of that whole ham she had had boiled. It seemed to him, he said, that there was enough of it to subsist them to Niagara and back; and he went on as some men do, while Somerville vanished, and even Tufts College, which assails the

Bostonian vision from every point of the compass, was shut out by the curve at the foot of the Belmont hills.

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They had chosen the Hoosac Tunnel route to Niagara, because, as Basil said, their experience of travel had never yet included a very long tunnel, and it would be a signal fact by which the children would always remember the journey, if nothing else remarkable happened to impress it upon them. Indeed, they were so much concerned in it that they began to ask when they should come to this tunnel, even before they began to ask for lunch; and the long time before they reached it was not perceptibly shortened by Tom's quarter-hourly consultations of his father's watch.

It scarcely seemed to Basil and Isabel that their fellow-passengers were so interesting as their fellow passengers used to be in their former days of travel. They were soberly dressed, and were all of a middle-aged sobriety of deportment, from which nothing salient offered itself for conjecture or speculation; and there was little within the car to take their minds from the brilliant young world that flashed and sang by them outside. The belated spring had ripened, with its frequent rains, into the perfection of early summer; the grass was thicker and the foliage denser than they had ever seen it before; and when they had run out into the hills beyond Fitchburg, they saw the laurel in bloom. It was everywhere in the woods, lurking like drifts among the underbrush, and overflowing the tops, and stealing down the hollows, of the railroad embankments; a snow of blossom flushed with a mist of pink. Its shy, wild beauty ceased whenever the train stopped, but the orioles made up for its absence with their singing in the village trees about the stations; and though Fitchburg and Ayer's Junction and Athol are not names that invoke historical or romantic associations, the hearts of Basil and Isabel began to stir with the joy of travel before they had passed these points. At the first Basil got out to buy the cold chicken which had been commanded, and he recognized in the keeper of the railroad restaurant their former conductor, who had been warned by the spirits never to travel without a flower of some sort carried between his lips, and who had preserved his own life and the lives of his passengers for many years by this simple device. His presence lent the sponge cake and rhubarb pie and baked beans a supernatural interest, and reconciled Basil to the toughness of the athletic bird which the mystical ex-partner of fate had sold him; he justly reflected that if he had heard the story of the restaurateur's superstition in a foreign land, or another time, he would have found in it a certain poetry. It was this willingness to find poetry in things around them that kept his life and Isabel's fresh, and they taught their children the secret of their elixir. To be sure, it was only a genre poetry, but it was such as has always inspired English art and song; and now the whole family enjoyed, as if it had been a passage from Goldsmith or Wordsworth, the flying sentiment of the railroad side. There was a simple interior

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at one place,—a small shanty, showing through the open door a cook stove surmounted by the evening coffee-pot, with a lazy cat outstretched upon the floor in the middle distance, and an old woman standing just outside the threshold to see the train go by,—which had an unrivaled value till they came to a superannuated car on a siding in the woods, in which the railroad workmen boarded—some were lounging on the platform and at the open windows, while others were “washing up” for supper, and the whole scene was full of holiday ease and sylvan comradery that went to the hearts of the sympathetic spectators. Basil had lately been reading aloud the delightful history of Rudder Grange, and the children, who had made their secret vows never to live in anything but an old canal-boat when they grew up, owned that there were fascinating possibilities in a worn-out railroad car.

The lovely Deerfield Valley began to open on either hand, with smooth stretches of the quiet river, and breadths of grassy intervale and tableland; the elms grouped themselves like the trees of a park; here and there the nearer hills broke away, and revealed long, deep, chasmed hollows, full of golden light and delicious shadow. There were people rowing on the water; and every pretty town had some touch of picturesqueness or pastoral charm to offer: at Greenfield, there were children playing in the new-mown hay along the railroad embankment; at Shelburne Falls, there was a game of cricket going on (among the English operatives of the cutlery works, as Basil boldly asserted). They looked down from their car-window on a young lady swinging in a hammock, in her door-yard, and on an old gentleman hoeing his potatoes; a group of girls waved their handkerchiefs to the passing train, and a boy paused in weeding a garden-bed,—and probably denied that he had paused, later. In the mean time the golden haze along the mountain side changed to a clear, pearly lustre, and the quiet evening possessed the quiet landscape. They confessed to each other that it was all as sweet and beautiful as it used to be; and in fact they had seen palaces, in other days, which did not give them the pleasure they found in a woodcutter’s shanty, losing itself among the shadows in a solitude of the hills. The tunnel, after this, was a gross and material sensation; but they joined the children in trying to hold and keep it, and Basil let the boy time it by his watch. “Now,” said Tom, when five minutes were gone, “we are under the very centre of the mountain.” But the tunnel was like all accomplished facts, all hopes fulfilled, valueless to the soul, and scarcely appreciable to the sense; and the children emerged at North Adams with but a mean opinion of that great feat of engineering. Basil drew a pretty moral from their experience. “If you rode upon a comet you would be disappointed. Take my advice, and never ride upon a comet. I shouldn’t object to your riding on a little meteor,—you would n’t expect much of that; but I warn you against comets; they are as bad as tunnels.”

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The children thought this moral was a joke at their expense, and as they were a little sleepy they permitted themselves the luxury of feeling trifled with. But they woke, refreshed and encouraged, from slumbers that had evidently been unbroken, though they both protested that they had not slept a wink the whole night, and gave themselves up to wonder at the interminable levels of Western New York over which the train was running. The longing to come to an edge, somewhere, that the New England traveler experiences on this plain, was inarticulate with the children; but it breathed in the sigh with which Isabel welcomed even the architectural inequalities of a city into which they drew in the early morning. This city showed to their weary eyes a noble stretch of river, from the waters of which lofty piles of buildings rose abruptly; and Isabel, being left to guess where they were, could think of no other place so picturesque as Rochester.

"Yes," said her husband; "it is our own Enchanted City. I wonder if that unstinted hospitality is still dispensed by the good head waiter at the hotel where we stopped, to bridal parties who have passed the ordeal of the haughty hotel clerk. I wonder what has become of that hotel clerk. Has he fallen, through pride, to some lower level, or has he bowed his arrogant spirit to the demands of advancing civilization, and realized that he is the servant, and not the master, of the public? I think I've noticed, since his time, a growing kindness in hotel clerks; or perhaps I have become of a more impressive presence; they certainly unbend to me a little more. I should like to go up to our hotel, and try myself on our old enemy, if he is still there. I can fancy how his shirt front has expanded in these twelve years past; he has grown a little bald, after the fashion of middle-aged hotel clerks, but he parts his hair very much on one side, and brushes it squarely across his forehead to hide his loss; the forefinger that he touches that little snapbell with, when he doesn't look at you, must be very pudgy now. Come, let us get out and breakfast at, Rochester; they will give us broiled whitefish; and we can show the children where Sam Patch jumped over Genesee Falls, and—"

"No, no, Basil," cried his wife. "It would be sacrilege! All that is sacred to those dear young days of ours; and I wouldn't think of trying to repeat it. Our own ghosts would rise up in that dining-room to reproach us for our intrusion! Oh, perhaps we have done a wicked thing in coming this journey! We ought to have left the past alone; we shall only mar our memories of all these beautiful places. Do you suppose Buffalo can be as poetical as it was then? Buffalo! The name does n't invite the Muse very much. Perhaps it never was very poetical! Oh, Basil, dear, I'm afraid we have only come to find out that we were mistaken about everything! Let's leave Rochester alone, at any rate!"

I'm not troubled! We won't disturb our dream of Rochester; but I don't despair of Buffalo. I'm sure that Buffalo will be all that our fancy ever painted it. I believe in Buffalo."

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“Well, well,” murmured Isabel, “I hope you’re right;” and she put some things together for leaving their car at Buffalo, while they were still two hours away.

When they reached a place where the land mated its level with the level of the lake, they ran into a wilderness of railroad cars, in a world where life seemed to be operated solely by locomotives and their helpless minions. The bellowing and bleating trains were arriving in every direction, not only along the ground floor of the plain, but stately stretches of trestle-work, which curved and extended across the plain, carried them to and fro overhead. The travelers owned that this railroad suburb had its own impressiveness, and they said that the trestle-work was as noble in effect as the lines of aqueduct that stalk across the Roman Campagna. Perhaps this was because they had not seen the Campagna or its aqueducts for a great while; but they were so glad to find themselves in the spirit of their former journey again that they were amiable to everything. When the children first caught sight of the lake’s delicious blue, and cried out that it was lovelier than the sea, they felt quite a local pride in their preference. It was what Isabel had said twelve years before, on first beholding the lake.

But they did not really see the lake till they had taken the train for Niagara Falls, after breakfasting in the depot, where the children, used to the severe native or the patronizing Irish ministrations of Boston restaurants and hotels, reveled for the first time in the affectionate devotion of a black waiter. There was already a ridiculous abundance and variety on the table; but this waiter brought them strawberries and again strawberries, and repeated plates of griddle cakes with maple syrup; and he hung over the back of first one chair and then another with an unselfish joy in the appetites of the breakfasters which gave Basil renewed hopes of his race. “Such rapture in serving argues a largeness of nature which will be recognized hereafter,” he said, feeling about in his waistcoat pocket for a quarter. It seemed a pity to render the waiter’s zeal retroactively interested, but in view of the fact that he possibly expected the quarter, there was nothing else to do; and by a mysterious stroke of gratitude the waiter delivered them into the hands of a friend, who took another quarter from them for carrying their bags and wraps to the train. This second retainer approved their admiration of the aesthetic forms and colors of the depot colonnade; and being asked if that were the depot whose roof had fallen in some years before, proudly replied that it was.

“There were a great many killed, were n’t there?” asked Basil, with sympathetic satisfaction in the disaster. The porter seemed humiliated; he confessed the mortifying truth that the loss of life was small, but he recovered a just self-respect in adding, “If the roof had fallen in five minutes sooner, it would have killed about three hundred people.”

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Basil had promised the children a sight of the Rapids before they reached the Falls, and they held him rigidly accountable from the moment they entered the train, and began to run out of the city between the river and the canal. He attempted a diversion with the canal boats, and tried to bring forward the subject of Rudder Grange in that connection. They said that the canal boats were splendid, but they were looking for the Rapids now; and they declined to be interested in a window in one of the boats, which Basil said was just like the window that the Rudder Granger and the boarder had popped Pomona out of when they took her for a burglar.

“You spoil those children, Basil,” said his wife, as they clambered over him, and clamored for the Rapids.

“At present I’m giving them an object-lesson in patience and self-denial; they are experiencing the fact that they can’t have the Rapids till they get to them, and probably they’ll be disappointed in them when they arrive.”

In fact, they valued the Rapids very little more than the Hoosac Tunnel, when they came in sight of them, at last; and Basil had some question in his own mind whether the Rapids had not dwindled since his former visit. He did not breathe this doubt to Isabel, however, and she arrived at the Falls with unabated expectations. They were going to spend only half a day there; and they turned into the station, away from the phalanx of omnibuses, when they dismounted from their train. They seemed, as before, to be the only passengers who had arrived, and they found an abundant choice of carriages waiting in the street, outside the station. The Niagara hackman may once have been a predatory and very rampant animal, but public opinion, long expressed through the public prints, has reduced him to silence and meekness. Apparently, he may not so much as beckon with his whip to the arriving wayfarer; it is certain that he cannot cross the pavement to the station door; and Basil, inviting one of them to negotiation, was himself required by the attendant policeman to step out to the curbstone, and complete his transaction there. It was an impressive illustration of the power of a free press, but upon the whole Basil found the effect melancholy; it had the saddening quality which inheres in every sort of perfection. The hackman, reduced to entire order, appealed to his compassion, and he had not the heart to beat him down from his moderate first demand, as perhaps he ought to have done. They drove directly to the cataract, and found themselves in the pretty grove beside the American Fall, and in the air whose dampness was as familiar as if they had breathed it all their childhood. It was full now of the fragrance of some sort of wild blossom; and again they had that old, entrancing sense of the mingled awfulness and loveliness of the great spectacle. This sylvan perfume, the gayety of the sunshine, the mildness of the breeze that stirred the leaves overhead,

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and the bird-singing that made itself heard amid the roar of the rapids and the solemn incessant plunge of the cataract, moved their hearts, and made them children with the boy and girl, who stood rapt for a moment and then broke into joyful wonder. They could sympathize with the ardor with which Tom longed to tempt fate at the brink of the river, and over the tops of the parapets which have been built along the edge of the precipice, and they equally entered into the terror with which Bella screamed at his suicidal zeal. They joined her in restraining him; they reduced him to a beggarly account of half a dozen stones, flung into the Rapids at not less than ten paces from the brink; and they would not let him toss the smallest pebble over the parapet, though he laughed to scorn the notion that anybody should be hurt by them below.

It seemed to them that the triviality of man in the surroundings of the Falls had increased with the lapse of time. There were more booths and bazaars, and more colored feather fans with whole birds spitted in the centres; and there was an offensive array of blue and green and yellow glasses on the shore, through which you were expected to look at the Falls gratis. They missed the simple dignity of the blanching Indian maids, who used to squat about on the grass, with their laps full of moccasins and pin-cushions. But, as of old, the photographer came out of his saloon, and invited them to pose for a family group; representing that the light and the spray were singularly propitious, and that everything in nature invited them to be taken. Basil put him off gently, for the sake of the time when he had refused to be photographed in a bridal group, and took refuge from him in the long low building from which you descend to the foot of the cataract.

The grove beside the American Fall has been inclosed, and named Prospect Park, by a company which exacts half a dollar for admittance, and then makes you free of all its wonders and conveniences, for which you once had to pay severally. This is well enough; but formerly you could refuse to go down the inclined tramway, and now you cannot, without feeling that you have failed to get your money's worth. It was in this illogical spirit of economy that Basil invited his family to the descent; but Isabel shook her head. "No, you go with the children," she said, "and I will stay, here, till you get back;" her agonized countenance added, "and pray for you;" and Basil took his children on either side of him, and rumbled down the, terrible descent with much of the excitement that attends travel in an open horse-car. When he stepped out of the car he felt that increase of courage which comes to every man after safely passing through danger. He resolved to brave the mists and slippery-stones at the foot of the Fall; and he would have plunged at once into this fresh peril, if he had not been prevented by the Prospect Park Company. This ingenious association has built a large tunnel-like

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shed quite to the water's edge, so that you cannot view the cataract as you once could, at a reasonable remoteness, but must emerge from the building into a storm of spray. The roof of the tunnel is painted with a lively effect in party-colored stripes, and is lettered "The Shadow of the Rock," so that you take it at first to be an appeal to your aesthetic sense; but the real object of the company is not apparent till you put your head out into the tempest, when you agree with the nearest guide—and one is always very near—that you had better have an oil-skin dress, as Basil did. He told the guide that he did not wish to go under the Fall, and the guide confidentially admitted that there was no fun in that, any way; and in the mean time he equipped him and his children for their foray into the mist. When they issued forth, under their friend's leadership, Basil felt that, with his children clinging to each hand, he looked like some sort of animal with its young, and, though not unsocial by nature, he was glad to be among strangers for the time. They climbed hither and thither over the rocks, and lifted their streaming faces for the views which the guide pointed out; and in a rift of the spray they really caught one glorious glimpse of the whole sweep of the Fall. The next instant the spray swirled back, and they were glad to turn for a sight of the rainbow, lying in a circle on the rocks as quietly and naturally as if that had been the habit of rainbows ever since the flood. This was all there was to be done, and they streamed back into the tunnel, where they disrobed in the face of a menacing placard, which announced that the hire of a guide and a dress for going under the Fall was one dollar.

"Will they make you pay a dollar for each of us, papa?" asked Tom, fearfully.

"Oh, pooh, no!" returned Basil; "we have n't been under the Fall." But he sought out the proprietor with a trembling heart. The proprietor was a man of severely logical mind; he said that the charge would be three dollars, for they had had the use of the dresses and the guide just the same as if they had gone under the Fall; and he refused to recognize anything misleading in the dressing-room placard: In fine, he left Basil without a leg to stand upon. It was not so much the three dollars as the sense of having been swindled that vexed him; and he instantly resolved not to share his annoyance with Isabel. Why, indeed, should he put that burden upon her? If she were none the wiser, she would be none the poorer; and he ought to be willing to deny himself her sympathy for the sake of sparing her needless pain.

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He met her at the top of the inclined tramway with a face of exemplary unconsciousness, and he listened with her to the tale their coachman told, as they sat in a pretty arbor looking out on the Rapids, of a Frenchman and his wife. This Frenchman had returned, one morning, from a stroll on Goat Island, and reported with much apparent concern that his wife had fallen into the water, and been carried over the Fall. It was so natural for a man to grieve for the loss of his wife, under the peculiar circumstances, that every one condoled with the widower; but when a few days later, her body was found, and the distracted husband refused to come back from New York to her funeral, there was a general regret that he had not been arrested. A flash of conviction illumed the whole fact to Basil's guilty consciousness: this unhappy Frenchman had paid a dollar for the use of an oil-skin suit at the foot of the Fall, and had been ashamed to confess the swindle to his wife, till, in a moment of remorse and madness, he shouted the fact into her ear, and then Basil looked at the mother of his children, and registered a vow that if he got away from Niagara without being forced to a similar excess he would confess his guilt to Isabel at the very first act of spendthrift profusion she committed. The guide pointed out the rock in the Rapids to which Avery had clung for twenty-four hours before he was carried over the Falls, and to the morbid fancy of the deceitful husband Isabel's bonnet ribbons seemed to flutter from the pointed reef. He could endure the pretty arbor no longer. "Come, children!" he cried, with a wild, unnatural gayety; "let us go to Goat Island, and see the Bridge to the Three Sisters, that your mother was afraid to walk back on after she had crossed it."

"For shame, Basil!" retorted Isabel. "You know it was you who were afraid of that bridge."

The children, who knew the story by heart, laughed with their father at the monstrous pretension; and his simulated hilarity only increased upon paying a toll of two dollars at the Goat Island bridge.

"What extortion!" cried Isabel, with an indignation that secretly unnerved him. He trembled upon the verge of confession; but he had finally the moral force to resist. He suffered her to compute the cost of their stay at Niagara without allowing those three dollars to enter into her calculation; he even began to think what justificative extravagance he could tempt her to. He suggested the purchase of local bric-a-brac; he asked her if she would not like to dine at the International, for old times' sake. But she answered, with disheartening virtue, that they must not think of such a thing, after what they had spent already. Nothing, perhaps, marked the confirmed husband in Basil more than these hidden fears and reluctances.

In the mean time Isabel ignorantly abandoned herself to the charm of the place, which she found unimpaired, in spite of the reported ravages of improvement about Niagara. Goat Island was still the sylvan solitude of twelve years ago, haunted by even fewer nymphs and dryads than of old. The air was full of the perfume that scented it at Prospect Park; the leaves showered them with shade and sun, as they drove along. "If

it were not for the children here," she said, "I should think that our first drive on Goat Island had never ended."

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She sighed a little, and Basil leaned forward and took her hand in his. "It never has ended; it's the same drive; only we are younger now, and enjoy it more." It always touched him when Isabel was sentimental about the past, for the years had tended to make her rather more seriously maternal towards him than towards the other children; and he recognized that these fond reminiscences were the expression of the girlhood still lurking deep within her heart.

She shook her head. "No, but I'm willing the children should be young in our place. It's only fair they should have their turn."

She remained in the carriage, while Basil visited the various points of view on Luna Island with the boy and girl. A boy is probably of considerable interest to himself, and a man looks back at his own boyhood with some pathos. But in his actuality a boy has very little to commend him to the toleration of other human beings. Tom was very well, as boys go; but now his contribution to the common enjoyment was to venture as near as possible to all perilous edges; to throw stones into the water, and to make as if to throw them over precipices on the people below; to pepper his father with questions, and to collect cumbrous mementos of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms. He kept the carriage waiting a good five minutes, while he could cut his initials on a band-rail. "You can come back and see 'em on your bridal tower," said the driver. Isabel gave a little start, as if she had almost thought of something she was trying to think of.

They occasionally met ladies driving, and sometimes they encountered a couple making a tour of the island on foot. But none of these people were young, and Basil reported that the Three Sisters were inhabited only by persons of like maturity; even a group of people who were eating lunch to the music of the shouting Rapids, on the outer edge of the last Sister, were no younger, apparently.

Isabel did not get out of the carriage to verify his report; she preferred to refute his story of her former panic on those islands by remaining serenely seated while he visited them. She thus lost a superb novelty which nature has lately added to the wonders of this Fall, in that place at the edge of the great Horse Shoe where the rock has fallen and left a peculiarly shaped chasm: through this the spray leaps up from below, and flashes a hundred feet into the air, in rocket-like jets and points, and then breaks and dissolves away in the pyrotechnic curves of a perpetual Fourth of July. Basil said something like this in celebrating the display, with the purpose of rendering her loss more poignant; but she replied, with tranquil piety, that she would rather keep her Niagara unchanged; and she declared that, as she understood him, there must be something rather cheap and conscious in the new feature. She approved, however, of the change that had removed that foolish little Terrapin Tower from the brink on which it stood, and she confessed that she could have enjoyed a little variety in the stories the driver told them of the Indian burial-ground on the island: they were exactly the stories she and Basil had heard twelve years before, and the ill-starred goats, from which the island took its name, perished once more in his narrative.

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Under the influence of his romances our travelers began to find the whole scene hackneyed; and they were glad to part from him a little sooner than they had bargained to do. They strolled about the anomalous village on foot, and once more marveled at the paucity of travel and the enormity of the local preparation. Surely the hotels are nowhere else in the world so large! Could there ever have been visitors enough at Niagara to fill them? They were built so big for some good reason, no doubt; but it is no more apparent than why all these magnificent equipages are waiting about the empty streets for the people who never come to hire them.

“It seems to me that I don’t see so many strangers here as I used,” Basil had suggested to their driver.

“Oh, they have n’t commenced coming yet,” he replied, with hardy cheerfulness, and pretended that they were plenty enough in July and August.

They went to dine at the modest restaurant of a colored man, who advertised a table d’hote dinner on a board at his door; and they put their misgivings to him, which seemed to grieve him, and he contended that Niagara was as prosperous and as much resorted to as ever. In fact, they observed that their regret for the supposed decline of the Falls as a summer resort was nowhere popular in the village, and they desisted in their offers of sympathy, after their rebuff from the restaurateur.

Basil got his family away to the station after dinner, and left them there, while he walked down the village street, for a closer inspection of the hotels. At the door of the largest a pair of children sported in the solitude, as fearlessly as the birds on Selkirk’s island; looking into the hotel, he saw a few porters and call-boys seated in statuesque repose against the wall, while the clerk pined in dreamless inactivity behind the register; some deserted ladies flitted through the door of the parlor at the side. He recalled the evening of his former visit, when he and Isabel had met the Ellisons in that parlor, and it seemed, in the retrospect, a scene of the wildest gayety. He turned for consolation into the barber’s shop, where he found himself the only customer, and no busy sound of “Next” greeted his ear. But the barber, like all the rest, said that Niagara was not unusually empty; and he came out feeling bewildered and defrauded. Surely the agent of the boats which descend the Rapids of the St. Lawrence must be frank, if Basil went to him and pretended that he was going to buy a ticket. But a glance at the agent’s sign showed Basil that the agent, with his brave jollity of manner and his impressive “Good-morning,” had passed away from the deceits of travel, and that he was now inherited by his widow, who in turn was absent, and temporarily represented by their son. The boy, in supplying Basil with an advertisement of the line, made a specious show of haste, as if there were a long queue of tourists waiting behind him to be served with tickets. Perhaps there was, indeed, a spectral line there, but Basil was the only tourist present in the flesh, and he shivered in his isolation, and fled with the advertisement in his hand. Isabel met him at the door of the station with a frightened face.

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“Basil,” she cried, “I have found out what the trouble is! Where are the brides?”

He took her outstretched hands in his, and passing one of them through his arm walked with her apart from the children, who were examining at the news-man’s booth the moccasins and the birchbark bric-a-brac of the Irish aborigines, and the cups and vases of Niagara spar imported from Devonshire.

“My dear,” he said, “there are no brides; everybody was married twelve years ago, and the brides are middle-aged mothers of families now, and don’t come to Niagara if they are wise.”

“Yes,” she desolately asserted, “that is so! Something has been hanging over me ever since we came, and suddenly I realized that it was the absence of the brides. But—but—down at the hotels—Didn’t you see anything bridal there? When the omnibuses arrived, was there no burst of minstrelsy? Was there—”

She could not go on, but sank nervelessly into the nearest seat.

“Perhaps,” said Basil, dreamily regarding the contest of Tom and Bella for a newly-purchased paper of sour cherries, and helplessly forecasting in his remoter mind the probable consequences, “there were both brides and minstrelsy at the hotel, if I had only had the eyes to see and the ears to hear. In this world, my dear, we are always of our own time, and we live amid contemporary things. I daresay there were middle-aged people at Niagara when we were here before, but we did not meet them, nor they us. I daresay that the place is now swarming with bridal couples, and it is because they are invisible and inaudible to us that it seems such a howling wilderness. But the hotel clerks and the restaurateurs and the hackmen know them, and that is the reason why they receive with surprise and even offense our sympathy for their loneliness. Do you suppose, Isabel, that if you were to lay your head on my shoulder, in a bridal manner, it would do anything to bring us en rapport with that lost bridal world again?”

Isabel caught away her hand. “Basil,” she cried, “it would be disgusting! I wouldn’t do it for the world—not even for that world. I saw one middle-aged couple on Goat Island, while you were down at the Cave of the Winds, or somewhere, with the children. They were sitting on some steps, he a step below her, and he seemed to want to put his head on her knee; but I gazed at him sternly, and he didn’t dare. We should look like them, if we yielded to any outburst of affection. Don’t you think we should look like them?”

“I don’t know,” said Basil. “You are certainly a little wrinkled, my dear.”

“And you are very fat, Basil.”

They glanced at each other with a flash of resentment, and then they both laughed. “We couldn’t look young if we quarreled a week,” he said. “We had better content

ourselves with feeling young, as I hope we shall do if we live to be ninety. It will be the loss of others if they don't see our bloom upon us. Shall I get you a paper of cherries, Isabel? The children seem to be enjoying them."

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Isabel sprang upon her offspring with a cry of despair. “Oh, what shall I do? Now we shall not have a wink of sleep with them to-night. Where is that nux?” She hunted for the medicine in her bag, and the children submitted; for they had eaten all the cherries, and they took their medicine without a murmur. “I wonder at your letting them eat the sour things, Basil,” said their mother, when the children bad run off to the newsstand again.

“I wonder that you left me to see what they were doing,” promptly retorted their father.

“It was your nonsense about the brides,” said Isabel; “and I think this has been a lesson to us. Don’t let them get anything else to eat, dearest.”

“They are safe; they have no more money. They are frugally confining themselves to the admiration of the Japanese bows and arrows yonder. Why have our Indians taken to making Japanese bows and arrows?”

Isabel despised the small pleasantry. “Then you saw nobody at the hotel?” she asked.

“Not even the Ellisons,” said Basil.

“Ah, yes,” said Isabel; “that was where we met them. How long ago it seems! And poor little Kitty! I wonder what has become of them? But I’m glad they’re not here. That’s what makes you realize your age: meeting the same people in the same place a great while after, and seeing how old—they’ve grown. I don’t think I could bear to see Kitty Ellison again. I’m glad she did n’t come to visit us in Boston, though, after what happened, she could n’t, poor thing! I wonder if she ’s ever regretted her breaking with him in the way she did. It’s a very painful thing to think of,—such an inconclusive conclusion; it always seemed as if they ought to meet again, somewhere.”

“I don’t believe she ever wished it.”

“A man can’t tell what a woman wishes.”

“Well, neither can a woman,” returned Basil, lightly.

His wife remained serious. “It was a very fine point,—a very little thing to reject a man for. I felt that when I first read her letter about it.”

Basil yawned. “I don’t believe I ever knew just what the point was.”

“Oh yes, you did; but you forget everything. You know that they met two Boston ladies just after they were engaged, and she believed that he did n’t introduce her because he was ashamed of her countrified appearance before them.”

“It was a pretty fine point,” said Basil, and he laughed provokingly.

“He might not have meant to ignore her,” answered Isabel thoughtfully; “he might have chosen not to introduce her because he felt too proud of her to subject her to any possible misappreciation from them. You might have looked at it in that way.”

“Why didn’t you look at it in that way? You advised her against giving him another chance. Why did you?”

“Why?” repeated Isabel, absently. “Oh, a woman does n’t judge a man by what he does, but by what he is! I knew that if she dismissed him it was because she never really had trusted or could trust his love; and I thought she had better not make another trial.”

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“Well, very possibly you were right. At any rate, you have the consolation of knowing that it’s too late to help it now.”

“Yes, it’s too late,” said Isabel; and her thoughts went back to her meeting with the young girl whom she had liked so much, and whose after history had interested her so painfully. It seemed to her a hard world that could come to nothing better than that for the girl whom she had seen in her first glimpse of it that night. Where was she now? What had become of her? If she had married that man, would she have been any happier? Marriage was not the poetic dream of perfect union that a girl imagines it; she herself had found that out. It was a state of trial, of probation; it was an ordeal, not an ecstasy. If she and Basil had broken each other’s hearts and parted, would not the fragments of their lives have been on a much finer, much higher plane? Had not the commonplace, every-day experiences of marriage vulgarized them both? To be sure, there were the children; but if they had never had the children, she would never have missed them; and if Basil had, for example, died just before they were married—She started from this wicked reverie, and ran towards her husband, whose broad, honest back, with no visible neck or shirt-collar, was turned towards her, as he stood, with his head thrown up, studying a time-table on the wall; she passed her arm convulsively through his, and pulled him away.

“It’s time to be getting our bags out to the train, Basil! Come, Bella! Tom, we’re going!”

The children reluctantly turned from the newsman’s trumpery, and they all went out to the track, and took seats on the benches under the colonnade. While they waited; the train for Buffalo drew in, and they remained watching it till it started. In the last car that passed them, when it was fairly under way, a face looked full at Isabel from one of the windows. In that moment of astonishment she forgot to observe whether it was sad or glad; she only saw, or believed she saw, the light of recognition dawn into its eyes, and then it was gone.

“Basil!” she cried, “stop the train! That was Kitty Ellison!”

“Oh no, it wasn’t,” said Basil, easily. “It looked like her; but it looked at least ten years older.”

“Why, of course it was! We’re all ten years older,” returned his wife in such indignation at his stupidity that she neglected to insist upon his stopping the train, which was rapidly diminishing in the perspective.

He declared it was only a fancied resemblance; she contended that this was in the neighborhood of Eriecreek, and it must be Kitty; and thus one of their most inveterate disagreements began.

Their own train drew into the depot, and they disputed upon the fact in question till they entered on the passage of the Suspension Bridge. Then Basil rose and called the children to his side. On the left hand, far up the river, the great Fall shows, with its mists at its foot and its rainbow on its brow, as silent and still as if it were vastly painted there; and below the bridge on the right, leap the Rapids in the narrow gorge, like seas on a rocky shore. “Look on both sides, now,” he said to the children. “Isabel you must see this!”

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Isabel had been preparing for the passage of this bridge ever since she left Boston. “Never!” she exclaimed. She instantly closed her eyes, and hid her face in her handkerchief. Thanks to this precaution of hers, the train crossed the bridge in perfect safety.

PG EDITORS BOOKMARKS:

All luckiest or the unluckiest, the healthiest or the sickest
All the loveliness that exists outside of you, dearest is little
Amusing world, if you do not refuse to be amused
At heart every man is a smuggler
Beautiful with the radiance of loving and being loved
Bewildering labyrinth of error
Biggest place is always the kindest as well as the cruelest
Brown-stone fronts
Civilly protested and consented
Coldly and inaccessibly vigilant
Collective silence which passes for sociality
Deadly summer day
Dinner unites the idea of pleasure and duty
Dog that had plainly made up his mind to go mad
Evil which will not let a man forgive his victim
Feeblest-minded are sure to lead the talk
Feeling of contempt for his unambitious destination
Feeling rather ashamed,—for he had laughed too
Glad; which considering, they ceased to be
Guilty rapture of a deliberate dereliction
Happiness built upon and hedged about with misery
Happiness is so unreasonable
Headache darkens the universe while it lasts
Heart that forgives but does not forget
Helplessness accounts for many heroic facts in the world
Helplessness begets a sense of irresponsibility
I supposed I had the pleasure of my wife’s acquaintance
I want to be sorry upon the easiest possible terms
I’m not afraid—I’m awfully demoralized
Indulge safely in the pleasures of autobiography
It ’s the same as a promise, your not saying you wouldn’t
It had come as all such calamities come, from nothing
Jesting mood in the face of all embarrassments
Long life of holidays which is happy marriage
Married the whole mystifying world of womankind
Muddy draught which impudently affected to be coffee

Never could have an emotion without desiring to analyze it
Nothing so apt to end in mutual dislike,—except gratitude
Nothing so sad to her as a bride, unless it's a young mother
Oblivion of sleep
Only so much clothing as the law compelled
Parkman
Patronizing spirit of travellers in a foreign country
Rejoice in everything that I haven't done
Seemed the last phase of a world presently to be destroyed
Self-sufficiency, without its vulgarity
So hard to give up doing anything we have meant to do
So old a world and groping still
The knowledge of your helplessness in any circumstances
There is little proportion

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about either pain or pleasure
They can only do harm by an expression of sympathy
Tragical character of heat
Used to having his decisions reached without his knowledge
Vexed by a sense of his own pitifulness
Voice of the common imbecility and incoherence
Weariness of buying
Willingness to find poetry in things around them

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

By William Dean Howells

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

The following story was the first fruit of my New York life when I began to live it after my quarter of a century in Cambridge and Boston, ending in 1889; and I used my own transition to the commercial metropolis in framing the experience which was wholly that of my supposititious literary adventurer. He was a character whom, with his wife, I have employed in some six or eight other stories, and whom I made as much the hero and heroine of 'Their Wedding Journey' as the slight fable would bear. In venturing out of my adoptive New England, where I had found myself at home with many imaginary friends, I found it natural to ask the company of these familiar acquaintances, but their company was not to be had at once for the asking. When I began speaking of them as Basil and Isabel, in the fashion of 'Their Wedding Journey,' they would not respond with the effect of early middle age which I desired in them. They remained wilfully, not to say woodenly, the young bridal pair of that romance, without the promise of novel functioning. It was not till I tried addressing them as March and Mrs. March that they stirred under my hand with fresh impulse, and set about the work assigned them as people in something more than their second youth.

The scene into which I had invited them to figure filled the largest canvas I had yet allowed myself; and, though 'A Hazard of New Fortunes was not the first story I had written with the printer at my heels, it was the first which took its own time to prescribe its own dimensions. I had the general design well in mind when I began to write it, but as it advanced it compelled into its course incidents, interests, individualities, which I had not known lay near, and it specialized and amplified at points which I had not always meant to touch, though I should not like to intimate anything mystical in the fact. It became, to my thinking, the most vital of my fictions, through my quickened interest in the life about me, at a moment of great psychological import. We had passed through a period of strong emotioning in the direction of the humaner economics, if I may phrase it

so; the rich seemed not so much to despise the poor, the poor did not so hopelessly repine. The solution of the riddle of the painful earth through the dreams of Henry George, through the dreams of Edward Bellamy, through the dreams of all the generous visionaries of the past, seemed not impossibly far off. That shedding of blood which is for the

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remission of sins had been symbolized by the bombs and scaffolds of Chicago, and the hearts of those who felt the wrongs bound up with our rights, the slavery implicated in our liberty, were thrilling with griefs and hopes hitherto strange to the average American breast. Opportunely for me there was a great street-car strike in New York, and the story began to find its way to issues nobler and larger than those of the love-affairs common to fiction. I was in my fifty-second year when I took it up, and in the prime, such as it was, of my powers. The scene which I had chosen appealed prodigiously to me, and the action passed as nearly without my conscious agency as I ever allow myself to think such things happen.

The opening chapters were written in a fine, old fashioned apartment house which had once been a family house, and in an uppermost room of which I could look from my work across the trees of the little park in Stuyvesant Square to the towers of St. George's Church. Then later in the spring of 1889 the unfinished novel was carried to a country house on the Belmont border of Cambridge. There I must have written very rapidly to have pressed it to conclusion before the summer ended. It came, indeed, so easily from the pen that I had the misgiving which I always have of things which do not cost me great trouble.

There is nothing in the book with which I amused myself more than the house-hunting of the Marches when they were placing themselves in New York; and if the contemporary reader should turn for instruction to the pages in which their experience is detailed I assure him that he may trust their fidelity and accuracy in the article of New York housing as it was early in the last decade of the last century: I mean, the housing of people of such moderate means as the Marches. In my zeal for truth I did not distinguish between reality and actuality in this or other matters—that is, one was as precious to me as the other. But the types here portrayed are as true as ever they were, though the world in which they were finding their habitat is wonderfully, almost incredibly different. Yet it is not wholly different, for a young literary pair now adventuring in New York might easily parallel the experience of the Marches with their own, if not for so little money; many phases of New York housing are better, but all are dearer. Other aspects of the material city have undergone a transformation much more wonderful. I find that in my book its population is once modestly spoken of as two millions, but now in twenty years it is twice as great, and the grandeur as well as grandiosity of its forms is doubly apparent. The transitional public that then moped about in mildly tinkling horse-cars is now hurried back and forth in clanging trolleys, in honking and whirring motors; the Elevated road which was the last word of speed is undermined by the Subway, shooting its swift shuttles through the subterranean woof of the city's haste. From these feet let the witness infer our whole massive Hercules, a bulk that sprawls and stretches beyond the rivers through the tunnels piercing their beds and that towers into the skies with innumerable tops—a Hercules blent of Briareus and Cerberus, but not so bad a monster as it seemed then to threaten becoming.

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Certain hopes of truer and better conditions on which my heart was fixed twenty years ago are not less dear, and they are by no means touched with despair, though they have not yet found the fulfilment which I would then have prophesied for them. Events have not wholly played them false; events have not halted, though they have marched with a slowness that might affect a younger observer as marking time. They who were then mindful of the poor have not forgotten them, and what is better the poor have not often forgotten themselves in violences such as offered me the material of tragedy and pathos in my story. In my quality of artist I could not regret these, and I gratefully realize that they offered me the opportunity of a more strenuous action, a more impressive catastrophe than I could have achieved without them. They tended to give the whole fable dignity and doubtless made for its success as a book. As a serial it had crept a sluggish course before a public apparently so unmindful of it that no rumor of its acceptance or rejection reached the writer during the half year of its publication; but it rose in book form from that failure and stood upon its feet and went its way to greater favor than any book of his had yet enjoyed. I hope that my recognition of the fact will not seem like boasting, but that the reader will regard it as a special confidence from the author and will let it go no farther.

Kittery point, *Maine*, July, 1909.

PART FIRST

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES I.

“Now, you think this thing over, March, and let me know the last of next week,” said Fulkerson. He got up from the chair which he had been sitting astride, with his face to its back, and tilting toward March on its hind-legs, and came and rapped upon his table with his thin bamboo stick. “What you want to do is to get out of the insurance business, anyway. You acknowledge that yourself. You never liked it, and now it makes you sick; in other words, it’s killing you. You ain’t an insurance man by nature. You’re a natural-born literary man, and you’ve been going against the grain. Now, I offer you a chance to go with the grain. I don’t say you’re going to make your everlasting fortune, but I’ll give you a living salary, and if the thing succeeds you’ll share in its success. We’ll all share in its success. That’s the beauty of it. I tell you, March, this is the greatest idea that has been struck since”—Fulkerson stopped and searched his mind for a fit image—“since the creation of man.”

He put his leg up over the corner of March’s table and gave himself a sharp cut on the thigh, and leaned forward to get the full effect of his words upon his listener.

March had his hands clasped together behind his head, and he took one of them down long enough to put his inkstand and mucilage-bottle out of Fulkerson’s way. After many

years' experiment of a mustache and whiskers, he now wore his grizzled beard full, but cropped close; it gave him a certain grimness, corrected by the gentleness of his eyes.

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“Some people don’t think much of the creation of man nowadays. Why stop at that? Why not say since the morning stars sang together?”

“No, sir; no, sir! I don’t want to claim too much, and I draw the line at the creation of man. I’m satisfied with that. But if you want to ring the morning stars into the prospectus all right; I won’t go back on you.”

“But I don’t understand why you’ve set your mind on me,” March said. “I haven’t had, any magazine experience, you know that; and I haven’t seriously attempted to do anything in literature since I was married. I gave up smoking and the Muse together. I suppose I could still manage a cigar, but I don’t believe I could—”

“Muse worth a cent.” Fulkerson took the thought out of his mouth and put it into his own words. “I know. Well, I don’t want you to. I don’t care if you never write a line for the thing, though you needn’t reject anything of yours, if it happens to be good, on that account. And I don’t want much experience in my editor; rather not have it. You told me, didn’t you, that you used to do some newspaper work before you settled down?”

“Yes; I thought my lines were permanently cast in those places once. It was more an accident than anything else that I got into the insurance business. I suppose I secretly hoped that if I made my living by something utterly different, I could come more freshly to literature proper in my leisure.”

“I see; and you found the insurance business too many, for you. Well, anyway, you’ve always had a hankering for the inkpots; and the fact that you first gave me the idea of this thing shows that you’ve done more or less thinking about magazines.”

“Yes—less.”

“Well, all right. Now don’t you be troubled. I know what I want, generally, speaking, and in this particular instance I want you. I might get a man of more experience, but I should probably get a man of more prejudice and self-conceit along with him, and a man with a following of the literary hangers-on that are sure to get round an editor sooner or later. I want to start fair, and I’ve found out in the syndicate business all the men that are worth having. But they know me, and they don’t know you, and that’s where we shall have the pull on them. They won’t be able to work the thing. Don’t you be anxious about the experience. I’ve got experience enough of my own to run a dozen editors. What I want is an editor who has taste, and you’ve got it; and conscience, and you’ve got it; and horse sense, and you’ve got that. And I like you because you’re a Western man, and I’m another. I do cotton to a Western man when I find him off East here, holding his own with the best of ’em, and showing ’em that he’s just as much civilized as they are. We both know what it is to have our bright home in the setting sun; heigh?”

“I think we Western men who’ve come East are apt to take ourselves a little too objectively and to feel ourselves rather more representative than we need,” March remarked.

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Fulkerson was delighted. “You’ve hit it! We do! We are!”

“And as for holding my own, I’m not very proud of what I’ve done in that way; it’s been very little to hold. But I know what you mean, Fulkerson, and I’ve felt the same thing myself; it warmed me toward you when we first met. I can’t help suffusing a little to any man when I hear that he was born on the other side of the Alleghanies. It’s perfectly stupid. I despise the same thing when I see it in Boston people.”

Fulkerson pulled first one of his blond whiskers and then the other, and twisted the end of each into a point, which he left to untwine itself. He fixed March with his little eyes, which had a curious innocence in their cunning, and tapped the desk immediately in front of him. “What I like about you is that you’re broad in your sympathies. The first time I saw you, that night on the Quebec boat, I said to myself: ’There’s a man I want to know. There’s a human being.’ I was a little afraid of Mrs. March and the children, but I felt at home with you—thoroughly domesticated—before I passed a word with you; and when you spoke first, and opened up with a joke over that fellow’s tableful of light literature and Indian moccasins and birch-bark toy canoes and stereoscopic views, I knew that we were brothers-spiritual twins. I recognized the Western style of fun, and I thought, when you said you were from Boston, that it was some of the same. But I see now that its being a cold fact, as far as the last fifteen or twenty years count, is just so much gain. You know both sections, and you can make this thing go, from ocean to ocean.”

“We might ring that into the prospectus, too,” March suggested, with a smile. “You might call the thing ‘From Sea to Sea.’ By-the-way, what are you going to call it?”

“I haven’t decided yet; that’s one of the things I wanted to talk with you about. I had thought of ‘The Syndicate’; but it sounds kind of dry, and doesn’t seem to cover the ground exactly. I should like something that would express the co-operative character of the thing, but I don’t know as I can get it.”

“Might call it ’The Mutual’.”

“They’d think it was an insurance paper. No, that won’t do. But Mutual comes pretty near the idea. If we could get something like that, it would pique curiosity; and then if we could get paragraphs afloat explaining that the contributors were to be paid according to the sales, it would be a first-rate ad.”

He bent a wide, anxious, inquiring smile upon March, who suggested, lazily: “You might call it ‘The Round-Robin’. That would express the central idea of irresponsibility. As I understand, everybody is to share the profits and be exempt from the losses. Or, if I’m wrong, and the reverse is true, you might call it ‘The Army of Martyrs’. Come, that sounds attractive, Fulkerson! Or what do you think of ‘The Fifth Wheel’? That would forestall the criticism that there are too many literary periodicals already. Or, if you want

to put forward the idea of complete independence, you could call it ‘The Free Lance’; or __”

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“Or ’The Hog on Ice’—either stand up or fall down, you know,” Fulkerson broke in coarsely. “But we’ll leave the name of the magazine till we get the editor. I see the poison’s beginning to work in you, March; and if I had time I’d leave the result to time. But I haven’t. I’ve got to know inside of the next week. To come down to business with you, March, I sha’n’t start this thing unless I can get you to take hold of it.”

He seemed to expect some acknowledgment, and March said, “Well, that’s very nice of you, Fulkerson.”

“No, sir; no, sir! I’ve always liked you and wanted you ever since we met that first night. I had this thing inchoately in my mind then, when I was telling you about the newspaper syndicate business—beautiful vision of a lot of literary fellows breaking loose from the bondage of publishers and playing it alone—”

“You might call it ‘The Lone Hand’; that would be attractive,” March interrupted. “The whole West would know what you meant.”

Fulkerson was talking seriously, and March was listening seriously; but they both broke off and laughed. Fulkerson got down off the table and made some turns about the room. It was growing late; the October sun had left the top of the tall windows; it was still clear day, but it would soon be twilight; they had been talking a long time. Fulkerson came and stood with his little feet wide apart, and bent his little lean, square face on March. “See here! How much do you get out of this thing here, anyway?”

“The insurance business?” March hesitated a moment and then said, with a certain effort of reserve, “At present about three thousand.” He looked up at Fulkerson with a glance, as if he had a mind to enlarge upon the fact, and then dropped his eyes without saying more.

Whether Fulkerson had not thought it so much or not, he said: “Well, I’ll give you thirty-five hundred. Come! And your chances in the success.”

“We won’t count the chances in the success. And I don’t believe thirty-five hundred would go any further in New York than three thousand in Boston.”

“But you don’t live on three thousand here?”

“No; my wife has a little property.”

“Well, she won’t lose the income if you go to New York. I suppose you pay ten or twelve hundred a year for your house here. You can get plenty of flats in New York for the same money; and I understand you can get all sorts of provisions for less than you pay now—three or four cents on the pound. Come!”

This was by no means the first talk they had had about the matter; every three or four months during the past two years the syndicate man had dropped in upon March to air the scheme and to get his impressions of it. This had happened so often that it had come to be a sort of joke between them. But now Fulkerson clearly meant business, and March had a struggle to maintain himself in a firm poise of refusal.

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“I dare say it wouldn’t—or it needn’t-cost so very much more, but I don’t want to go to New York; or my wife doesn’t. It’s the same thing.”

“A good deal samer,” Fulkerson admitted.

March did not quite like his candor, and he went on with dignity. “It’s very natural she shouldn’t. She has always lived in Boston; she’s attached to the place. Now, if you were going to start ‘The Fifth Wheel’ in Boston—”

Fulkerson slowly and sadly shook his head, but decidedly. “Wouldn’t do. You might as well say St. Louis or Cincinnati. There’s only one city that belongs to the whole country, and that’s New York.”

“Yes, I know,” sighed March; “and Boston belongs to the Bostonians, but they like you to make yourself at home while you’re visiting.”

“If you’ll agree to make phrases like that, right along, and get them into ‘The Round-Robin’ somehow, I’ll say four thousand,” said Fulkerson. “You think it over now, March. You talk it over with Mrs. March; I know you will, anyway; and I might as well make a virtue of advising you to do it. Tell her I advised you to do it, and you let me know before next Saturday what you’ve decided.”

March shut down the rolling top of his desk in the corner of the room, and walked Fulkerson out before him. It was so late that the last of the chore-women who washed down the marble halls and stairs of the great building had wrung out her floor-cloth and departed, leaving spotless stone and a clean, damp smell in the darkening corridors behind her.

“Couldn’t offer you such swell quarters in New York, March,” Fulkerson said, as he went tack-tacking down the steps with his small boot-heels. “But I’ve got my eye on a little house round in West Eleventh Street that I’m going to fit up for my bachelor’s hall in the third story, and adapt for ‘The Lone Hand’ in the first and second, if this thing goes through; and I guess we’ll be pretty comfortable. It’s right on the Sand Strip—no malaria of any kind.”

“I don’t know that I’m going to share its salubrity with you yet,” March sighed, in an obvious travail which gave Fulkerson hopes.

“Oh yes, you are,” he coaxed. “Now, you talk it over with your wife. You give her a fair, unprejudiced chance at the thing on its merits, and I’m very much mistaken in Mrs. March if she doesn’t tell you to go in and win. We’re bound to win!”

They stood on the outside steps of the vast edifice beetling like a granite crag above them, with the stone groups of an allegory of life-insurance foreshortened in the bas-relief overhead. March absently lifted his eyes to it. It was suddenly strange after so

many years' familiarity, and so was the well-known street in its Saturday-evening solitude. He asked himself, with prophetic homesickness, if it were an omen of what was to be. But he only said, musingly: "A fortnightly. You know that didn't work in England. The fortnightly is published once a month now."

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“It works in France,” Fulkerson retorted. “The ‘Revue des Deux Mondes’ is still published twice a month. I guess we can make it work in America—with illustrations.”

“Going to have illustrations?”

“My dear boy! What are you giving me? Do I look like the sort of lunatic who would start a thing in the twilight of the nineteenth century without illustrations? Come off!”

“Ah, that complicates it! I don’t know anything about art.” March’s look of discouragement confessed the hold the scheme had taken upon him.

“I don’t want you to!” Fulkerson retorted. “Don’t you suppose I shall have an art man?”

“And will they—the artists—work at a reduced rate, too, like the writers, with the hopes of a share in the success?”

“Of course they will! And if I want any particular man, for a card, I’ll pay him big money besides. But I can get plenty of first-rate sketches on my own terms. You’ll see! They’ll pour in!”

“Look here, Fulkerson,” said March, “you’d better call this fortnightly of yours ‘The Madness o f the Half-Moon’; or ‘Bedlam Broke Loose’ wouldn’t be bad! Why do you throw away all your hard earnings on such a crazy venture? Don’t do it!” The kindness which March had always felt, in spite of his wife’s first misgivings and reservations, for the merry, hopeful, slangy, energetic little creature trembled in his voice. They had both formed a friendship for Fulkerson during the week they were together in Quebec. When he was not working the newspapers there, he went about with them over the familiar ground they were showing their children, and was simply grateful for the chance, as well as very entertaining about it all. The children liked him, too; when they got the clew to his intention, and found that he was not quite serious in many of the things he said, they thought he was great fun. They were always glad when their father brought him home on the occasion of Fulkerson’s visits to Boston; and Mrs. March, though of a charier hospitality, welcomed Fulkerson with a grateful sense of his admiration for her husband. He had a way of treating March with deference, as an older and abler man, and of qualifying the freedom he used toward every one with an implication that March tolerated it voluntarily, which she thought very sweet and even refined.

“Ah, now you’re talking like a man and a brother,” said Fulkerson. “Why, March, old man, do you suppose I’d come on here and try to talk you into this thing if I wasn’t morally, if I wasn’t perfectly, sure of success? There isn’t any if or and about it. I know my ground, every inch; and I don’t stand alone on it,” he added, with a significance which did not escape March. “When you’ve made up your mind I can give you the proof; but I’m not at liberty now to say anything more. I tell you it’s going to be a triumphal march from the word go, with coffee and lemonade for the procession along

the whole line. All you've got to do is to fall in." He stretched out his hand to March. "You let me know as soon as you can."

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March deferred taking his hand till he could ask, “Where are you going?”

“Parker House. Take the eleven for New York to-night.”

“I thought I might walk your way.” March looked at his watch. “But I shouldn’t have time. Goodbye!”

He now let Fulkerson have his hand, and they exchanged a cordial pressure. Fulkerson started away at a quick, light pace. Half a block off he stopped, turned round, and, seeing March still standing where he had left him, he called back, joyously, “I’ve got the name!”

“What?”

“Every Other Week.”

“It isn’t bad.”

“Ta-ta!”

II.

All the way up to the South End March mentally prolonged his talk with Fulkerson, and at his door in Nankeen Square he closed the parley with a plump refusal to go to New York on any terms. His daughter Bella was lying in wait for him in the hall, and she threw her arms round his neck with the exuberance of her fourteen years and with something of the histrionic intention of her sex. He pressed on, with her clinging about him, to the library, and, in the glow of his decision against Fulkerson, kissed his wife, where she sat by the study lamp reading the Transcript through her first pair of eye-glasses: it was agreed in the family that she looked distinguished in them, or, at any rate, cultivated. She took them off to give him a glance of question, and their son Tom looked up from his book for a moment; he was in his last year at the high school, and was preparing for Harvard.

“I didn’t get away from the office till half-past five,” March explained to his wife’s glance, “and then I walked. I suppose dinner’s waiting. I’m sorry, but I won’t do it any more.”

At table he tried to be gay with Bella, who babbled at him with a voluble pertness which her brother had often advised her parents to check in her, unless they wanted her to be universally despised.

“Papa!” she shouted at last, “you’re not listening!” As soon as possible his wife told the children they might be excused. Then she asked, “What is it, Basil?”

“What is what?” he retorted, with a specious brightness that did not avail.

“What is on your mind?”

“How do you know there’s anything?”

“Your kissing me so when you came in, for one thing.”

“Don’t I always kiss you when I come in?”

“Not now. I suppose it isn’t necessary any more. ‘Cela va sans baiser.’”

“Yes, I guess it’s so; we get along without the symbolism now.” He stopped, but she knew that he had not finished.

“Is it about your business? Have they done anything more?”

“No; I’m still in the dark. I don’t know whether they mean to supplant me, or whether they ever did. But I wasn’t thinking about that. Fulkerson has been to see me again.”

“Fulkerson?” She brightened at the name, and March smiled, too. “Why didn’t you bring him to dinner?”

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“I wanted to talk with you. Then you do like him?”

“What has that got to do with it, Basil?”

“Nothing! nothing! That is, he was boring away about that scheme of his again. He’s got it into definite shape at last.”

“What shape?”

March outlined it for her, and his wife seized its main features with the intuitive sense of affairs which makes women such good business-men when they will let it.

“It sounds perfectly crazy,” she said, finally. “But it mayn’t be. The only thing I didn’t like about Mr. Fulkerson was his always wanting to chance things. But what have you got to do with it?”

“What have I got to do with it?” March toyed with the delay the question gave him; then he said, with a sort of deprecatory laugh: “It seems that Fulkerson has had his eye on me ever since we met that night on the Quebec boat. I opened up pretty freely to him, as you do to a man you never expect to see again, and when I found he was in that newspaper syndicate business I told him about my early literary ambitions—”

“You can’t say that I ever discouraged them, Basil,” his wife put in. “I should have been willing, any time, to give up everything for them.”

“Well, he says that I first suggested this brilliant idea to him. Perhaps I did; I don’t remember. When he told me about his supplying literature to newspapers for simultaneous publication, he says I asked: ’Why not apply the principle of co-operation to a magazine, and run it in the interest of the contributors?’ and that set him to thinking, and he thought out his plan of a periodical which should pay authors and artists a low price outright for their work and give them a chance of the profits in the way of a percentage. After all, it isn’t so very different from the chances an author takes when he publishes a book. And Fulkerson thinks that the novelty of the thing would pique public curiosity, if it didn’t arouse public sympathy. And the long and short of it is, Isabel, that he wants me to help edit it.”

“To edit it?” His wife caught her breath, and she took a little time to realize the fact, while she stared hard at her husband to make sure he was not joking.

“Yes. He says he owes it all to me; that I invented the idea—the germ—the microbe.”

His wife had now realized the fact, at least in a degree that excluded trifling with it. “That is very honorable of Mr. Fulkerson; and if he owes it to you, it was the least he could do.” Having recognized her husband’s claim to the honor done him, she began to kindle with a sense of the honor itself and the value of the opportunity. “It’s a very high

compliment to you, Basil—a very high compliment. And you could give up this wretched insurance business that you've always hated so, and that's making you so unhappy now that you think they're going to take it from you. Give it up and take Mr. Fulkerson's offer! It's a perfect interposition, coming just at this time! Why, do it! Mercy!" she suddenly arrested herself, "he wouldn't expect you to get along on the possible profits?" Her face expressed the awfulness of the notion.

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March smiled reassuringly, and waited to give himself the pleasure of the sensation he meant to give her. “If I’ll make striking phrases for it and edit it, too, he’ll give me four thousand dollars.”

He leaned back in his chair, and stuck his hands deep into his pockets, and watched his wife’s face, luminous with the emotions that flashed through her mind-doubt, joy, anxiety.

“Basil! You don’t mean it! Why, take it! Take it instantly! Oh, what a thing to happen! Oh, what luck! But you deserve it, if you first suggested it. What an escape, what a triumph over all those hateful insurance people! Oh, Basil, I’m afraid he’ll change his mind! You ought to have accepted on the spot. You might have known I would approve, and you could so easily have taken it back if I didn’t. Telegraph him now! Run right out with the despatch—Or we can send Tom!”

In these imperatives of Mrs. March’s there was always much of the conditional. She meant that he should do what she said, if it were entirely right; and she never meant to be considered as having urged him.

“And suppose his enterprise went wrong?” her husband suggested.

“It won’t go wrong. Hasn’t he made a success of his syndicate?”

“He says so—yes.”

“Very well, then, it stands to reason that he’ll succeed in this, too. He wouldn’t undertake it if he didn’t know it would succeed; he must have capital.”

“It will take a great deal to get such a thing going; and even if he’s got an Angel behind him—”

She caught at the word—“An Angel?”

“It’s what the theatrical people call a financial backer. He dropped a hint of something of that kind.”

“Of course, he’s got an Angel,” said his wife, promptly adopting the word. “And even if he hadn’t, still, Basil, I should be willing to have you risk it. The risk isn’t so great, is it? We shouldn’t be ruined if it failed altogether. With our stocks we have two thousand a year, anyway, and we could pinch through on that till you got into some other business afterward, especially if we’d saved something out of your salary while it lasted. Basil, I want you to try it! I know it will give you a new lease of life to have a congenial occupation.” March laughed, but his wife persisted. “I’m all for your trying it, Basil; indeed I am. If it’s an experiment, you can give it up.”

"It can give me up, too."

"Oh, nonsense! I guess there's not much fear of that. Now, I want you to telegraph Mr. Fulkerson, so that he'll find the despatch waiting for him when he gets to New York. I'll take the whole responsibility, Basil, and I'll risk all the consequences."

III.

March's face had sobered more and more as she followed one hopeful burst with another, and now it expressed a positive pain. But he forced a smile and said: "There's a little condition attached. Where did you suppose it was to be published?"

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“Why, in Boston, of course. Where else should it be published?”

She looked at him for the intention of his question so searchingly that he quite gave up the attempt to be gay about it. “No,” he said, gravely, “it’s to be published in New York.”

She fell back in her chair. “In New York?” She leaned forward over the table toward him, as if to make sure that she heard aright, and said, with all the keen reproach that he could have expected: “In New York, Basil! Oh, how could you have let me go on?”

He had a sufficiently rueful face in owning: “I oughtn’t to have done it, but I got started wrong. I couldn’t help putting the best foot, forward at first—or as long as the whole thing was in the air. I didn’t know that you would take so much to the general enterprise, or else I should have mentioned the New York condition at once; but, of course, that puts an end to it.”

“Oh, of course,” she assented, sadly. “We *couldn’t* go to New York.”

“No, I know that,” he said; and with this a perverse desire to tempt her to the impossibility awoke in him, though he was really quite cold about the affair himself now. “Fulkerson thought we could get a nice flat in New York for about what the interest and taxes came to here, and provisions are cheaper. But I should rather not experiment at my time of life. If I could have been caught younger, I might have been inured to New York, but I don’t believe I could stand it now.”

“How I hate to have you talk that way, Basil! You are young enough to try anything—-anywhere; but you know I don’t like New York. I don’t approve of it. It’s so big, and so hideous! Of course I shouldn’t mind that; but I’ve always lived in Boston, and the children were born and have all their friendships and associations here.” She added, with the helplessness that discredited her good sense and did her injustice, “I have just got them both into the Friday afternoon class at Papanti’s, and you know how difficult that is.”

March could not fail to take advantage of an occasion like this. “Well, that alone ought to settle it. Under the circumstances, it would be flying in the face of Providence to leave Boston. The mere fact of a brilliant opening like that offered me on ‘The Microbe,’ and the halcyon future which Fulkerson promises if we’ll come to New York, is as dust in the balance against the advantages of the Friday afternoon class.”

“Basil,” she appealed, solemnly, “have I ever interfered with your career?”

“I never had any for you to interfere with, my dear.”

“Basil! Haven’t I always had faith in you? And don’t you suppose that if I thought it would really be for your advancement I would go to New York or anywhere with you?”

“No, my dear, I don’t,” he teased. “If it would be for my salvation, yes, perhaps; but not short of that; and I should have to prove by a cloud of witnesses that it would. I don’t blame you. I wasn’t born in Boston, but I understand how you feel. And really, my dear,” he added, without irony, “I never seriously thought of asking you to go to New York. I was dazzled by Fulkerson’s offer, I’ll own that; but his choice of me as editor sapped my confidence in him.”

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“I don’t like to hear you say that, Basil,” she entreated.

“Well, of course there were mitigating circumstances. I could see that Fulkerson meant to keep the whip-hand himself, and that was reassuring. And, besides, if the Reciprocity Life should happen not to want my services any longer, it wouldn’t be quite like giving up a certainty; though, as a matter of business, I let Fulkerson get that impression; I felt rather sneaking to do it. But if the worst comes to the worst, I can look about for something to do in Boston; and, anyhow, people don’t starve on two thousand a year, though it’s convenient to have five. The fact is, I’m too old to change so radically. If you don’t like my saying that, then you are, Isabel, and so are the children. I’ve no right to take them from the home we’ve made, and to change the whole course of their lives, unless I can assure them of something, and I can’t assure them of anything. Boston is big enough for us, and it’s certainly prettier than New York. I always feel a little proud of hailing from Boston; my pleasure in the place mounts the farther I get away from it. But I do appreciate it, my dear; I’ve no more desire to leave it than you have. You may be sure that if you don’t want to take the children out of the Friday afternoon class, I don’t want to leave my library here, and all the ways I’ve got set in. We’ll keep on. Very likely the company won’t supplant me, and if it does, and Watkins gets the place, he’ll give me a subordinate position of some sort. Cheer up, Isabel! I have put Satan and his angel, Fulkerson, behind me, and it’s all right. Let’s go in to the children.”

He came round the table to Isabel, where she sat in a growing distraction, and lifted her by the waist from her chair.

She sighed deeply. “Shall we tell the children about it?”

“No. What’s the use, now?”

“There wouldn’t be any,” she assented. When they entered the family room, where the boy and girl sat on either side of the lamp working out the lessons for Monday which they had left over from the day before, she asked, “Children, how would you like to live in New York?”

Bella made haste to get in her word first. “And give up the Friday afternoon class?” she wailed.

Tom growled from his book, without lifting his eyes: “I shouldn’t want to go to Columbia. They haven’t got any dormitories, and you have to board round anywhere. Are you going to New York?” He now deigned to look up at his father.

“No, Tom. You and Bella have decided me against it. Your perspective shows the affair in its true proportions. I had an offer to go to New York, but I’ve refused it.”

IV

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March's irony fell harmless from the children's preoccupation with their own affairs, but he knew that his wife felt it, and this added to the bitterness which prompted it. He blamed her for letting her provincial narrowness prevent his accepting Fulkerson's offer quite as much as if he had otherwise entirely wished to accept it. His world, like most worlds, had been superficially a disappointment. He was no richer than at the beginning, though in marrying he had given up some tastes, some preferences, some aspirations, in the hope of indulging them later, with larger means and larger leisure. His wife had not urged him to do it; in fact, her pride, as she said, was in his fitness for the life he had renounced; but she had acquiesced, and they had been very happy together. That is to say, they made up their quarrels or ignored them.

They often accused each other of being selfish and indifferent, but she knew that he would always sacrifice himself for her and the children; and he, on his part, with many gibes and mockeries, wholly trusted in her. They had grown practically tolerant of each other's disagreeable traits; and the danger that really threatened them was that they should grow too well satisfied with themselves, if not with each other. They were not sentimental, they were rather matter-of-fact in their motives; but they had both a sort of humorous fondness for sentimentality. They liked to play with the romantic, from the safe vantage-ground of their real practicality, and to divine the poetry of the commonplace. Their peculiar point of view separated them from most other people, with whom their means of self-comparison were not so good since their marriage as before. Then they had travelled and seen much of the world, and they had formed tastes which they had not always been able to indulge, but of which they felt that the possession reflected distinction on them. It enabled them to look down upon those who were without such tastes; but they were not ill-natured, and so they did not look down so much with contempt as with amusement. In their unfashionable neighborhood they had the fame of being not exclusive precisely, but very much wrapped up in themselves and their children.

Mrs. March was reputed to be very cultivated, and Mr. March even more so, among the simpler folk around them. Their house had some good pictures, which her aunt had brought home from Europe in more affluent days, and it abounded in books on which he spent more than he ought. They had beautified it in every way, and had unconsciously taken credit to them selves for it. They felt, with a glow almost of virtue, how perfectly it fitted their lives and their children's, and they believed that somehow it expressed their characters—that it was like them. They went out very little; she remained shut up in its refinement, working the good of her own; and he went to his business, and hurried back to forget it, and dream his dream of intellectual achievement in the

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flattering atmosphere of her sympathy. He could not conceal from himself that his divided life was somewhat like Charles Lamb's, and there were times when, as he had expressed to Fulkerson, he believed that its division was favorable to the freshness of his interest in literature. It certainly kept it a high privilege, a sacred refuge. Now and then he wrote something, and got it printed after long delays, and when they met on the St. Lawrence Fulkerson had some of March's verses in his pocket-book, which he had cut out of astray newspaper and carried about for years, because they pleased his fancy so much; they formed an immediate bond of union between the men when their authorship was traced and owned, and this gave a pretty color of romance to their acquaintance. But, for the most part, March was satisfied to read. He was proud of reading critically, and he kept in the current of literary interests and controversies. It all seemed to him, and to his wife at second-hand, very meritorious; he could not help contrasting his life and its inner elegance with that of other men who had no such resources. He thought that he was not arrogant about it, because he did full justice to the good qualities of those other people; he congratulated himself upon the democratic instincts which enabled him to do this; and neither he nor his wife supposed that they were selfish persons. On the contrary, they were very sympathetic; there was no good cause that they did not wish well; they had a generous scorn of all kinds of narrow-heartedness; if it had ever come into their way to sacrifice themselves for others, they thought they would have done so, but they never asked why it had not come in their way. They were very gentle and kind, even when most elusive; and they taught their children to loathe all manner of social cruelty. March was of so watchful a conscience in some respects that he denied himself the pensive pleasure of lapsing into the melancholy of unfulfilled aspirations; but he did not see that, if he had abandoned them, it had been for what he held dearer; generally he felt as if he had turned from them with a high, altruistic aim. The practical expression of his life was that it was enough to provide well for his family; to have cultivated tastes, and to gratify them to the extent of his means; to be rather distinguished, even in the simplification of his desires. He believed, and his wife believed, that if the time ever came when he really wished to make a sacrifice to the fulfilment of the aspirations so long postponed, she would be ready to join with heart and hand.

When he went to her room from his library, where she left him the whole evening with the children, he found her before the glass thoughtfully removing the first dismantling pin from her back hair.

"I can't help feeling," she grieved into the mirror, "that it's I who keep you from accepting that offer. I know it is! I could go West with you, or into a new country—anywhere; but New York terrifies me. I don't like New York, I never did; it disheartens and distracts me; I can't find myself in it; I shouldn't know how to shop. I know I'm foolish and narrow and provincial," she went on, "but I could never have any inner quiet in New York; I couldn't live in the spirit there. I suppose people do. It can't be that all these millions—'

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“Oh, not so bad as that!” March interposed, laughing. “There aren’t quite two.”

“I thought there were four or five. Well, no matter. You see what I am, Basil. I’m terribly limited. I couldn’t make my sympathies go round two million people; I should be wretched. I suppose I’m standing in the way of your highest interest, but I can’t help it. We took each other for better or worse, and you must try to bear with me—” She broke off and began to cry.

“Stop it!” shouted March. “I tell you I never cared anything for Fulkerson’s scheme or entertained it seriously, and I shouldn’t if he’d proposed to carry it out in Boston.” This was not quite true, but in the retrospect it seemed sufficiently so for the purposes of argument. “Don’t say another word about it. The thing’s over now, and I don’t want to think of it any more. We couldn’t change its nature if we talked all night. But I want you to understand that it isn’t your limitations that are in the way. It’s mine. I shouldn’t have the courage to take such a place; I don’t think I’m fit for it, and that’s the long and short of it.”

“Oh, you don’t know how it hurts me to have you say that, Basil.”

The next morning, as they sat together at breakfast, without the children, whom they let lie late on Sunday, Mrs. March said to her husband, silent over his fish-balls and baked beans: “We will go to New York. I’ve decided it.”

“Well, it takes two to decide that,” March retorted. “We are not going to New York.”

“Yes, we are. I’ve thought it out. Now, listen.”

“Oh, I’m willing to listen,” he consented, airily.

“You’ve always wanted to get out of the insurance business, and now with that fear of being turned out which you have you mustn’t neglect this offer. I suppose it has its risks, but it’s a risk keeping on as we are; and perhaps you will make a great success of it. I do want you to try, Basil. If I could once feel that you had fairly seen what you could do in literature, I should die happy.”

“Not immediately after, I hope,” he suggested, taking the second cup of coffee she had been pouring out for him. “And Boston?”

“We needn’t make a complete break. We can keep this place for the present, anyway; we could let it for the winter, and come back in the summer next year. It would be change enough from New York.”

“Fulkerson and I hadn’t got as far as to talk of a vacation.”

“No matter. The children and I could come. And if you didn’t like New York, or the enterprise failed, you could get into something in Boston again; and we have enough to live on till you did. Yes, Basil, I’m going.”

“I can see by the way your chin trembles that nothing could stop you. You may go to New York if you wish, Isabel, but I shall stay here.”

“Be serious, Basil. I’m in earnest.”

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“Serious? If I were any more serious I should shed tears. Come, my dear, I know what you mean, and if I had my heart set on this thing—Fulkerson always calls it ‘this thing’ I would cheerfully accept any sacrifice you could make to it. But I’d rather not offer you up on a shrine I don’t feel any particular faith in. I’m very comfortable where I am; that is, I know just where the pinch comes, and if it comes harder, why, I’ve got used to bearing that kind of pinch. I’m too old to change pinches.”

“Now, that does decide me.”

“It decides me, too.”

“I will take all the responsibility, Basil,” she pleaded.

“Oh yes; but you’ll hand it back to me as soon as you’ve carried your point with it. There’s nothing mean about you, Isabel, where responsibility is concerned. No; if I do this thing—Fulkerson again? I can’t get away from ‘this thing’; it’s ominous—I must do it because I want to do it, and not because you wish that you wanted me to do it. I understand your position, Isabel, and that you’re really acting from a generous impulse, but there’s nothing so precarious at our time of life as a generous impulse. When we were younger we could stand it; we could give way to it and take the consequences. But now we can’t bear it. We must act from cold reason even in the ardor of self-sacrifice.”

“Oh, as if you did that!” his wife retorted.

“Is that any cause why you shouldn’t?” She could not say that it was, and he went on triumphantly:

“No, I won’t take you away from the only safe place on the planet and plunge you into the most perilous, and then have you say in your revulsion of feeling that you were all against it from the first, and you gave way because you saw I had my heart set on it.” He supposed he was treating the matter humorously, but in this sort of banter between husband and wife there is always much more than the joking. March had seen some pretty feminine inconsistencies and trepidations which once charmed him in his wife hardening into traits of middle-age which were very like those of less interesting older women. The sight moved him with a kind of pathos, but he felt the result hindering and vexatious.

She now retorted that if he did not choose to take her at her word be need not, but that whatever he did she should have nothing to reproach herself with; and, at least, he could not say that she had trapped him into anything.

“What do you mean by trapping?” he demanded.

“I don’t know what you call it,” she answered; “but when you get me to commit myself to a thing by leaving out the most essential point, I call it trapping.”

“I wonder you stop at trapping, if you think I got you to favor Fulkerson’s scheme and then sprung New York on you. I don’t suppose you do, though. But I guess we won’t talk about it any more.”

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He went out for a long walk, and she went to her room. They lunched silently together in the presence of their children, who knew that they had been quarrelling, but were easily indifferent to the fact, as children get to be in such cases; nature defends their youth, and the unhappiness which they behold does not infect them. In the evening, after the boy and girl had gone to bed, the father and mother resumed their talk. He would have liked to take it up at the point from which it wandered into hostilities, for he felt it lamentable that a matter which so seriously concerned them should be confused in the fumes of senseless anger; and he was willing to make a tacit acknowledgment of his own error by recurring to the question, but she would not be content with this, and he had to concede explicitly to her weakness that she really meant it when she had asked him to accept Fulkerson's offer. He said he knew that; and he began soberly to talk over their prospects in the event of their going to New York.

"Oh, I see you are going!" she twitted.

"I'm going to stay," he answered, "and let them turn me out of my agency here," and in this bitterness their talk ended.

V.

His wife made no attempt to renew their talk before March went to his business in the morning, and they parted in dry offence. Their experience was that these things always came right of themselves at last, and they usually let them. He knew that she had really tried to consent to a thing that was repugnant to her, and in his heart he gave her more credit for the effort than he had allowed her openly. She knew that she had made it with the reservation he accused her of, and that he had a right to feel sore at what she could not help. But he left her to brood over his ingratitude, and she suffered him to go heavy and unfriended to meet the chances of the day. He said to himself that if she had assented cordially to the conditions of Fulkerson's offer, he would have had the courage to take all the other risks himself, and would have had the satisfaction of resigning his place. As it was, he must wait till he was removed; and he figured with bitter pleasure the pain she would feel when he came home some day and told her he had been supplanted, after it was too late to close with Fulkerson.

He found a letter on his desk from the secretary, "Dictated," in typewriting, which briefly informed him that Mr. Hubbell, the Inspector of Agencies, would be in Boston on Wednesday, and would call at his office during the forenoon. The letter was not different in tone from many that he had formerly received; but the visit announced was out of the usual order, and March believed he read his fate in it. During the eighteen years of his connection with it—first as a subordinate in the Boston office, and finally as its general agent there—he had seen a good many changes in the Reciprocity; presidents,

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vice-presidents, actuaries, and general agents had come and gone, but there had always seemed to be a recognition of his efficiency, or at least sufficiency, and there had never been any manner of trouble, no question of accounts, no apparent dissatisfaction with his management, until latterly, when there had begun to come from headquarters some suggestions of enterprise in certain ways, which gave him his first suspicions of his clerk Watkins's willingness to succeed him; they embodied some of Watkins's ideas. The things proposed seemed to March undignified, and even vulgar; he had never thought himself wanting in energy, though probably he had left the business to take its own course in the old lines more than he realized. Things had always gone so smoothly that he had sometimes fancied a peculiar regard for him in the management, which he had the weakness to attribute to an appreciation of what he occasionally did in literature, though in saner moments he felt how impossible this was. Beyond a reference from Mr. Hubbell to some piece of March's which had happened to meet his eye, no one in the management ever gave a sign of consciousness that their service was adorned by an obscure literary man; and Mr. Hubbell himself had the effect of regarding the excursions of March's pen as a sort of joke, and of winking at them; as he might have winked if once in a way he had found him a little the gayer for dining.

March wore through the day gloomily, but he had it on his conscience not to show any resentment toward Watkins, whom he suspected of wishing to supplant him, and even of working to do so. Through this self-denial he reached a better mind concerning his wife. He determined not to make her suffer needlessly, if the worst came to the worst; she would suffer enough, at the best, and till the worst came he would spare her, and not say anything about the letter he had got.

But when they met, her first glance divined that something had happened, and her first question frustrated his generous intention. He had to tell her about the letter. She would not allow that it had any significance, but she wished him to make an end of his anxieties and forestall whatever it might portend by resigning his place at once. She said she was quite ready to go to New York; she had been thinking it all over, and now she really wanted to go. He answered, soberly, that he had thought it over, too; and he did not wish to leave Boston, where he had lived so long, or try a new way of life if he could help it. He insisted that he was quite selfish in this; in their concessions their quarrel vanished; they agreed that whatever happened would be for the best; and the next day he went to his office fortified for any event.

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His destiny, if tragical, presented itself with an aspect which he might have found comic if it had been another's destiny. Mr. Hubbell brought March's removal, softened in the guise of a promotion. The management at New York, it appeared, had acted upon a suggestion of Mr. Hubbell's, and now authorized him to offer March the editorship of the monthly paper published in the interest of the company; his office would include the authorship of circulars and leaflets in behalf of life-insurance, and would give play to the literary talent which Mr. Hubbell had brought to the attention of the management; his salary would be nearly as much as at present, but the work would not take his whole time, and in a place like New York he could get a great deal of outside writing, which they would not object to his doing.

Mr. Hubbell seemed so sure of his acceptance of a place in every way congenial to a man of literary tastes that March was afterward sorry he dismissed the proposition with obvious irony, and had needlessly hurt Hubbell's feelings; but Mrs. March had no such regrets. She was only afraid that he had not made his rejection contemptuous enough. "And now," she said, "telegraph Mr. Fulkerson, and we will go at once."

"I suppose I could still get Watkins's former place," March suggested.

"Never!" she retorted. "Telegraph instantly!"

They were only afraid now that Fulkerson might have changed his mind, and they had a wretched day in which they heard nothing from him. It ended with his answering March's telegram in person. They were so glad of his coming, and so touched by his satisfaction with his bargain, that they laid all the facts of the case before him. He entered fully into March's sense of the joke latent in Mr. Hubbell's proposition, and he tried to make Mrs. March believe that he shared her resentment of the indignity offered her husband.

March made a show of willingness to release him in view of the changed situation, saying that he held him to nothing. Fulkerson laughed, and asked him how soon he thought he could come on to New York. He refused to reopen the question of March's fitness with him; he said they, had gone into that thoroughly, but he recurred to it with Mrs. March, and confirmed her belief in his good sense on all points. She had been from the first moment defiantly confident of her husband's ability, but till she had talked the matter over with Fulkerson she was secretly not sure of it; or, at least, she was not sure that March was not right in distrusting himself. When she clearly understood, now, what Fulkerson intended, she had no longer a doubt. He explained how the enterprise differed from others, and how he needed for its direction a man who combined general business experience and business ideas with a love for the thing and a natural aptness for it. He did not want a young man, and yet he wanted youth—its freshness, its zest—-such as March would

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feel in a thing he could put his whole heart into. He would not run in ruts, like an old fellow who had got hackneyed; he would not have any hobbies; he would not have any friends or any enemies. Besides, he would have to meet people, and March was a man that people took to; she knew that herself; he had a kind of charm. The editorial management was going to be kept in the background, as far as the public was concerned; the public was to suppose that the thing ran itself. Fulkerson did not care for a great literary reputation in his editor—he implied that March had a very pretty little one. At the same time the relations between the contributors and the management were to be much more, intimate than usual. Fulkerson felt his personal disqualification for working the thing socially, and he counted upon Mr. March for that; that was to say, he counted upon Mrs. March.

She protested he must not count upon her; but it by no means disabled Fulkerson's judgment in her view that March really seemed more than anything else a fancy of his. He had been a fancy of hers; and the sort of affectionate respect with which Fulkerson spoke of him laid forever some doubt she had of the fineness of Fulkerson's manners and reconciled her to the graphic slanginess of his speech.

The affair was now irretrievable, but she gave her approval to it as superbly as if it were submitted in its inception. Only, Mr. Fulkerson must not suppose she should ever like New York. She would not deceive him on that point. She never should like it. She did not conceal, either, that she did not like taking the children out of the Friday afternoon class; and she did not believe that Tom would ever be reconciled to going to Columbia. She took courage from Fulkerson's suggestion that it was possible for Tom to come to Harvard even from New York; and she heaped him with questions concerning the domiciliation of the family in that city. He tried to know something about the matter, and he succeeded in seeming interested in points necessarily indifferent to him.

VI.

In the uprooting and transplanting of their home that followed, Mrs. March often trembled before distant problems and possible contingencies, but she was never troubled by present difficulties. She kept up with tireless energy; and in the moments of dejection and misgiving which harassed her husband she remained dauntless, and put heart into him when he had lost it altogether.

She arranged to leave the children in the house with the servants, while she went on with March to look up a dwelling of some sort in New York. It made him sick to think of it; and, when it came to the point, he would rather have given up the whole enterprise. She had to nerve him to it, to represent more than once that now they had no choice but

to make this experiment. Every detail of parting was anguish to him. He got consolation out of the notion

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of letting the house furnished for the winter; that implied their return to it, but it cost him pangs of the keenest misery to advertise it; and, when a tenant was actually found, it was all he could do to give him the lease. He tried his wife's love and patience as a man must to whom the future is easy in the mass but terrible as it translates itself piecemeal into the present. He experienced remorse in the presence of inanimate things he was going to leave as if they had sensibly reproached him, and an anticipative homesickness that seemed to stop his heart. Again and again his wife had to make him reflect that his depression was not prophetic. She convinced him of what he already knew, and persuaded him against his knowledge that he could be keeping an eye out for something to take hold of in Boston if they could not stand New York. She ended by telling him that it was too bad to make her comfort him in a trial that was really so much more a trial to her. She had to support him in a last access of despair on their way to the Albany depot the morning they started to New York; but when the final details had been dealt with, the tickets bought, the trunks checked, and the handbags hung up in their car, and the future had massed itself again at a safe distance and was seven hours and two hundred miles away, his spirits began to rise and hers to sink. He would have been willing to celebrate the taste, the domestic refinement, of the ladies' waiting-room in the depot, where they had spent a quarter of an hour before the train started. He said he did not believe there was another station in the world where mahogany rocking-chairs were provided; that the dull-red warmth of the walls was as cozy as an evening lamp, and that he always hoped to see a fire kindled on that vast hearth and under that aesthetic mantel, but he supposed now he never should. He said it was all very different from that tunnel, the old Albany depot, where they had waited the morning they went to New York when they were starting on their wedding journey.

"The morning, Basil!" cried his wife. "We went at night; and we were going to take the boat, but it stormed so!" She gave him a glance of such reproach that he could not answer anything, and now she asked him whether he supposed their cook and second girl would be contented with one of those dark holes where they put girls to sleep in New York flats, and what she should do if Margaret, especially, left her. He ventured to suggest that Margaret would probably like the city; but, if she left, there were plenty of other girls to be had in New York. She replied that there were none she could trust, and that she knew Margaret would not stay. He asked her why she took her, then—why she did not give her up at once; and she answered that it would be inhuman to give her up just in the edge of the winter. She had promised to keep her; and Margaret was pleased with the notion of going to New York, where she had a cousin.

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“Then perhaps she’ll be pleased with the notion of staying,” he said.

“Oh, much you know about it!” she retorted; and, in view of the hypothetical difficulty and his want of sympathy, she fell into a gloom, from which she roused herself at last by declaring that, if there was nothing else in the flat they took, there should be a light kitchen and a bright, sunny bedroom for Margaret. He expressed the belief that they could easily find such a flat as that, and she denounced his fatal optimism, which buoyed him up in the absence of an undertaking and let him drop into the depths of despair in its presence.

He owned this defect of temperament, but he said that it compensated the opposite in her character. “I suppose that’s one of the chief uses of marriage; people supplement one another, and form a pretty fair sort of human being together. The only drawback to the theory is that unmarried people seem each as complete and whole as a married pair.”

She refused to be amused; she turned her face to the window and put her handkerchief up under her veil.

It was not till the dining-car was attached to their train that they were both able to escape for an hour into the care-free mood of their earlier travels, when they were so easily taken out of themselves. The time had been when they could have found enough in the conjectural fortunes and characters of their fellow-passengers to occupy them. This phase of their youth had lasted long, and the world was still full of novelty and interest for them; but it required all the charm of the dining-car now to lay the anxieties that beset them. It was so potent for the moment, however, that they could take an objective view at their sitting cozily down there together, as if they had only themselves in the world. They wondered what the children were doing, the children who possessed them so intensely when present, and now, by a fantastic operation of absence, seemed almost non-existents. They tried to be homesick for them, but failed; they recognized with comfortable self-abhorrence that this was terrible, but owned a fascination in being alone; at the same time, they could not imagine how people felt who never had any children. They contrasted the luxury of dining that way, with every advantage except a band of music, and the old way of rushing out to snatch a fearful joy at the lunch-counters of the Worcesier and Springfield and New Haven stations. They had not gone often to New York since their wedding journey, but they had gone often enough to have noted the change from the lunch-counter to the lunch-basket brought in the train, from which you could subsist with more ease and dignity, but seemed destined to a superabundance of pickles, whatever you ordered.

They thought well of themselves now that they could be both critical and tolerant of flavors not very sharply distinguished from one another in their dinner, and they lingered over their coffee and watched the autumn landscape through the windows.

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“Not quite so loud a pattern of calico this year,” he said, with patronizing forbearance toward the painted woodlands whirling by. “Do you see how the foreground next the train rushes from us and the background keeps ahead of us, while the middle distance seems stationary? I don’t think I ever noticed that effect before. There ought to be something literary in it: retreating past and advancing future and deceitfully permanent present—something like that?”

His wife brushed some crumbs from her lap before rising. “Yes. You mustn’t waste any of these ideas now.”

“Oh no; it would be money out of Fulkerson’s pocket.”

VII.

They went to a quiet hotel far down-town, and took a small apartment which they thought they could easily afford for the day or two they need spend in looking up a furnished flat. They were used to staying at this hotel when they came on for a little outing in New York, after some rigid winter in Boston, at the time of the spring exhibitions. They were remembered there from year to year; the colored call-boys, who never seemed to get any older, smiled upon them, and the clerk called March by name even before he registered. He asked if Mrs. March were with him, and said then he supposed they would want their usual quarters; and in a moment they were domesticated in a far interior that seemed to have been waiting for them in a clean, quiet, patient disoccupation ever since they left it two years before. The little parlor, with its gilt paper and ebonized furniture, was the lightest of the rooms, but it was not very light at noonday without the gas, which the bell-boy now flared up for them. The uproar of the city came to it in a soothing murmur, and they took possession of its peace and comfort with open celebration. After all, they agreed, there was no place in the world so delightful as a hotel apartment like that; the boasted charms of home were nothing to it; and then the magic of its being always there, ready for any one, every one, just as if it were for some one alone: it was like the experience of an Arabian Nights hero come true for all the race.

“Oh, why can’t we always stay here, just we two!” Mrs. March sighed to her husband, as he came out of his room rubbing his face red with the towel, while she studied a new arrangement of her bonnet and handbag on the mantel.

“And ignore the past? I’m willing. I’ve no doubt that the children could get on perfectly well without us, and could find some lot in the scheme of Providence that would really be just as well for them.”

“Yes; or could contrive somehow never to have existed. I should insist upon that. If they are, don’t you see that we couldn’t wish them not to be?”

“Oh yes; I see your point; it’s simply incontrovertible.”

She laughed and said: “Well, at any rate, if we can’t find a flat to suit us we can all crowd into these three rooms somehow, for the winter, and then browse about for meals. By the week we could get them much cheaper; and we could save on the eating, as they do in Europe. Or on something else.”

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“Something else, probably,” said March. “But we won’t take this apartment till the ideal furnished flat winks out altogether. We shall not have any trouble. We can easily find some one who is going South for the winter and will be glad to give up their flat ‘to the right party’ at a nominal rent. That’s my notion. That’s what the Evanses did one winter when they came on here in February. All but the nominality of the rent.”

“Yes, and we could pay a very good rent and still save something on letting our house. You can settle yourselves in a hundred different ways in New York, that is one merit of the place. But if everything else fails, we can come back to this. I want you to take the refusal of it, Basil. And we’ll commence looking this very evening as soon as we’ve had dinner. I cut a lot of things out of the Herald as we came on. See here!”

She took a long strip of paper out of her hand-bag with minute advertisements pinned transversely upon it, and forming the effect of some glittering nondescript vertebrate.

“Looks something like the sea-serpent,” said March, drying his hands on the towel, while he glanced up and down the list. “But we sha’n’t have any trouble. I’ve no doubt there are half a dozen things there that will do. You haven’t gone up-town? Because we must be near the ’Every Other Week’ office.”

“No; but I wish Mr. Fulkerson hadn’t called it that! It always makes one think of ‘jam yesterday and jam tomorrow, but never jam to-day,’ in ‘Through the Looking-Glass.’ They’re all in this region.”

They were still at their table, beside a low window, where some sort of never-blooming shrub symmetrically balanced itself in a large pot, with a leaf to the right and a leaf to the left and a spear up the middle, when Fulkerson came stepping square-footedly over the thick dining-room carpet. He wagged in the air a gay hand of salutation at sight of them, and of repression when they offered to rise to meet him; then, with an apparent simultaneity of action he gave a hand to each, pulled up a chair from the next table, put his hat and stick on the floor beside it, and seated himself.

“Well, you’ve burned your ships behind you, sure enough,” he said, beaming his satisfaction upon them from eyes and teeth.

“The ships are burned,” said March, “though I’m not sure we alone did it. But here we are, looking for shelter, and a little anxious about the disposition of the natives.”

“Oh, they’re an awful peaceable lot,” said Fulkerson. “I’ve been round among the caciques a little, and I think I’ve got two or three places that will just suit you, Mrs. March. How did you leave the children?”

“Oh, how kind of you! Very well, and very proud to be left in charge of the smoking wrecks.”

Fulkerson naturally paid no attention to what she said, being but secondarily interested in the children at the best. “Here are some things right in this neighborhood, within gunshot of the office, and if you want you can go and look at them to-night; the agents gave me houses where the people would be in.”

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“We will go and look at them instantly,” said Mrs. March. “Or, as soon as you’ve had coffee with us.”

“Never do,” Fulkerson replied. He gathered up his hat and stick. “Just rushed in to say Hello, and got to run right away again. I tell you, March, things are humming. I’m after those fellows with a sharp stick all the while to keep them from loafing on my house, and at the same time I’m just bubbling over with ideas about ’The Lone Hand—wish we could call it that!—that I want to talk up with you.”

“Well, come to breakfast,” said Mrs. March, cordially.

“No; the ideas will keep till you’ve secured your lodge in this vast wilderness. Good-bye.”

“You’re as nice as you can be, Mr. Fulkerson,” she said, “to keep us in mind when you have so much to occupy you.”

“I wouldn’t have anything to occupy me if I hadn’t kept you in mind, Mrs. March,” said Fulkerson, going off upon as good a speech as he could apparently hope to make.

“Why, Basil,” said Mrs. March, when he was gone, “he’s charming! But now we mustn’t lose an instant. Let’s see where the places are.” She ran over the half-dozen agents’ permits. “Capital-first-rate-the very thing-every one. Well, I consider ourselves settled! We can go back to the children to-morrow if we like, though I rather think I should like to stay over another day and get a little rested for the final pulling up that’s got to come. But this simplifies everything enormously, and Mr. Fulkerson is as thoughtful and as sweet as he can be. I know you will get on well with him. He has such a good heart. And his attitude toward you, Basil, is beautiful always—so respectful; or not that so much as appreciative. Yes, appreciative—that’s the word; I must always keep that in mind.”

“It’s quite important to do so,” said March.

“Yes,” she assented, seriously, “and we must not forget just what kind of flat we are going to look for. The ‘sine qua nons’ are an elevator and steam heat, not above the third floor, to begin with. Then we must each have a room, and you must have your study and I must have my parlor; and the two girls must each have a room. With the kitchen and dining room, how many does that make?”

“Ten.”

“I thought eight. Well, no matter. You can work in the parlor, and run into your bedroom when anybody comes; and I can sit in mine, and the girls must put up with one, if it’s large and sunny, though I’ve always given them two at home. And the kitchen must be sunny, so they can sit in it. And the rooms must all have outside light. And the rent

must not be over eight hundred for the winter. We only get a thousand for our whole house, and we must save something out of that, so as to cover the expenses of moving. Now, do you think you can remember all that?"

"Not the half of it," said March. "But you can; or if you forget a third of it, I can come in with my partial half and more than make it up."

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She had brought her bonnet and sacque down-stairs with her, and was transferring them from the hatrack to her person while she talked. The friendly door-boy let them into the street, and the clear October evening air brightened her so that as she tucked her hand under her husband's arm and began to pull him along she said, "If we find something right away—and we're just as likely to get the right flat soon as late; it's all a lottery—well go to the theatre somewhere."

She had a moment's panic about having left the agents' permits on the table, and after remembering that she had put them into her little shopping-bag, where she kept her money (each note crushed into a round wad), and had heft it on the hat-rack, where it would certainly be stolen, she found it on her wrist. She did not think that very funny; but after a first impulse to inculpate her husband, she let him laugh, while they stopped under a lamp and she held the permits half a yard away to read the numbers on them.

"Where are your glasses, Isabel?"

"On the mantel in our room, of course."

"Then you ought to have brought a pair of tongs."

"I wouldn't get off second-hand jokes, Basil," she said; and "Why, here!" she cried, whirling round to the door before which they had halted, "this is the very number. Well, I do believe it's a sign!"

One of those colored men who soften the trade of janitor in many of the smaller apartment-houses in New York by the sweetness of their race let the Marches in, or, rather, welcomed them to the possession of the premises by the bow with which he acknowledged their permit. It was a large, old mansion cut up into five or six dwellings, but it had kept some traits of its former dignity, which pleased people of their sympathetic tastes. The dark-mahogany trim, of sufficiently ugly design, gave a rich gloom to the hallway, which was wide and paved with marble; the carpeted stairs curved aloft through a generous space.

"There is no elevator?" Mrs. March asked of the janitor.

He answered, "No, ma'am; only two flights up," so winningly that she said,

"Oh!" in courteous apology, and whispered to her husband, as she followed lightly up, "We'll take it, Basil, if it's like the rest."

"If it's like him, you mean."

"I don't wonder they wanted to own them," she hurriedly philosophized. "If I had such a creature, nothing but death should part us, and I should no more think of giving him his freedom!"

“No; we couldn’t afford it,” returned her husband.

The apartment which the janitor unlocked for them, and lit up from those chandeliers and brackets of gilt brass in the form of vine bunches, leaves, and tendrils in which the early gas-fitter realized most of his conceptions of beauty, had rather more of the ugliness than the dignity of the hall. But the rooms were large, and they grouped themselves in a reminiscence of the time when they were part of a dwelling

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that had its charm, its pathos, its impressiveness. Where they were cut up into smaller spaces, it had been done with the frankness with which a proud old family of fallen fortunes practises its economies. The rough pine-floors showed a black border of tack-heads where carpets had been lifted and put down for generations; the white paint was yellow with age; the apartment had light at the front and at the back, and two or three rooms had glimpses of the day through small windows let into their corners; another one seemed lifting an appealing eye to heaven through a glass circle in its ceiling; the rest must darkle in perpetual twilight. Yet something pleased in it all, and Mrs. March had gone far to adapt the different rooms to the members of her family, when she suddenly thought (and for her to think was to say), “Why, but there’s no steam heat!”

“No, ma’am,” the janitor admitted; “but dere’s grates in most o’ de rooms, and dere’s furnace heat in de halls.”

“That’s true,” she admitted, and, having placed her family in the apartments, it was hard to get them out again. “Could we manage?” she referred to her husband.

“Why, I shouldn’t care for the steam heat if—What is the rent?” he broke off to ask the janitor.

“Nine hundred, sir.”

March concluded to his wife, “If it were furnished.”

“Why, of course! What could I have been thinking of? We’re looking for a furnished flat,” she explained to the janitor, “and this was so pleasant and homelike that I never thought whether it was furnished or not.”

She smiled upon the janitor, and he entered into the joke and chuckled so amiably at her flattering oversight on the way down-stairs that she said, as she pinched her husband’s arm, “Now, if you don’t give him a quarter I’ll never speak to you again, Basil!”

“I would have given half a dollar willingly to get you beyond his glamour,” said March, when they were safely on the pavement outside. “If it hadn’t been for my strength of character, you’d have taken an unfurnished flat without heat and with no elevator, at nine hundred a year, when you had just sworn me to steam heat, an elevator, furniture, and eight hundred.”

“Yes! How could I have lost my head so completely?” she said, with a lenient amusement in her aberration which she was not always able to feel in her husband’s.

“The next time a colored janitor opens the door to us, I’ll tell him the apartment doesn’t suit at the threshold. It’s the only way to manage you, Isabel.”

“It’s true. I am in love with the whole race. I never saw one of them that didn’t have perfectly angelic manners. I think we shall all be black in heaven—that is, black-souled.”

“That isn’t the usual theory,” said March.

“Well, perhaps not,” she assented. “Where are we going now? Oh yes, to the Xenophon!”

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She pulled him gayly along again, and after they had walked a block down and half a block over they stood before the apartment-house of that name, which was cut on the gas-lamps on either side of the heavily spiked, aesthetic-hinged black door. The titter of an electric-bell brought a large, fat Buttons, with a stage effect of being dressed to look small, who said he would call the janitor, and they waited in the dimly splendid, copper-colored interior, admiring the whorls and waves into which the wallpaint was combed, till the janitor came in his gold-banded cap, like a Continental porker. When they said they would like to see Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment, he owned his inability to cope with the affair, and said he must send for the superintendent; he was either in the Herodotus or the Thucydides, and would be there in a minute. The Buttons brought him—a Yankee of browbeating presence in plain clothes—almost before they had time to exchange a frightened whisper in recognition of the fact that there could be no doubt of the steam heat and elevator in this case. Half stifled in the one, they mounted in the other eight stories, while they tried to keep their self-respect under the gaze of the superintendent, which they felt was classing and assessing them with unfriendly accuracy. They could not, and they faltered abashed at the threshold of Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment, while the superintendent lit the gas in the gangway that he called a private hall, and in the drawing-room and the succession of chambers stretching rearward to the kitchen. Everything had, been done by the architect to save space, and everything, to waste it by Mrs. Grosvenor Green. She had conformed to a law for the necessity of turning round in each room, and had folding-beds in the chambers, but there her subordination had ended, and wherever you might have turned round she had put a gimcrack so that you would knock it over if you did turn. The place was rather pretty and even imposing at first glance, and it took several joint ballots for March and his wife to make sure that with the kitchen there were only six rooms. At every door hung a portiere from large rings on a brass rod; every shelf and dressing-case and mantel was littered with gimcracks, and the corners of the tiny rooms were curtained off, and behind these portieres swarmed more gimcracks. The front of the upright piano had what March called a short-skirted portiere on it, and the top was covered with vases, with dragon candlesticks and with Jap fans, which also expanded themselves bat wise on the walls between the etchings and the water colors. The floors were covered with filling, and then rugs and then skins; the easy-chairs all had tidies, Armenian and Turkish and Persian; the lounges and sofas had embroidered cushions hidden under tidies.

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The radiator was concealed by a Jap screen, and over the top of this some Arab scarfs were flung. There was a superabundance of clocks. China pugs guarded the hearth; a brass sunflower smiled from the top of either andiron, and a brass peacock spread its tail before them inside a high filigree fender; on one side was a coalhod in 'repousse' brass, and on the other a wrought iron wood-basket. Some red Japanese bird-kites were stuck about in the necks of spelter vases, a crimson Jap umbrella hung opened beneath the chandelier, and each globe had a shade of yellow silk.

March, when he had recovered his self-command a little in the presence of the agglomeration, comforted himself by calling the bric-a-brac Jamescracks, as if this was their full name.

The disrespect he was able to show the whole apartment by means of this joke strengthened him to say boldly to the superintendent that it was altogether too small; then he asked carelessly what the rent was.

"Two hundred and fifty."

The Marches gave a start, and looked at each other.

"Don't you think we could make it do?" she asked him, and he could see that she had mentally saved five hundred dollars as the difference between the rent of their house and that of this flat. "It has some very pretty features, and we could manage to squeeze in, couldn't we?"

"You won't find another furnished flat like it for no two-fifty a month in the whole city," the superintendent put in.

They exchanged glances again, and March said, carelessly, "It's too small."

"There's a vacant flat in the Herodotus for eighteen hundred a year, and one in the Thucydides for fifteen," the superintendent suggested, clicking his keys together as they sank down in the elevator; "seven rooms and bath."

"Thank you," said March; "we're looking for a furnished flat."

They felt that the superintendent parted from them with repressed sarcasm.

"Oh, Basil, do you think we really made him think it was the smallness and not the dearness?"

"No, but we saved our self-respect in the attempt; and that's a great deal."

"Of course, I wouldn't have taken it, anyway, with only six rooms, and so high up. But what prices! Now, we must be very circumspect about the next place."

It was a janitress, large, fat, with her arms wound up in her apron, who received them there. Mrs. March gave her a succinct but perfect statement of their needs. She failed to grasp the nature of them, or feigned to do so. She shook her head, and said that her son would show them the flat. There was a radiator visible in the narrow hall, and Isabel tacitly compromised on steam heat without an elevator, as the flat was only one flight up. When the son appeared from below with a small kerosene hand-lamp, it appeared that the flat was unfurnished, but there was no stopping him till he had shown it in all its impossibility. When they got safely away from it and into the street March said: "Well, have you had enough for to-night, Isabel? Shall we go to the theatre now?"

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“Not on any account. I want to see the whole list of flats that Mr. Fulkerson thought would be the very thing for us.” She laughed, but with a certain bitterness.

“You’ll be calling him my Mr. Fulkerson next, Isabel.”

“Oh no!”

The fourth address was a furnished flat without a kitchen, in a house with a general restaurant. The fifth was a furnished house. At the sixth a pathetic widow and her pretty daughter wanted to take a family to board, and would give them a private table at a rate which the Marches would have thought low in Boston.

Mrs. March came away tingling with compassion for their evident anxiety, and this pity naturally soured into a sense of injury. “Well, I must say I have completely lost confidence in Mr. Fulkerson’s judgment. Anything more utterly different from what I told him we wanted I couldn’t imagine. If he doesn’t manage any better about his business than he has done about this, it will be a perfect failure.”

“Well, well, let’s hope he’ll be more circumspect about that,” her husband returned, with ironical propitiation. “But I don’t think it’s Fulkerson’s fault altogether. Perhaps it’s the house-agents’. They’re a very illusory generation. There seems to be something in the human habitation that corrupts the natures of those who deal in it, to buy or sell it, to hire or let it. You go to an agent and tell him what kind of a house you want. He has no such house, and he sends you to look at something altogether different, upon the well-ascertained principle that if you can’t get what you want you will take what you can get. You don’t suppose the ‘party’ that took our house in Boston was looking for any such house? He was looking for a totally different kind of house in another part of the town.”

“I don’t believe that!” his wife broke in.

“Well, no matter. But see what a scandalous rent you asked for it.”

“We didn’t get much more than half; and, besides, the agent told me to ask fourteen hundred.”

“Oh, I’m not blaming you, Isabel. I’m only analyzing the house-agent and exonerating Fulkerson.”

“Well, I don’t believe he told them just what we wanted; and, at any rate, I’m done with agents. Tomorrow I’m going entirely by advertisements.”

VIII.

Mrs. March took the vertebrate with her to the Vienna Coffee-House, where they went to breakfast next morning. She made March buy her the Herald and the World, and she added to its spiny convolutions from them. She read the new advertisements aloud with ardor and with faith to believe that the apartments described in them were every one truthfully represented, and that any one of them was richly responsive to their needs. “Elegant, light, large, single and outside flats” were offered with “all improvements—-bath, ice-box, *etc*.”—for twenty-five to thirty dollars a month. The cheapness

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was amazing. The Wagram, the Esmeralda, the Jacinth, advertised them for forty dollars and sixty dollars, “with steam heat and elevator,” rent free till November. Others, attractive from their air of conscientious scruple, announced “first-class flats; good order; reasonable rents.” The Helena asked the reader if she had seen the “cabinet finish, hard-wood floors, and frescoed ceilings” of its fifty-dollar flats; the Asteroid affirmed that such apartments, with “six light rooms and bath, porcelain wash-tubs, electric bells, and hall-boy,” as it offered for seventy-five dollars were unapproached by competition. There was a sameness in the jargon which tended to confusion. Mrs. March got several flats on her list which promised neither steam heat nor elevators; she forgot herself so far as to include two or three as remote from the down-town region of her choice as Harlem. But after she had rejected these the nondescript vertebrate was still voluminous enough to sustain her buoyant hopes.

The waiter, who remembered them from year to year, had put them at a window giving a pretty good section of Broadway, and before they set out on their search they had a moment of reminiscence. They recalled the Broadway of five, of ten, of twenty years ago, swelling and roaring with a tide of gayly painted omnibuses and of picturesque traffic that the horsecars have now banished from it. The grind of their wheels and the clash of their harsh bells imperfectly fill the silence that the omnibuses have left, and the eye misses the tumultuous perspective of former times.

They went out and stood for a moment before Grace Church, and looked down the stately thoroughfare, and found it no longer impressive, no longer characteristic. It is still Broadway in name, but now it is like any other street. You do not now take your life in your hand when you attempt to cross it; the Broadway policeman who supported the elbow of timorous beauty in the hollow of his cotton-gloved palm and guided its little fearful boots over the crossing, while he arrested the billowy omnibuses on either side with an imperious glance, is gone, and all that certain processional, barbaric gayety of the place is gone.

“Palmyra, Baalbec, Timour of the Desert,” said March, voicing their common feeling of the change.

They turned and went into the beautiful church, and found themselves in time for the matin service. Rapt far from New York, if not from earth, in the dim richness of the painted light, the hallowed music took them with solemn ecstasy; the aerial, aspiring Gothic forms seemed to lift them heavenward. They came out, reluctant, into the dazzle and bustle of the street, with a feeling that they were too good for it, which they confessed to each other with whimsical consciousness.

“But no matter how consecrated we feel now,” he said, “we mustn’t forget that we went into the church for precisely the same reason that we went to the Vienna Cafe for

breakfast—to gratify an aesthetic sense, to renew the faded pleasure of travel for a moment, to get back into the Europe of our youth. It was a purely Pagan impulse, Isabel, and we'd better own it."

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“I don’t know,” she returned. “I think we reduce ourselves to the bare bones too much. I wish we didn’t always recognize the facts as we do. Sometimes I should like to blink them. I should like to think I was devouter than I am, and younger and prettier.”

“Better not; you couldn’t keep it up. Honesty is the best policy even in such things.”

“No; I don’t like it, Basil. I should rather wait till the last day for some of my motives to come to the top. I know they’re always mixed, but do let me give them the benefit of a doubt sometimes.”

“Well, well, have it your own way, my dear. But I prefer not to lay up so many disagreeable surprises for myself at that time.”

She would not consent. “I know I am a good deal younger than I was. I feel quite in the mood of that morning when we walked down Broadway on our wedding journey. Don’t you?”

“Oh yes. But I know I’m not younger; I’m only prettier.”

She laughed for pleasure in his joke, and also for unconscious joy in the gay New York weather, in which there was no ‘arriere pensee’ of the east wind. They had crossed Broadway, and were walking over to Washington Square, in the region of which they now hoped to place themselves. The ‘primo tenore’ statue of Garibaldi had already taken possession of the place in the name of Latin progress, and they met Italian faces, French faces, Spanish faces, as they strolled over the asphalt walks, under the thinning shadows of the autumn-stricken sycamores. They met the familiar picturesque raggedness of Southern Europe with the old kindly illusion that somehow it existed for their appreciation, and that it found adequate compensation for poverty in this. March thought he sufficiently expressed his tacit sympathy in sitting down on one of the iron benches with his wife and letting a little Neapolitan put a superfluous shine on his boots, while their desultory comment wandered with equal esteem to the old-fashioned American respectability which keeps the north side of the square in vast mansions of red brick, and the international shabbiness which has invaded the southern border, and broken it up into lodging-houses, shops, beer-gardens, and studios.

They noticed the sign of an apartment to let on the north side, and as soon as the little bootblack could be bought off they went over to look at it. The janitor met them at the door and examined them. Then he said, as if still in doubt, “It has ten rooms, and the rent is twenty-eight hundred dollars.”

“It wouldn’t do, then,” March replied, and left him to divide the responsibility between the paucity of the rooms and the enormity of the rent as he best might. But their self-love had received a wound, and they questioned each other what it was in their appearance made him doubt their ability to pay so much.

“Of course, we don’t look like New-Yorkers,” sighed Mrs. March, “and we’ve walked through the Square. That might be as if we had walked along the Park Street mall in the Common before we came out on Beacon. Do you suppose he could have seen you getting your boots blacked in that way?”

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“It’s useless to ask,” said March. “But I never can recover from this blow.”

“Oh, pshaw! You know you hate such things as badly as I do. It was very impertinent of him.”

“Let us go back and ‘ecraser l’infame’ by paying him a year’s rent in advance and taking immediate possession. Nothing else can soothe my wounded feelings. You were not having your boots blacked: why shouldn’t he have supposed you were a New-Yorker, and I a country cousin?”

“They always know. Don’t you remember Mrs. Williams’s going to a Fifth Avenue milliner in a Worth dress, and the woman’s asking her instantly what hotel she should send her hat to?”

“Yes; these things drive one to despair. I don’t wonder the bodies of so many genteel strangers are found in the waters around New York. Shall we try the south side, my dear? or had we better go back to our rooms and rest awhile?”

Mrs. March had out the vertebrate, and was consulting one of its glittering ribs and glancing up from it at a house before which they stood. “Yes, it’s the number; but do they call this being ready October first?” The little area in front of the basement was heaped with a mixture of mortar, bricks, laths, and shavings from the interior; the brownstone steps to the front door were similarly bestrewn; the doorway showed the half-open, rough pine carpenter’s sketch of an unfinished house; the sashless windows of every story showed the activity of workmen within; the clatter of hammers and the hiss of saws came out to them from every opening.

“They may call it October first,” said March, “because it’s too late to contradict them. But they’d better not call it December first in my presence; I’ll let them say January first, at a pinch.”

“We will go in and look at it, anyway,” said his wife; and he admired how, when she was once within, she began provisionally to settle the family in each of the several floors with the female instinct for domiciliation which never failed her. She had the help of the landlord, who was present to urge forward the workmen apparently; he lent a hopeful fancy to the solution of all her questions. To get her from under his influence March had to represent that the place was damp from undried plastering, and that if she stayed she would probably be down with that New York pneumonia which visiting Bostonians are always dying of. Once safely on the pavement outside, she realized that the apartment was not only unfinished, but unfurnished, and had neither steam heat nor elevator. “But I thought we had better look at everything,” she explained.

“Yes, but not take everything. If I hadn’t pulled you away from there by main force you’d have not only died of New York pneumonia on the spot, but you’d have had us all settled there before we knew what we were about.”

“Well, that’s what I can’t help, Basil. It’s the only way I can realize whether it will do for us. I have to dramatize the whole thing.”

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She got a deal of pleasure as well as excitement out of this, and he had to own that the process of setting up housekeeping in so many different places was not only entertaining, but tended, through association with their first beginnings in housekeeping, to restore the image of their early married days and to make them young again.

It went on all day, and continued far into the night, until it was too late to go to the theatre, too late to do anything but tumble into bed and simultaneously fall asleep. They groaned over their reiterated disappointments, but they could not deny that the interest was unfailing, and that they got a great deal of fun out of it all. Nothing could abate Mrs. March's faith in her advertisements. One of them sent her to a flat of ten rooms which promised to be the solution of all their difficulties; it proved to be over a livery-stable, a liquor store, and a milliner's shop, none of the first fashion. Another led them far into old Greenwich Village to an apartment-house, which she refused to enter behind a small girl with a loaf of bread under one arm and a quart can of milk under the other.

In their search they were obliged, as March complained, to the acquisition of useless information in a degree unequalled in their experience. They came to excel in the sad knowledge of the line at which respectability distinguishes itself from shabbiness. Flattering advertisements took them to numbers of huge apartment-houses chiefly distinguishable from tenement-houses by the absence of fire-escapes on their facades, till Mrs. March refused to stop at any door where there were more than six bell-ratchets and speaking-tubes on either hand. Before the middle of the afternoon she decided against ratchets altogether, and confined herself to knobs, neatly set in the door-trim. Her husband was still sunk in the superstition that you can live anywhere you like in New York, and he would have paused at some places where her quicker eye caught the fatal sign of "Modes" in the ground-floor windows. She found that there was an east and west line beyond which they could not go if they wished to keep their self-respect, and that within the region to which they had restricted themselves there was a choice of streets. At first all the New York streets looked to them ill-paved, dirty, and repulsive; the general infamy imparted itself in their casual impression to streets in no wise guilty. But they began to notice that some streets were quiet and clean, and, though never so quiet and clean as Boston streets, that they wore an air of encouraging reform, and suggested a future of greater and greater domesticity. Whole blocks of these downtown cross-streets seemed to have been redeemed from decay, and even in the midst of squalor a dwelling here and there had been seized, painted a dull red as to its brick-work, and a glossy black as to its wood-work, and with a bright brass bell-pull and door-knob and a large brass

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plate for its key-hole escutcheon, had been endowed with an effect of purity and pride which removed its shabby neighborhood far from it. Some of these houses were quite small, and imaginably within their means; but, as March said, some body seemed always to be living there himself, and the fact that none of them was to rent kept Mrs. March true to her ideal of a fiat. Nothing prevented its realization so much as its difference from the New York ideal of a flat, which was inflexibly seven rooms and a bath. One or two rooms might be at the front, the rest crooked and cornered backward through in creasing and then decreasing darkness till they reached a light bedroom or kitchen at the rear. It might be the one or the other, but it was always the seventh room with the bath; or if, as sometimes happened, it was the eighth, it was so after having counted the bath as one; in this case the janitor said you always counted the bath as one. If the flats were advertised as having “all light rooms,” he explained that any room with a window giving into the open air of a court or shaft was counted a light room.

The Marches tried to make out why it was that these flats were go much more repulsive than the apartments which everyone lived in abroad; but they could only do so upon the supposition that in their European days they were too young, too happy, too full of the future, to notice whether rooms were inside or outside, light or dark, big or little, high or low. “Now we’re imprisoned in the present,” he said, “and we have to make the worst of it.”

In their despair he had an inspiration, which she declared worthy of him: it was to take two small flats, of four or five rooms and a bath, and live in both. They tried this in a great many places, but they never could get two flats of the kind on the same floor where there was steam heat and an elevator. At one place they almost did it. They had resigned themselves to the humility of the neighborhood, to the prevalence of modistes and livery-stablemen (they seem to consort much in New York), to the garbage in the gutters and the litter of paper in the streets, to the faltering slats in the surrounding window-shutters and the crumbled brownstone steps and sills, when it turned out that one of the apartments had been taken between two visits they made. Then the only combination left open to them was of a ground-floor flat to the right and a third-floor flat to the left.

Still they kept this inspiration in reserve for use at the first opportunity. In the mean time there were several flats which they thought they could almost make do: notably one where they could get an extra servant’s room in the basement four flights down, and another where they could get it in the roof five flights up. At the first the janitor was respectful and enthusiastic; at the second he had an effect of ironical pessimism. When they trembled on the verge of taking his apartment, he pointed out a spot

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in the kalsomining of the parlor ceiling, and gratuitously said, Now such a thing as that he should not agree to put in shape unless they took the apartment for a term of years. The apartment was unfurnished, and they recurred to the fact that they wanted a furnished apartment, and made their escape. This saved them in several other extremities; but short of extremity they could not keep their different requirements in mind, and were always about to decide without regard to some one of them.

They went to several places twice without intending: once to that old-fashioned house with the pleasant colored janitor, and wandered all over the apartment again with a haunting sense of familiarity, and then recognized the janitor and laughed; and to that house with the pathetic widow and the pretty daughter who wished to take them to board. They stayed to excuse their blunder, and easily came by the fact that the mother had taken the house that the girl might have a home while she was in New York studying art, and they hoped to pay their way by taking boarders. Her daughter was at her class now, the mother concluded; and they encouraged her to believe that it could only be a few days till the rest of her scheme was realized.

“I dare say we could be perfectly comfortable there,” March suggested when they had got away. “Now if we were truly humane we would modify our desires to meet their needs and end this sickening search, wouldn’t we?”

“Yes, but we’re not truly humane,” his wife answered, “or at least not in that sense. You know you hate boarding; and if we went there I should have them on my sympathies the whole time.”

“I see. And then you would take it out of me.”

“Then I should take it out of you. And if you are going to be so weak, Basil, and let every little thing work upon you in that way, you’d better not come to New York. You’ll see enough misery here.”

“Well, don’t take that superior tone with me, as if I were a child that had its mind set on an undesirable toy, Isabel.”

“Ah, don’t you suppose it’s because you are such a child in some respects that I like you, dear?” she demanded, without relenting.

“But I don’t find so much misery in New York. I don’t suppose there’s any more suffering here to the population than there is in the country. And they’re so gay about it all. I think the outward aspect of the place and the hilarity of the sky and air must get into the people’s blood. The weather is simply unapproachable; and I don’t care if it is the ugliest place in the world, as you say. I suppose it is. It shrieks and yells with ugliness

here and there but it never loses its spirits. That widow is from the country. When she's been a year in New York she'll be as gay—as gay as an L road." He celebrated a satisfaction they both had in the L roads. "They kill the streets and avenues, but at least they partially hide them, and that is some comfort; and they do triumph

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over their prostrate forms with a savage exultation that is intoxicating. Those bends in the L that you get in the corner of Washington Square, or just below the Cooper Institute—they're the gayest things in the world. Perfectly atrocious, of course, but incomparably picturesque! And the whole city is so," said March, "or else the L would never have got built here. New York may be splendidly gay or squalidly gay; but, prince or pauper, it's gay always."

"Yes, gay is the word," she admitted, with a sigh. "But frantic. I can't get used to it. They forget death, Basil; they forget death in New York."

"Well, I don't know that I've ever found much advantage in remembering it."

"Don't say such a thing, dearest."

He could see that she had got to the end of her nervous strength for the present, and he proposed that they should take the Elevated road as far as it would carry them into the country, and shake off their nightmare of flat-hunting for an hour or two; but her conscience would not let her. She convicted him of levity equal to that of the New-Yorkers in proposing such a thing; and they dragged through the day. She was too tired to care for dinner, and in the night she had a dream from which she woke herself with a cry that roused him, too. It was something about the children at first, whom they had talked of wistfully before falling asleep, and then it was of a hideous thing with two square eyes and a series of sections growing darker and then lighter, till the tail of the monstrous articulate was quite luminous again. She shuddered at the vague description she was able to give; but he asked, "Did it offer to bite you?"

"No. That was the most frightful thing about it; it had no mouth."

March laughed. "Why, my dear, it was nothing but a harmless New York flat—seven rooms and a bath."

"I really believe it was," she consented, recognizing an architectural resemblance, and she fell asleep again, and woke renewed for the work before them.

IX.

Their house-hunting no longer had novelty, but it still had interest; and they varied their day by taking a coupe, by renouncing advertisements, and by reverting to agents. Some of these induced them to consider the idea of furnished houses; and Mrs. March learned tolerance for Fulkerson by accepting permits to visit flats and houses which had none of the qualifications she desired in either, and were as far beyond her means as they were out of the region to which she had geographically restricted herself. They

looked at three-thousand and four-thousand dollar apartments, and rejected them for one reason or another which had nothing to do with the rent; the higher the rent was, the more critical they were of the slippery inlaid floors and the arrangement of the richly decorated rooms. They never knew whether they had deceived the janitor or not; as they came in a coupe, they hoped they had.

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They drove accidentally through one street that seemed gayer in the perspective than an L road. The fire-escapes, with their light iron balconies and ladders of iron, decorated the lofty house fronts; the roadway and sidewalks and door-steps swarmed with children; women's heads seemed to show at every window. In the basements, over which flights of high stone steps led to the tenements, were green-grocers' shops abounding in cabbages, and provision stores running chiefly to bacon and sausages, and cobblers' and tinners' shops, and the like, in proportion to the small needs of a poor neighborhood. Ash barrels lined the sidewalks, and garbage heaps filled the gutters; teams of all trades stood idly about; a peddler of cheap fruit urged his cart through the street, and mixed his cry with the joyous screams and shouts of the children and the scolding and gossiping voices of the women; the burly blue bulk of a policeman defined itself at the corner; a drunkard zigzagged down the sidewalk toward him. It was not the abode of the extremest poverty, but of a poverty as hopeless as any in the world, transmitting itself from generation to generation, and establishing conditions of permanency to which human life adjusts itself as it does to those of some incurable disease, like leprosy.

The time had been when the Marches would have taken a purely aesthetic view of the facts as they glimpsed them in this street of tenement-houses; when they would have contented themselves with saying that it was as picturesque as a street in Naples or Florence, and with wondering why nobody came to paint it; they would have thought they were sufficiently serious about it in blaming the artists for their failure to appreciate it, and going abroad for the picturesque when they had it here under their noses. It was to the nose that the street made one of its strongest appeals, and Mrs. March pulled up her window of the coupe. "Why does he take us through such a disgusting street?" she demanded, with an exasperation of which her husband divined the origin.

"This driver may be a philanthropist in disguise," he answered, with dreamy irony, "and may want us to think about the people who are not merely carried through this street in a coupe, but have to spend their whole lives in it, winter and summer, with no hopes of driving out of it, except in a hearse. I must say they don't seem to mind it. I haven't seen a jollier crowd anywhere in New York. They seem to have forgotten death a little more completely than any of their fellow-citizens, Isabel. And I wonder what they think of us, making this gorgeous progress through their midst. I suppose they think we're rich, and hate us—if they hate rich people; they don't look as if they hated anybody. Should we be as patient as they are with their discomfort? I don't believe there's steam heat or an elevator in the whole block. Seven rooms and a bath would be more than the largest and genteelest family would know what to do with. They wouldn't know what to do with the bath, anyway."

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His monologue seemed to interest his wife apart from the satirical point it had for themselves. “You ought to get Mr. Fulkerson to let you work some of these New York sights up for Every Other Week, Basil; you could do them very nicely.”

“Yes; I’ve thought of that. But don’t let’s leave the personal ground. Doesn’t it make you feel rather small and otherwise unworthy when you see the kind of street these fellow-beings of yours live in, and then think how particular you are about locality and the number of bellpulls? I don’t see even ratchets and speaking-tubes at these doors.” He craned his neck out of the window for a better look, and the children of discomfort cheered him, out of sheer good feeling and high spirits. “I didn’t know I was so popular. Perhaps it’s a recognition of my humane sentiments.”

“Oh, it’s very easy to have humane sentiments, and to satirize ourselves for wanting eight rooms and a bath in a good neighborhood, when we see how these wretched creatures live,” said his wife. “But if we shared all we have with them, and then settled down among them, what good would it do?”

“Not the least in the world. It might help us for the moment, but it wouldn’t keep the wolf from their doors for a week; and then they would go on just as before, only they wouldn’t be on such good terms with the wolf. The only way for them is to keep up an unbroken intimacy with the wolf; then they can manage him somehow. I don’t know how, and I’m afraid I don’t want to. Wouldn’t you like to have this fellow drive us round among the halls of pride somewhere for a little while? Fifth Avenue or Madison, up-town?”

“No; we’ve no time to waste. I’ve got a place near Third Avenue, on a nice cross street, and I want him to take us there.” It proved that she had several addresses near together, and it seemed best to dismiss their coupe and do the rest of their afternoon’s work on foot. It came to nothing; she was not humbled in the least by what she had seen in the tenement-house street; she yielded no point in her ideal of a flat, and the flats persistently refused to lend themselves to it. She lost all patience with them.

“Oh, I don’t say the flats are in the right of it,” said her husband, when she denounced their stupid inadequacy to the purposes of a Christian home. “But I’m not so sure that we are, either. I’ve been thinking about that home business ever since my sensibilities were dragged—in a coupe—through that tenement-house street. Of course, no child born and brought up in such a place as that could have any conception of home. But that’s because those poor people can’t give character to their habitations. They have to take what they can get. But people like us—that is, of our means—do give character to the average flat. It’s made to meet their tastes, or their supposed tastes; and so it’s made for social show, not for family life at all. Think of a baby in a flat! It’s a contradiction

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in terms; the flat is the negation of motherhood. The flat means society life; that is, the pretence of social life. It's made to give artificial people a society basis on a little money—too much money, of course, for what they get. So the cost of the building is put into marble halls and idiotic decoration of all kinds. I don't object to the conveniences, but none of these flats has a living-room. They have drawing-rooms to foster social pretence, and they have dining-rooms and bedrooms; but they have no room where the family can all come together and feel the sweetness of being a family. The bedrooms are black-holes mostly, with a sinful waste of space in each. If it were not for the marble halls, and the decorations, and the foolishly expensive finish, the houses could be built round a court, and the flats could be shaped something like a Pompeiian house, with small sleeping-closets—only lit from the outside—and the rest of the floor thrown into two or three large cheerful halls, where all the family life could go on, and society could be transacted unpretentiously. Why, those tenements are better and humaner than those flats! There the whole family lives in the kitchen, and has its consciousness of being; but the flat abolishes the family consciousness. It's confinement without coziness; it's cluttered without being snug. You couldn't keep a self-respecting cat in a flat; you couldn't go down cellar to get cider. No! the Anglo-Saxon home, as we know it in the Anglo-Saxon house, is simply impossible in the Franco-American flat, not because it's humble, but because it's false."

"Well, then," said Mrs. March, "let's look at houses."

He had been denouncing the flat in the abstract, and he had not expected this concrete result. But he said, "We will look at houses, then."

X.

Nothing mystifies a man more than a woman's aberrations from some point at which he, supposes her fixed as a star. In these unfurnished houses, without steam or elevator, March followed his wife about with patient wonder. She rather liked the worst of them best: but she made him go down into the cellars and look at the furnaces; she exacted from him a rigid inquest of the plumbing. She followed him into one of the cellars by the fitful glare of successively lighted matches, and they enjoyed a moment in which the anomaly of their presence there on that errand, so remote from all the facts of their long-established life in Boston, realized itself for them.

"Think how easily we might have been murdered and nobody been any the wiser!" she said when they were comfortably outdoors again.

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“Yes, or made way with ourselves in an access of emotional insanity, supposed to have been induced by unavailing flat-hunting,” he suggested. She fell in with the notion. “I’m beginning to feel crazy. But I don’t want you to lose your head, Basil. And I don’t want you to sentimentalize any of the things you see in New York. I think you were disposed to do it in that street we drove through. I don’t believe there’s any real suffering—not real suffering—among those people; that is, it would be suffering from our point of view, but they’ve been used to it all their lives, and they don’t feel their’ discomfort so much.”

“Of course, I understand that, and I don’t propose to sentimentalize them. I think when people get used to a bad state of things they had better stick to it; in fact, they don’t usually like a better state so well, and I shall keep that firmly in mind.”

She laughed with him, and they walked along the L bestridden avenue, exhilarated by their escape from murder and suicide in that cellar, toward the nearest cross town track, which they meant to take home to their hotel. “Now to-night we will go to the theatre,” she said, “and get this whole house business out of our minds, and be perfectly fresh for a new start in the morning.” Suddenly she clutched his arm. “Why, did you see that man?” and she signed with her head toward a decently dressed person who walked beside them, next the gutter, stooping over as if to examine it, and half halting at times.

“No. What?”

“Why, I saw him pick up a dirty bit of cracker from the pavement and cram it into his mouth and eat it down as if he were famished. And look! he’s actually hunting for more in those garbage heaps!”

This was what the decent-looking man with the hard hands and broken nails of a workman was doing-like a hungry dog. They kept up with him, in the fascination of the sight, to the next corner, where he turned down the side street still searching the gutter.

They walked on a few paces. Then March said, “I must go after him,” and left his wife standing.

“Are you in want—hungry?” he asked the man.

The man said he could not speak English, Monsieur.

March asked his question in French.

The man shrugged a pitiful, desperate shrug, “Mais, Monsieur—”

March put a coin in his hand, and then suddenly the man’s face twisted up; he caught the hand of this alms-giver in both of his and clung to it. “Monsieur! Monsieur!” he gasped, and the tears rained down his face.

His benefactor pulled himself away, shocked and ashamed, as one is by such a chance, and got back to his wife, and the man lapsed back into the mystery of misery out of which he had emerged.

March felt it laid upon him to console his wife for what had happened. “Of course, we might live here for years and not see another case like that; and, of course, there are twenty places where he could have gone for help if he had known where to find them.”

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“Ah, but it’s the possibility of his needing the help so badly as that,” she answered. “That’s what I can’t bear, and I shall not come to a place where such things are possible, and we may as well stop our house-hunting here at once.”

“Yes? And what part of Christendom will you live in? Such things are possible everywhere in our conditions.”

“Then we must change the conditions—”

“Oh no; we must go to the theatre and forget them. We can stop at Brentano’s for our tickets as we pass through Union Square.”

“I am not going to the theatre, Basil. I am going home to Boston to-night. You can stay and find a flat.”

He convinced her of the absurdity of her position, and even of its selfishness; but she said that her mind was quite made up irrespective of what had happened, that she had been away from the children long enough; that she ought to be at home to finish up the work of leaving it. The word brought a sigh. “Ah, I don’t know why we should see nothing but sad and ugly things now. When we were young—”

“Younger,” he put in. “We’re still young.”

“That’s what we pretend, but we know better. But I was thinking how pretty and pleasant things used to be turning up all the time on our travels in the old days. Why, when we were in New York here on our wedding journey the place didn’t seem half so dirty as it does now, and none of these dismal things happened.”

“It was a good deal dirtier,” he answered; “and I fancy worse in every way-hungrier, raggeder, more wretchedly housed. But that wasn’t the period of life for us to notice it. Don’t you remember, when we started to Niagara the last time, how everybody seemed middle-aged and commonplace; and when we got there there were no evident brides; nothing but elderly married people?”

“At least they weren’t starving,” she rebelled.

“No, you don’t starve in parlor-cars and first-class hotels; but if you step out of them you run your chance of seeing those who do, if you’re getting on pretty well in the forties. If it’s the unhappy who see unhappiness, think what misery must be revealed to people who pass their lives in the really squalid tenement-house streets—I don’t mean picturesque avenues like that we passed through.”

“But we are not unhappy,” she protested, bringing the talk back to the personal base again, as women must to get any good out of talk. “We’re really no unhappier than we were when we were young.”

“We’re more serious.”

“Well, I hate it; and I wish you wouldn’t be so serious, if that’s what it brings us to.”

“I will be trivial from this on,” said March. “Shall we go to the Hole in the Ground to-night?”

“I am going to Boston.”

“It’s much the same thing. How do you like that for triviality? It’s a little blasphemous, I’ll allow.”

“It’s very silly,” she said.

At the hotel they found a letter from the agent who had sent them the permit to see Mrs. Grosvenor Green’s apartment. He wrote that she had heard they were pleased with her apartment, and that she thought she could make the terms to suit. She had taken her passage for Europe, and was very anxious to let the flat before she sailed. She would call that evening at seven.

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“Mrs. Grosvenor Green!” said Mrs. March. “Which of the ten thousand flats is it, Basil?”

“The gimcrackery,” he answered. “In the Xenophon, you know.”

“Well, she may save herself the trouble. I shall not see her. Or yes—I must. I couldn’t go away without seeing what sort of creature could have planned that fly-away flat. She must be a perfect—”

“Parachute,” March suggested.

“No! anybody so light as that couldn’t come down.”

“Well, toy balloon.”

“Toy balloon will do for the present,” Mrs. March admitted. “But I feel that naught but herself can be her parallel for volatility.”

When Mrs. Grosvenor-Green’s card came up they both descended to the hotel parlor, which March said looked like the saloon of a Moorish day-boat; not that he knew of any such craft, but the decorations were so Saracenic and the architecture so Hudson Riverish. They found there on the grand central divan a large lady whose vast smoothness, placidity, and plumpness set at defiance all their preconceptions of Mrs. Grosvenor Green, so that Mrs. March distinctly paused with her card in her hand before venturing even tentatively to address her. Then she was astonished at the low, calm voice in which Mrs. Green acknowledged herself, and slowly proceeded to apologize for calling. It was not quite true that she had taken her passage for Europe, but she hoped soon to do so, and she confessed that in the mean time she was anxious to let her flat. She was a little worn out with the care of housekeeping—Mrs. March breathed, “Oh yes!” in the sigh with which ladies recognize one another’s martyrdom—and Mrs. Green had business abroad, and she was going to pursue her art studies in Paris; she drew in Mr. Ilcomb’s class now, but the instruction was so much better in Paris; and as the superintendent seemed to think the price was the only objection, she had ventured to call.

“Then we didn’t deceive him in the least,” thought Mrs. March, while she answered, sweetly: “No; we were only afraid that it would be too small for our family. We require a good many rooms.” She could not forego the opportunity of saying, “My husband is coming to New York to take charge of a literary periodical, and he will have to have a room to write in,” which made Mrs. Green bow to March, and made March look sheepish. “But we did think the apartment very charming”, (It was architecturally charming, she protested to her conscience), “and we should have been so glad if we could have got into it.” She followed this with some account of their house-hunting, amid soft murmurs of sympathy from Mrs. Green, who said that she had been through all that, and that if she could have shown her apartment to them she felt sure that she

could have explained it so that they would have seen its capabilities better, Mrs. March assented to this, and Mrs. Green added that if they found nothing exactly suitable she would be glad to have them look at it again; and then Mrs. March

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said that she was going back to Boston herself, but she was leaving Mr. March to continue the search; and she had no doubt he would be only too glad to see the apartment by daylight. "But if you take it, Basil," she warned him, when they were alone, "I shall simply renounce you. I wouldn't live in that junk-shop if you gave it to me. But who would have thought she was that kind of looking person? Though of course I might have known if I had stopped to think once. It's because the place doesn't express her at all that it's so unlike her. It couldn't be like anybody, or anything that flies in the air, or creeps upon the earth, or swims in the waters under the earth. I wonder where in the world she's from; she's no New-Yorker; even we can see that; and she's not quite a country person, either; she seems like a person from some large town, where she's been an aesthetic authority. And she can't find good enough art instruction in New York, and has to go to Paris for it! Well, it's pathetic, after all, Basil. I can't help feeling sorry for a person who mistakes herself to that extent."

"I can't help feeling sorry for the husband of a person who mistakes herself to that extent. What is Mr. Grosvenor Green going to do in Paris while she's working her way into the Salon?"

"Well, you keep away from her apartment, Basil; that's all I've got to say to you. And yet I do like some things about her."

"I like everything about her but her apartment," said March.

"I like her going to be out of the country," said his wife. "We shouldn't be overlooked. And the place was prettily shaped, you can't deny it. And there was an elevator and steam heat. And the location is very convenient. And there was a hall-boy to bring up cards. The halls and stairs were kept very clean and nice. But it wouldn't do. I could put you a folding bed in the room where you wrote, and we could even have one in the parlor"

"Behind a portiere? I couldn't stand any more portieres!"

"And we could squeeze the two girls into one room, or perhaps only bring Margaret, and put out the whole of the wash. Basil!" she almost shrieked, "it isn't to be thought of!"

He retorted, "I'm not thinking of it, my dear."

Fulkerson came in just before they started for Mrs. March's train, to find out what had become of them, he said, and to see whether they had got anything to live in yet.

"Not a thing," she said. "And I'm just going back to Boston, and leaving Mr. March here to do anything he pleases about it. He has 'carte blanche.'"

“But freedom brings responsibility, you know, Fulkerson, and it’s the same as if I’d no choice. I’m staying behind because I’m left, not because I expect to do anything.”

“Is that so?” asked Fulkerson. “Well, we must see what can be done. I supposed you would be all settled by this time, or I should have humped myself to find you something. None of those places I gave you amounts to anything?”

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“As much as forty thousand others we’ve looked at,” said Mrs. March. “Yes, one of them does amount to something. It comes so near being what we want that I’ve given Mr. March particular instructions not to go near it.”

She told him about Mrs. Grosvenor Green and her flats, and at the end he said:

“Well, well, we must look out for that. I’ll keep an eye on him, Mrs. March, and see that he doesn’t do anything rash, and I won’t leave him till he’s found just the right thing. It exists, of course; it must in a city of eighteen hundred thousand people, and the only question is where to find it. You leave him to me, Mrs. March; I’ll watch out for him.”

Fulkerson showed some signs of going to the station when he found they were not driving, but she bade him a peremptory good-bye at the hotel door.

“He’s very nice, Basil, and his way with you is perfectly charming. It’s very sweet to see how really fond of you he is. But I didn’t want him stringing along with us up to Forty-second Street and spoiling our last moments together.”

At Third Avenue they took the Elevated for which she confessed an infatuation. She declared it the most ideal way of getting about in the world, and was not ashamed when he reminded her of how she used to say that nothing under the sun could induce her to travel on it. She now said that the night transit was even more interesting than the day, and that the fleeing intimacy you formed with people in second and third floor interiors, while all the usual street life went on underneath, had a domestic intensity mixed with a perfect repose that was the last effect of good society with all its security and exclusiveness. He said it was better than the theatre, of which it reminded him, to see those people through their windows: a family party of work-folk at a late tea, some of the men in their shirt-sleeves; a woman sewing by a lamp; a mother laying her child in its cradle; a man with his head fallen on his hands upon a table; a girl and her lover leaning over the window-sill together. What suggestion! what drama? what infinite interest! At the Forty-second Street station they stopped a minute on the bridge that crosses the track to the branch road for the Central Depot, and looked up and down the long stretch of the Elevated to north and south. The track that found and lost itself a thousand times in the flare and tremor of the innumerable lights; the moony sheen of the electrics mixing with the reddish points and blots of gas far and near; the architectural shapes of houses and churches and towers, rescued by the obscurity from all that was ignoble in them, and the coming and going of the trains marking the stations with vivider or fainter plumes of flame-shot steam-formed an incomparable perspective. They often talked afterward of the superb spectacle, which in a city full of painters nightly works its unrecorded miracles; and they were just to the Arachne

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roof spun in iron over the cross street on which they ran to the depot; but for the present they were mostly inarticulate before it. They had another moment of rich silence when they paused in the gallery that leads from the Elevated station to the waiting-rooms in the Central Depot and looked down upon the great night trains lying on the tracks dim under the rain of gas-lights that starred without dispersing the vast darkness of the place. What forces, what fates, slept in these bulks which would soon be hurling themselves north and south and west through the night! Now they waited there like fabled monsters of Arab story ready for the magician's touch, tractable, reckless, will-less—organized lifelessness full of a strange semblance of life.

The Marches admired the impressive sight with a thrill of patriotic pride in the fact that the whole world perhaps could not afford just the like. Then they hurried down to the ticket-offices, and he got her a lower berth in the Boston sleeper, and went with her to the car. They made the most of the fact that her berth was in the very middle of the car; and she promised to write as soon as she reached home. She promised also that, having seen the limitations of New York in respect to flats, she would not be hard on him if he took something not quite ideal. Only he must remember that it was not to be above Twentieth Street nor below Washington Square; it must not be higher than the third floor; it must have an elevator, steam heat, hail-boys, and a pleasant janitor. These were essentials; if he could not get them, then they must do without. But he must get them.

XI.

Mrs. March was one of those wives who exact a more rigid adherence to their ideals from their husbands than from themselves. Early in their married life she had taken charge of him in all matters which she considered practical. She did not include the business of bread-winning in these; that was an affair that might safely be left to his absent-minded, dreamy inefficiency, and she did not interfere with him there. But in such things as rehanging the pictures, deciding on a summer boarding-place, taking a seaside cottage, repapering rooms, choosing seats at the theatre, seeing what the children ate when she was not at table, shutting the cat out at night, keeping run of calls and invitations, and seeing if the furnace was dampered, he had failed her so often that she felt she could not leave him the slightest discretion in regard to a flat. Her total distrust of his judgment in the matters cited and others like them consisted with the greatest admiration of his mind and respect for his character. She often said that if he would only bring these to bear in such exigencies he would be simply perfect; but she had long given up his ever doing so. She subjected him, therefore, to an iron code, but after proclaiming it she was apt to abandon him to the native lawlessness

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of his temperament. She expected him in this event to do as he pleased, and she resigned herself to it with considerable comfort in holding him accountable. He learned to expect this, and after suffering keenly from her disappointment with whatever he did he waited patiently till she forgot her grievance and began to extract what consolation lurks in the irreparable. She would almost admit at moments that what he had done was a very good thing, but she reserved the right to return in full force to her original condemnation of it; and she accumulated each act of independent volition in witness and warning against him. Their mass oppressed but never deterred him. He expected to do the wrong thing when left to his own devices, and he did it without any apparent recollection of his former misdeeds and their consequences. There was a good deal of comedy in it all, and some tragedy.

He now experienced a certain expansion, such as husbands of his kind will imagine, on going back to his hotel alone. It was, perhaps, a revulsion from the pain of parting; and he toyed with the idea of Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment, which, in its preposterous unsuitability, had a strange attraction. He felt that he could take it with less risk than anything else they had seen, but he said he would look at all the other places in town first. He really spent the greater part of the next day in hunting up the owner of an apartment that had neither steam heat nor an elevator, but was otherwise perfect, and trying to get him to take less than the agent asked. By a curious psychical operation he was able, in the transaction, to work himself into quite a passionate desire for the apartment, while he held the Grosvenor Green apartment in the background of his mind as something that he could return to as altogether more suitable. He conducted some simultaneous negotiation for a furnished house, which enhanced still more the desirability of the Grosvenor Green apartment. Toward evening he went off at a tangent far up-town, so as to be able to tell his wife how utterly preposterous the best there would be as compared even with this ridiculous Grosvenor Green gimcrackery. It is hard to report the processes of his sophistication; perhaps this, again, may best be left to the marital imagination.

He rang at the last of these up-town apartments as it was falling dusk, and it was long before the janitor appeared. Then the man was very surly, and said if he looked at the flat now he would say it was too dark, like all the rest. His reluctance irritated March in proportion to his insincerity in proposing to look at it at all. He knew he did not mean to take it under any circumstances; that he was going to use his inspection of it in dishonest justification of his disobedience to his wife; but he put on an air of offended dignity. "If you don't wish to show the apartment," he said, "I don't care to see it."

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The man groaned, for he was heavy, and no doubt dreaded the stairs. He scratched a match on his thigh, and led the way up. March was sorry for him, and he put his fingers on a quarter in his waistcoat-pocket to give him at parting. At the same time, he had to trump up an objection to the flat. This was easy, for it was advertised as containing ten rooms, and he found the number eked out with the bath-room and two large closets. "It's light enough," said March, "but I don't see how you make out ten rooms"

"There's ten rooms," said the man, deigning no proof.

March took his fingers off the quarter, and went down-stairs and out of the door without another word. It would be wrong, it would be impossible, to give the man anything after such insolence. He reflected, with shame, that it was also cheaper to punish than forgive him.

He returned to his hotel prepared for any desperate measure, and convinced now that the Grosvenor Green apartment was not merely the only thing left for him, but was, on its own merits, the best thing in New York.

Fulkerson was waiting for him in the reading-room, and it gave March the curious thrill with which a man closes with temptation when he said: "Look here! Why don't you take that woman's flat in the Xenophon? She's been at the agents again, and they've been at me. She likes your look—or Mrs. March's—and I guess you can have it at a pretty heavy discount from the original price. I'm authorized to say you can have it for one seventy-five a month, and I don't believe it would be safe for you to offer one fifty."

March shook his head, and dropped a mask of virtuous rejection over his corrupt acquiescence. "It's too small for us—we couldn't squeeze into it."

"Why, look here!" Fulkerson persisted. "How many rooms do you people want?"

"I've got to have a place to work—"

"Of course! And you've got to have it at the Fifth Wheel office."

"I hadn't thought of that," March began. "I suppose I could do my work at the office, as there's not much writing—"

"Why, of course you can't do your work at home. You just come round with me now, and look at that again."

"No; I can't do it."

"Why?"

"I—I've got to dine."

“All right,” said Fulkerson. “Dine with me. I want to take you round to a little Italian place that I know.”

One may trace the successive steps of March’s descent in this simple matter with the same edification that would attend the study of the self-delusions and obfuscations of a man tempted to crime. The process is probably not at all different, and to the philosophical mind the kind of result is unimportant; the process is everything.

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Fulkerson led him down one block and half across another to the steps of a small dwelling-house, transformed, like many others, into a restaurant of the Latin ideal, with little or no structural change from the pattern of the lower middle-class New York home. There were the corroded brownstone steps, the mean little front door, and the cramped entry with its narrow stairs by which ladies could go up to a dining-room appointed for them on the second floor; the parlors on the first were set about with tables, where men smoked cigarettes between the courses, and a single waiter ran swiftly to and fro with plates and dishes, and, exchanged unintelligible outcries with a cook beyond a slide in the back parlor. He rushed at the new-comers, brushed the soiled table-cloth before them with a towel on his arm, covered its worst stains with a napkin, and brought them, in their order, the vermicelli soup, the fried fish, the cheese-strewn spaghetti, the veal cutlets, the tepid roast fowl and salad, and the wizened pear and coffee which form the dinner at such places.

“Ah, this is nice!” said Fulkerson, after the laying of the charitable napkin, and he began to recognize acquaintances, some of whom he described to March as young literary men and artists with whom they should probably have to do; others were simply frequenters of the place, and were of all nationalities and religions apparently—at least, several were Hebrews and Cubans. “You get a pretty good slice of New York here,” he said, “all except the frosting on top. That you won’t find much at Maroni’s, though you will occasionally. I don’t mean the ladies ever, of course.” The ladies present seemed harmless and reputable-looking people enough, but certainly they were not of the first fashion, and, except in a few instances, not Americans. “It’s like cutting straight down through a fruitcake,” Fulkerson went on, “or a mince-pie, when you don’t know who made the pie; you get a little of everything.” He ordered a small flask of Chianti with the dinner, and it came in its pretty wicker jacket. March smiled upon it with tender reminiscence, and Fulkerson laughed. “Lights you up a little. I brought old Dryfoos here one day, and he thought it was sweet-oil; that’s the kind of bottle they used to have it in at the country drug-stores.”

“Yes, I remember now; but I’d totally forgotten it,” said March. “How far back that goes! Who’s Dryfoos?”

“Dryfoos?” Fulkerson, still smiling, tore off a piece of the half-yard of French loaf which had been supplied them, with two pale, thin disks of butter, and fed it into himself. “Old Dryfoos? Well, of course! I call him old, but he ain’t so very. About fifty, or along there.”

“No,” said March, “that isn’t very old—or not so old as it used to be.”

“Well, I suppose you’ve got to know about him, anyway,” said Fulkerson, thoughtfully. “And I’ve been wondering just how I should tell you. Can’t always make out exactly how much of a Bostonian you really are! Ever been out in the natural-gas country?”

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“No,” said March. “I’ve had a good deal of curiosity about it, but I’ve never been able to get away except in summer, and then we always preferred to go over the old ground, out to Niagara and back through Canada, the route we took on our wedding journey. The children like it as much as we do.”

“Yes, yes,” said Fulkerson. “Well, the natural-gas country is worth seeing. I don’t mean the Pittsburg gas-fields, but out in Northern Ohio and Indiana around Moffitt—that’s the place in the heart of the gas region that they’ve been booming so. Yes, you ought to see that country. If you haven’t been West for a good many years, you haven’t got any idea how old the country looks. You remember how the fields used to be all full of stumps?”

“I should think so.”

“Well, you won’t see any stumps now. All that country out around Moffitt is just as smooth as a checker-board, and looks as old as England. You know how we used to burn the stumps out; and then somebody invented a stump-extractor, and we pulled them out with a yoke of oxen. Now they just touch ’em off with a little dynamite, and they’ve got a cellar dug and filled up with kindling ready for housekeeping whenever you want it. Only they haven’t got any use for kindling in that country—all gas. I rode along on the cars through those level black fields at corn-planting time, and every once in a while I’d come to a place with a piece of ragged old stove-pipe stickin’ up out of the ground, and blazing away like forty, and a fellow ploughing all round it and not minding it any more than if it was spring violets. Horses didn’t notice it, either. Well, they’ve always known about the gas out there; they say there are places in the woods where it’s been burning ever since the country was settled.

“But when you come in sight of Moffitt—my, oh, my! Well, you come in smell of it about as soon. That gas out there ain’t odorless, like the Pittsburg gas, and so it’s perfectly safe; but the smell isn’t bad—about as bad as the finest kind of benzine. Well, the first thing that strikes you when you come to Moffitt is the notion that there has been a good warm, growing rain, and the town’s come up overnight. That’s in the suburbs, the annexes, and additions. But it ain’t shabby—no shanty-farm business; nice brick and frame houses, some of ’em Queen Anne style, and all of ’em looking as if they had come to stay. And when you drive up from the depot you think everybody’s moving. Everything seems to be piled into the street; old houses made over, and new ones going up everywhere. You know the kind of street Main Street always used to be in our section—half plank-road and turnpike, and the rest mud-hole, and a lot of stores and doggeries strung along with false fronts a story higher than the back, and here and there a decent building with the gable end to the public; and a court-house and jail and two taverns and three or four churches. Well, they’re all there in Moffitt yet, but architecture

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has struck it hard, and they've got a lot of new buildings that needn't be ashamed of themselves anywhere; the new court-house is as big as St. Peter's, and the Grand Opera-house is in the highest style of the art. You can't buy a lot on that street for much less than you can buy a lot in New York—or you couldn't when the boom was on; I saw the place just when the boom was in its prime. I went out there to work the newspapers in the syndicate business, and I got one of their men to write me a real bright, snappy account of the gas; and they just took me in their arms and showed me everything. Well, it was wonderful, and it was beautiful, too! To see a whole community stirred up like that was—just like a big boy, all hope and high spirits, and no discount on the remotest future; nothing but perpetual boom to the end of time—I tell you it warmed your blood. Why, there were some things about it that made you think what a nice kind of world this would be if people ever took hold together, instead of each fellow fighting it out on his own hook, and devil take the hindmost. They made up their minds at Moffitt that if they wanted their town to grow they'd got to keep their gas public property. So they extended their corporation line so as to take in pretty much the whole gas region round there; and then the city took possession of every well that was put down, and held it for the common good. Anybody that's a mind to come to Moffitt and start any kind of manufacture can have all the gas he wants free; and for fifteen dollars a year you can have all the gas you want to heat and light your private house. The people hold on to it for themselves, and, as I say, it's a grand sight to see a whole community hanging together and working for the good of all, instead of splitting up into as many different cut-throats as there are able-bodied citizens. See that fellow?" Fulkerson broke off, and indicated with a twirl of his head a short, dark, foreign-looking man going out of the door. "They say that fellow's a Socialist. I think it's a shame they're allowed to come here. If they don't like the way we manage our affairs let 'em stay at home," Fulkerson continued. "They do a lot of mischief, shooting off their mouths round here. I believe in free speech and all that; but I'd like to see these fellows shut up in jail and left to jaw one another to death. We don't want any of their poison."

March did not notice the vanishing Socialist. He was watching, with a teasing sense of familiarity, a tall, shabbily dressed, elderly man, who had just come in. He had the aquiline profile uncommon among Germans, and yet March recognized him at once as German. His long, soft beard and mustache had once been fair, and they kept some tone of their yellow in the gray to which they had turned. His eyes were full, and his lips and chin shaped the beard to the noble outline which shows in the beards the Italian masters liked to paint for their Last Suppers. His carriage was erect and soldierly, and March presently saw that he had lost his left hand. He took his place at a table where the overworked waiter found time to cut up his meat and put everything in easy reach of his right hand.

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“Well,” Fulkerson resumed, “they took me round everywhere in Moffitt, and showed me their big wells—lit ’em up for a private view, and let me hear them purr with the soft accents of a mass-meeting of locomotives. Why, when they let one of these wells loose in a meadow that they’d piped it into temporarily, it drove the flame away forty feet from the mouth of the pipe and blew it over half an acre of ground. They say when they let one of their big wells burn away all winter before they had learned how to control it, that well kept up a little summer all around it; the grass stayed green, and the flowers bloomed all through the winter. I don’t know whether it’s so or not. But I can believe anything of natural gas. My! but it was beautiful when they turned on the full force of that well and shot a roman candle into the gas—that’s the way they light it—and a plume of fire about twenty feet wide and seventy-five feet high, all red and yellow and violet, jumped into the sky, and that big roar shook the ground under your feet! You felt like saying:

“‘Don’t trouble yourself; I’m perfectly convinced. I believe in Moffitt.’ We-e-e-ll!” drawled Fulkerson, with a long breath, “that’s where I met old Dryfoos.”

“Oh yes!—Dryfoos,” said March. He observed that the waiter had brought the old one-handed German a towering glass of beer.

“Yes,” Fulkerson laughed. “We’ve got round to Dryfoos again. I thought I could cut a long story short, but I seem to be cutting a short story long. If you’re not in a hurry, though—”

“Not in the least. Go on as long as you like.”

“I met him there in the office of a real-estate man—speculator, of course; everybody was, in Moffitt; but a first-rate fellow, and public-spirited as all get-out; and when Dryfoos left he told me about him. Dryfoos was an old Pennsylvania Dutch farmer, about three or four miles out of Moffitt, and he’d lived there pretty much all his life; father was one of the first settlers. Everybody knew he had the right stuff in him, but he was slower than molasses in January, like those Pennsylvania Dutch. He’d got together the largest and handsomest farm anywhere around there; and he was making money on it, just like he was in some business somewhere; he was a very intelligent man; he took the papers and kept himself posted; but he was awfully old-fashioned in his ideas. He hung on to the doctrines as well as the dollars of the dads; it was a real thing with him. Well, when the boom began to come he hated it awfully, and he fought it. He used to write communications to the weekly newspaper in Moffitt—they’ve got three dailies there now—and throw cold water on the boom. He couldn’t catch on no way. It made him sick to hear the clack that went on about the gas the whole while, and that stirred up the neighborhood and got into his family. Whenever he’d hear of a man that had been offered a big price for his land and was going to sell out and move into town, he’d go and labor with him and try to talk him out of it, and tell him how long his fifteen or twenty thousand would last him to live on, and shake the Standard Oil Company before him,

and try to make him believe it wouldn’t be five years before the Standard owned the whole region.

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“Of course, he couldn’t do anything with them. When a man’s offered a big price for his farm, he don’t care whether it’s by a secret emissary from the Standard Oil or not; he’s going to sell and get the better of the other fellow if he can. Dryfoos couldn’t keep the boom out of has own family even. His wife was with him. She thought whatever he said and did was just as right as if it had been thundered down from Sinai. But the young folks were sceptical, especially the girls that had been away to school. The boy that had been kept at home because he couldn’t be spared from helping his father manage the farm was more like him, but they contrived to stir the boy up—with the hot end of the boom, too. So when a fellow came along one day and offered old Dryfoos a cool hundred thousand for his farm, it was all up with Dryfoos. He’d ‘a’ liked to ‘a’ kept the offer to himself and not done anything about it, but his vanity wouldn’t let him do that; and when he let it out in his family the girls outvoted him. They just made him sell.

“He wouldn’t sell all. He kept about eighty acres that was off in some piece by itself, but the three hundred that had the old brick house on it, and the big barn—that went, and Dryfoos bought him a place in Moffitt and moved into town to live on the interest of his money. Just What he had scolded and ridiculed everybody else for doing. Well, they say that at first he seemed like he would go crazy. He hadn’t anything to do. He took a fancy to that land-agent, and he used to go and set in his office and ask him what he should do. ’I hain’t got any horses, I hain’t got any cows, I hain’t got any pigs, I hain’t got any chickens. I hain’t got anything to do from sun-up to sun-down.’ The fellow said the tears used to run down the old fellow’s cheeks, and if he hadn’t been so busy himself he believed he should ‘a’ cried, too. But most o’ people thought old Dryfoos was down in the mouth because he hadn’t asked more for his farm, when he wanted to buy it back and found they held it at a hundred and fifty thousand. People couldn’t believe he was just homesick and heartsick for the old place. Well, perhaps he was sorry he hadn’t asked more; that’s human nature, too.

“After a while something happened. That land-agent used to tell Dryfoos to get out to Europe with his money and see life a little, or go and live in Washington, where he could be somebody; but Dryfoos wouldn’t, and he kept listening to the talk there, and all of a sudden he caught on. He came into that fellow’s one day with a plan for cutting up the eighty acres he’d kept into town lots; and he’d got it all plotted out so-well, and had so many practical ideas about it, that the fellow was astonished. He went right in with him, as far as Dryfoos would let him, and glad of the chance; and they were working the thing for all it was worth when I struck Moffitt. Old Dryfoos wanted me to go out and see the Dryfoos & Hendry Addition—guess

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he thought maybe I'd write it up; and he drove me out there himself. Well, it was funny to see a town made: streets driven through; two rows of shadetrees, hard and soft, planted; cellars dug and houses put up-regular Queen Anne style, too, with stained glass-all at once. Dryfoos apologized for the streets because they were hand-made; said they expected their street-making machine Tuesday, and then they intended to push things."

Fulkerson enjoyed the effect of his picture on March for a moment, and then went on: "He was mighty intelligent, too, and he questioned me up about my business as sharp as I ever was questioned; seemed to kind of strike his fancy; I guess he wanted to find out if there was any money in it. He was making money, hand over hand, then; and he never stopped speculating and improving till he'd scraped together three or four hundred thousand dollars, they said a million, but they like round numbers at Moffitt, and I guess half a million would lay over it comfortably and leave a few thousands to spare, probably. Then he came on to New York."

Fulkerson struck a match against the ribbed side of the porcelain cup that held the matches in the centre of the table, and lit a cigarette, which he began to smoke, throwing his head back with a leisurely effect, as if he had got to the end of at least as much of his story as he meant to tell without prompting.

March asked him the desired question. "What in the world for?"

Fulkerson took out his cigarette and said, with a smile: "To spend his money, and get his daughters into the old Knickerbocker society. Maybe he thought they were all the same kind of Dutch."

"And has he succeeded?"

"Well, they're not social leaders yet. But it's only a question of time—generation or two—especially if time's money, and if Every Other Week is the success it's bound to be."

"You don't mean to say, Fulkerson," said March, with a half-doubting, half-daunted laugh, "that he's your Angel?"

"That's what I mean to say," returned Fulkerson. "I ran onto him in Broadway one day last summer. If you ever saw anybody in your life; you're sure to meet him in Broadway again, sooner or later. That's the philosophy of the bunco business; country people from the same neighborhood are sure to run up against each other the first time they come to New York. I put out my hand, and I said, 'Isn't this Mr. Dryfoos from Moffitt?' He didn't seem to have any use for my hand; he let me keep it, and he squared those old lips of his till his imperial stuck straight out. Ever see Bernhardt in 'L'Etrangere'? Well,

the American husband is old Dryfoos all over; no mustache; and hay-colored chin-whiskers cut slanting froze the corners of his mouth. He cocked his little gray eyes at me, and says he: 'Yes, young man; my name is Dryfoos, and I'm from Moffitt. But I don't want no present of Longfellow's Works, illustrated; and I don't want to taste no fine teas; but I know a policeman that does; and if you're the son of my old friend Squire Strohfeldt, you'd better get out.' 'Well, then,' said I, 'how would you like to go into the newspaper syndicate business?' He gave another look at me, and then he burst out laughing, and he grabbed my hand, and he just froze to it. I never saw anybody so glad.

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“Well, the long and the short of it was that I asked him round here to Maroni’s to dinner; and before we broke up for the night we had settled the financial side of the plan that’s brought you to New York.”

“I can see,” said Fulkerson, who had kept his eyes fast on March’s face, “that you don’t more than half like the idea of Dryfoos. It ought to give you more confidence in the thing than you ever had. You needn’t be afraid,” he added, with some feeling, “that I talked Dryfoos into the thing for my own advantage.”

“Oh, my dear Fulkerson!” March protested, all the more fervently because he was really a little guilty.

“Well, of course not! I didn’t mean you were. But I just happened to tell him what I wanted to go into when I could see my way to it, and he caught on of his own accord. The fact is,” said Fulkerson, “I guess I’d better make a clean breast of it, now I’m at it, Dryfoos wanted to get something for that boy of his to do. He’s in railroads himself, and he’s in mines and other things, and he keeps busy, and he can’t bear to have his boy hanging round the house doing nothing, like as if he was a girl. I told him that the great object of a rich man was to get his son into just that fix, but he couldn’t seem to see it, and the boy hated it himself. He’s got a good head, and he wanted to study for the ministry when they were all living together out on the farm; but his father had the old-fashioned ideas about that. You know they used to think that any sort of stuff was good enough to make a preacher out of; but they wanted the good timber for business; and so the old man wouldn’t let him. You’ll see the fellow; you’ll like him; he’s no fool, I can tell you; and he’s going to be our publisher, nominally at first and actually when I’ve taught him the ropes a little.”

XII.

Fulkerson stopped and looked at March, whom he saw lapsing into a serious silence. Doubtless he divined his uneasiness with the facts that had been given him to digest. He pulled out his watch and glanced at it. “See here, how would you like to go up to Forty-sixth street with me, and drop in on old Dryfoos? Now’s your chance. He’s going West tomorrow, and won’t be back for a month or so. They’ll all be glad to see you, and you’ll understand things better when you’ve seen him and his family. I can’t explain.”

March reflected a moment. Then he said, with a wisdom that surprised him, for he would have liked to yield to the impulse of his curiosity: “Perhaps we’d better wait till Mrs. March comes down, and let things take the usual course. The Dryfoos ladies will want to call on her as the last-comer, and if I treated myself ‘en garcon’ now, and paid the first visit, it might complicate matters.”

“Well, perhaps you’re right,” said Fulkerson. “I don’t know much about these things, and I don’t believe Ma Dryfoos does, either.” He was on his legs lighting another cigarette. “I suppose the girls are getting themselves up in etiquette, though. Well, then, let’s have a look at the ‘Every Other Week’ building, and then, if you like your quarters there, you can go round and close for Mrs. Green’s flat.”

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March's dormant allegiance to his wife's wishes had been roused by his decision in favor of good social usage. "I don't think I shall take the flat," he said.

"Well, don't reject it without giving it another look, anyway. Come on!"

He helped March on with his light overcoat, and the little stir they made for their departure caught the notice of the old German; he looked up from his beer at them. March was more than ever impressed with something familiar in his face. In compensation for his prudence in regard to the Dryfooses he now indulged an impulse. He stepped across to where the old man sat, with his bald head shining like ivory under the gas-jet, and his fine patriarchal length of bearded mask taking picturesque lights and shadows, and put out his hand to him.

"Lindau! Isn't this Mr. Lindau?"

The old man lifted himself slowly to his feet with mechanical politeness, and cautiously took March's hand. "Yes, my name is Lindau," he said, slowly, while he scanned March's face. Then he broke into a long cry. "Ah-h-h-h-h, my dear poy! my gong friendt! my-my—Idt is Passil Marge, not zo? Ah, ha, ha, ha! How gladt I am to zee you! Why, I am gladt! And you rememberdt me? You remember Schiller, and Goethe, and Uhland? And Indianapolis? You still lif in Indianapolis? It sheers my hardt to zee you. But you are lidtle oldt, too? Tventy-five years makes a difference. Ah, I am gladt! Dell me, idt is Passil Marge, not zo?"

He looked anxiously into March's face, with a gentle smile of mixed hope and doubt, and March said: "As sure as it's Berthold Lindau, and I guess it's you. And you remember the old times? You were as much of a boy as I was, Lindau. Are you living in New York? Do you recollect how you tried to teach me to fence? I don't know how to this day, Lindau. How good you were, and how patient! Do you remember how we used to sit up in the little parlor back of your printing-office, and read Die Rauber and Die Theilung der Erde and Die Glocke? And Mrs. Lindau? Is she with—"

"Deadt—deadt long ago. Right after I got home from the war—tventy years ago. But tell me, you are married? Children? Yes! Goodt! And how oldt are you now?"

"It makes me seventeen to see you, Lindau, but I've got a son nearly as old."

"Ah, ha, ha! Goodt! And where do you lif?"

"Well, I'm just coming to live in New York," March said, looking over at Fulkerson, who had been watching his interview with the perfunctory smile of sympathy that people put on at the meeting of old friends. "I want to introduce you to my friend Mr. Fulkerson. He and I are going into a literary enterprise here."

“Ah! zo?” said the old man, with polite interest. He took Fulkerson’s proffered hand, and they all stood talking a few moments together.

Then Fulkerson said, with another look at his watch, “Well, March, we’re keeping Mr. Lindau from his dinner.”

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“Dinner!” cried the old man. “Idt’s better than breadt and meadt to see Mr. Marge!”

“I must be going, anyway,” said March. “But I must see you again soon, Lindau. Where do you live? I want a long talk.”

“And I. You will find me here at dinner-time.” said the old man. “It is the best place”; and March fancied him reluctant to give another address.

To cover his consciousness he answered, gayly: “Then, it’s ’auf wiedersehen’ with us. Well!”

“Also!” The old man took his hand, and made a mechanical movement with his mutilated arm, as if he would have taken it in a double clasp. He laughed at himself. “I wanted to gif you the other handt, too, but I gafe it to your gountry a goodt while ago.”

“To my country?” asked March, with a sense of pain, and yet lightly, as if it were a joke of the old man’s. “Your country, too, Lindau?”

The old man turned very grave, and said, almost coldly, “What gountry hass a poor man got, Mr. Marge?”

“Well, you ought to have a share in the one you helped to save for us rich men, Lindau,” March returned, still humoring the joke.

The old man smiled sadly, but made no answer as he sat down again.

“Seems to be a little soured,” said Fulkerson, as they went down the steps. He was one of those Americans whose habitual conception of life is unalloyed prosperity. When any experience or observation of his went counter to it he suffered—something like physical pain. He eagerly shrugged away the impression left upon his buoyancy by Lindau, and added to March’s continued silence, “What did I tell you about meeting every man in New York that you ever knew before?”

“I never expected to meat Lindau in the world again,” said March, more to himself than to Fulkerson. “I had an impression that he had been killed in the war. I almost wish he had been.”

“Oh, hello, now!” cried Fulkerson.

March laughed, but went on soberly: “He was a man predestined to adversity, though. When I first knew him out in Indianapolis he was starving along with a sick wife and a sick newspaper. It was before the Germans had come over to the Republicans generally, but Lindau was fighting the anti-slavery battle just as naturally at Indianapolis in 1858 as he fought behind the barricades at Berlin in 1848. And yet he was always such a gentle soul! And so generous! He taught me German for the love of it; he

wouldn't spoil his pleasure by taking a cent from me; he seemed to get enough out of my being young and enthusiastic, and out of prophesying great things for me. I wonder what the poor old fellow is doing here, with that one hand of his?"

"Not amassing a very 'handsome pittance,' I guess, as Artemus Ward would say," said Fulkerson, getting back some of his lightness. "There are lots of two-handed fellows in New York that are not doing much better, I guess. Maybe he gets some writing on the German papers."

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“I hope so. He’s one of the most accomplished men! He used to be a splendid musician—pianist—and knows eight or ten languages.”

“Well, it’s astonishing,” said Fulkerson, “how much lumber those Germans can carry around in their heads all their lives, and never work it up into anything. It’s a pity they couldn’t do the acquiring, and let out the use of their learning to a few bright Americans. We could make things hum, if we could arrange ’em that way.”

He talked on, unheeded by March, who went along half-consciously tormented by his lightness in the pensive memories the meeting with Lindau had called up. Was this all that sweet, unselfish nature could come to? What a homeless old age at that meagre Italian table d’hote, with that tall glass of beer for a half-hour’s oblivion! That shabby dress, that pathetic mutilation! He must have a pension, twelve dollars a month, or eighteen, from a grateful country. But what else did he eke out with?

“Well, here we are,” said Fulkerson, cheerily. He ran up the steps before March, and opened the carpenter’s temporary valve in the door frame, and led the way into a darkness smelling sweetly of unpainted wood-work and newly dried plaster; their feat slipped on shavings and grated on sand. He scratched a match, and found a candle, and then walked about up and down stairs, and lectured on the advantages of the place. He had fitted up bachelor apartments for himself in the house, and said that he was going to have a flat to let on the top floor. “I didn’t offer it to you because I supposed you’d be too proud to live over your shop; and it’s too small, anyway; only five rooms.”

“Yes, that’s too small,” said March, shirking the other point.

“Well, then, here’s the room I intend for your office,” said Fulkerson, showing him into a large back parlor one flight up. “You’ll have it quiet from the street noises here, and you can be at home or not, as you please. There’ll be a boy on the stairs to find out. Now, you see, this makes the Grosvenor Green flat practicable, if you want it.”

March felt the forces of fate closing about him and pushing him to a decision. He feebly fought them off till he could have another look at the flat. Then, baked and subdued still more by the unexpected presence of Mrs. Grosvenor Green herself, who was occupying it so as to be able to show it effectively, he took it. He was aware more than ever of its absurdities; he knew that his wife would never cease to hate it; but he had suffered one of those eclipses of the imagination to which men of his temperament are subject, and into which he could see no future for his desires. He felt a comfort in irretrievably committing himself, and exchanging the burden of indecision for the burden of responsibility.

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“I don’t know,” said Fulkerson, as they walked back to his hotel together, “but you might fix it up with that lone widow and her pretty daughter to take part of their house here.” He seemed to be reminded of it by the fact of passing the house, and March looked up at its dark front. He could not have told exactly why he felt a pang of remorse at the sight, and doubtless it was more regret for having taken the Grosvenor Green flat than for not having taken the widow’s rooms. Still, he could not forget her wistfulness when his wife and he were looking at them, and her disappointment when they decided against them. He had toyed, in, his after-talk to Mrs. March, with a sort of hypothetical obligation they had to modify their plans so as to meet the widow’s want of just such a family as theirs; they had both said what a blessing it would be to her, and what a pity they could not do it; but they had decided very distinctly that they could not. Now it seemed to him that they might; and he asked himself whether he had not actually departed as much from their ideal as if he had taken board with the widow. Suddenly it seemed to him that his wife asked him this, too.

“I reckon,” said Fulkerson, “that she could have arranged to give you your meals in your rooms, and it would have come to about the same thing as housekeeping.”

“No sort of boarding can be the same as house-keeping,” said March. “I want my little girl to have the run of a kitchen, and I want the whole family to have the moral effect of housekeeping. It’s demoralizing to board, in every way; it isn’t a home, if anybody else takes the care of it off your hands.”

“Well, I suppose so,” Fulkerson assented; but March’s words had a hollow ring to himself, and in his own mind he began to retaliate his dissatisfaction upon Fulkerson.

He parted from him on the usual terms outwardly, but he felt obscurely abused by Fulkerson in regard to the Dryfooses, father and son. He did not know but Fulkerson had taken an advantage of him in allowing him to commit himself to their enterprise with out fully and frankly telling him who and what his backer was; he perceived that with young Dryfoos as the publisher and Fulkerson as the general director of the paper there might be very little play for his own ideas of its conduct. Perhaps it was the hurt to his vanity involved by the recognition of this fact that made him forget how little choice he really had in the matter, and how, since he had not accepted the offer to edit the insurance paper, nothing remained for him but to close with Fulkerson. In this moment of suspicion and resentment he accused Fulkerson of hastening his decision in regard to the Grosvenor Green apartment; he now refused to consider it a decision, and said to himself that if he felt disposed to do so he would send Mrs. Green a note reversing it in the morning. But he put it all off till morning with his clothes, when he went to bed, he put off even

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thinking what his wife would say; he cast Fulkerson and his constructive treachery out of his mind, too, and invited into it some pensive reveries of the past, when he still stood at the parting of the ways, and could take this path or that. In his middle life this was not possible; he must follow the path chosen long, ago, wherever, it led. He was not master of himself, as he once seemed, but the servant of those he loved; if he could do what he liked, perhaps he might renounce this whole New York enterprise, and go off somewhere out of the reach of care; but he could not do what he liked, that was very clear. In the pathos of this conviction he dwelt compassionately upon the thought of poor old Lindau; he resolved to make him accept a handsome sum of money—more than he could spare, something that he would feel the loss of—in payment of the lessons in German and fencing given so long ago. At the usual rate for such lessons, his debt, with interest for twenty-odd years, would run very far into the hundreds. Too far, he perceived, for his wife's joyous approval; he determined not to add the interest; or he believed that Lindau would refuse the interest; he put a fine speech in his mouth, making him do so; and after that he got Lindau employment on 'Every Other Week,' and took care of him till he died.

Through all his melancholy and munificence he was aware of sordid anxieties for having taken the Grosvenor Green apartment. These began to assume visible, tangible shapes as he drowsed, and to became personal entities, from which he woke, with little starts, to a realization of their true nature, and then suddenly fell fast asleep.

In the accomplishment of the events which his reverie played with, there was much that retroactively stamped it with prophecy, but much also that was better than he forboded. He found that with regard to the Grosvenor Green apartment he had not allowed for his wife's willingness to get any sort of roof over her head again after the removal from their old home, or for the alleviations that grow up through mere custom. The practical workings of the apartment were not so bad; it had its good points, and after the first sensation of oppression in it they began to feel the convenience of its arrangement. They were at that time of life when people first turn to their children's opinion with deference, and, in the loss of keenness in their own likes and dislikes, consult the young preferences which are still so sensitive. It went far to reconcile Mrs. March to the apartment that her children were pleased with its novelty; when this wore off for them, she had herself begun to find it much more easily manageable than a house. After she had put away several barrels of gimcracks, and folded up screens and rugs and skins, and carried them all off to the little dark store-room which the flat developed, she perceived at once a roominess and coziness in it unsuspected before. Then, when people began to call, she had a pleasure, a superiority, in saying

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that it was a furnished apartment, and in disclaiming all responsibility for the upholstery and decoration. If March was by, she always explained that it was Mr. March's fancy, and amiably laughed it off with her callers as a mannish eccentricity. Nobody really seemed to think it otherwise than pretty; and this again was a triumph for Mrs. March, because it showed how inferior the New York taste was to the Boston taste in such matters.

March submitted silently to his punishment, and laughed with her before company at his own eccentricity. She had been so preoccupied with the adjustment of the family to its new quarters and circumstances that the time passed for laying his misgivings, if they were misgivings, about Fulkerson before her, and when an occasion came for expressing them they had themselves passed in the anxieties of getting forward the first number of 'Every Other Week.' He kept these from her, too, and the business that brought them to New York had apparently dropped into abeyance before the questions of domestic economy that presented and absented themselves. March knew his wife to be a woman of good mind and in perfect sympathy with him, but he understood the limitations of her perspective; and if he was not too wise, he was too experienced to intrude upon it any affairs of his till her own were reduced to the right order and proportion. It would have been folly to talk to her of Fulkerson's conjecturable uncandor while she was in doubt whether her cook would like the kitchen, or her two servants would consent to room together; and till it was decided what school Tom should go to, and whether Bella should have lessons at home or not, the relation which March was to bear to the Dryfooses, as owner and publisher, was not to be discussed with his wife. He might drag it in, but he was aware that with her mind distracted by more immediate interests he could not get from her that judgment, that reasoned divination, which he relied upon so much. She would try, she would do her best, but the result would be a view clouded and discolored by the effort she must make.

He put the whole matter by, and gave himself to the details of the work before him. In this he found not only escape, but reassurance, for it became more and more apparent that whatever was nominally the structure of the business, a man of his qualifications and his instincts could not have an insignificant place in it. He had also the consolation of liking his work, and of getting an instant grasp of it that grew constantly firmer and closer. The joy of knowing that he had not made a mistake was great. In giving rein to ambitions long forborne he seemed to get back to the youth when he had indulged them first; and after half a lifetime passed in pursuits alien to his nature, he was feeling the serene happiness of being mated through his work to his early love. From the outside the spectacle might have had its pathos, and it is not easy to justify such an experiment as he had made at his time of life, except upon the ground where he rested from its consideration—the ground of necessity.

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His work was more in his thoughts than himself, however; and as the time for the publication of the first number of his periodical came nearer, his cares all centred upon it. Without fixing any date, Fulkerson had announced it, and pushed his announcements with the shameless vigor of a born advertiser. He worked his interest with the press to the utmost, and paragraphs of a variety that did credit to his ingenuity were afloat everywhere. Some of them were speciously unfavorable in tone; they criticised and even ridiculed the principles on which the new departure in literary journalism was based. Others defended it; others yet denied that this rumored principle was really the principle. All contributed to make talk. All proceeded from the same fertile invention.

March observed with a degree of mortification that the talk was very little of it in the New York press; there the references to the novel enterprise were slight and cold. But Fulkerson said: "Don't mind that, old man. It's the whole country that makes or breaks a thing like this; New York has very little to do with it. Now if it were a play, it would be different. New York does make or break a play; but it doesn't make or break a book; it doesn't make or break a magazine. The great mass of the readers are outside of New York, and the rural districts are what we have got to go for. They don't read much in New York; they write, and talk about what they've written. Don't you worry."

The rumor of Fulkerson's connection with the enterprise accompanied many of the paragraphs, and he was able to stay March's thirst for employment by turning over to him from day to day heaps of the manuscripts which began to pour in from his old syndicate writers, as well as from adventurous volunteers all over the country. With these in hand March began practically to plan the first number, and to concrete a general scheme from the material and the experience they furnished. They had intended to issue the first number with the new year, and if it had been an affair of literature alone, it would have been very easy; but it was the art leg they limped on, as Fulkerson phrased it. They had not merely to deal with the question of specific illustrations for this article or that, but to decide the whole character of their illustrations, and first of all to get a design for a cover which should both ensnare the heedless and captivate the fastidious. These things did not come properly within March's province—-that had been clearly understood—and for a while Fulkerson tried to run the art leg himself. The phrase was again his, but it was simpler to make the phrase than to run the leg. The difficult generation, at once stiff-backed and slippery, with which he had to do in this endeavor, reduced even so buoyant an optimist to despair, and after wasting some valuable weeks in trying to work the artists himself, he determined to get an artist to work them. But what artist? It could not be a man with fixed reputation and a

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following: he would be too costly, and would have too many enemies among his brethren, even if he would consent to undertake the job. Fulkerson had a man in mind, an artist, too, who would have been the very thing if he had been the thing at all. He had talent enough, and his sort of talent would reach round the whole situation, but, as Fulkerson said, he was as many kinds of an ass as he was kinds of an artist.

PG EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Anticipative homesickness
Any sort of stuff was good enough to make a preacher out of
Appearance made him doubt their ability to pay so much
As much of his story as he meant to tell without prompting
Considerable comfort in holding him accountable
Extract what consolation lurks in the irreparable
Flavors not very sharply distinguished from one another
Handsome pittance
He expected to do the wrong thing when left to his own devices
Hypothetical difficulty
Never-blooming shrub
Poverty as hopeless as any in the world
Seeming interested in points necessarily indifferent to him
Servant of those he loved
Sigh with which ladies recognize one another's martyrdom
Sorry he hadn't asked more; that's human nature
That isn't very old—or not so old as it used to be
Tried to be homesick for them, but failed
Turn to their children's opinion with deference
Wish we didn't always recognize the facts as we do

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

By William Dean Howells

PART SECOND

I.

The evening when March closed with Mrs. Green's reduced offer, and decided to take her apartment, the widow whose lodgings he had rejected sat with her daughter in an upper room at the back of her house. In the shaded glow of the drop-light she was

sewing, and the girl was drawing at the same table. From time to time, as they talked, the girl lifted her head and tilted it a little on one side so as to get some desired effect of her work.

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

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

“The Messenger says they’ve had a sprinkling of snow.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Why? What harm does it do?”

“Harm?” echoed the mother.

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

It was what the Rev. Archibald Leighton had done with all the consumptive’s buoyancy. The morning he died he told them that now he had turned the point and was really going to get well. The cheerfulness was not only in his disease, but in his temperament. Its excess was always a little against him in his church work, and Mrs. Leighton was right enough in feeling that if it had not been for the ballast of her instinctive despondency he would have made shipwreck of such small chances of prosperity as befell him in life. It was not from him that his daughter got her talent, though he had left her his temperament intact of his widow’s legal thirds. He was one of those men of whom the country people say when he is gone that the woman gets along better without him. Mrs. Leighton had long eked out their income by taking a summer boarder or two, as a great favor, into her family; and when the greater need came, she frankly gave up her house to the summer-folks (as they call them in the country), and managed it for their comfort from the small quarter of it in which she shut herself up with her daughter.

The notion of shutting up is an exigency of the rounded period. The fact is, of course, that Alma Leighton was not shut up in any sense whatever. She was the pervading light, if not force, of the house. She was a good cook, and she managed the kitchen with the help of an Irish girl, while her mother looked after the rest of the housekeeping. But she was not systematic; she had inspiration but not discipline, and her mother mourned more over the days when Alma left the whole dinner to the Irish girl than she rejoiced in those when one of Alma’s great thoughts took form in a chicken-pie of incomparable savor or in a matchless pudding. The off-days came when her artistic nature was expressing itself in charcoal, for she drew to the admiration of all among the lady boarders who could not draw. The others had their reserves; they readily

conceded that Alma had genius, but they were sure she needed instruction. On the other hand, they were not so radical as to agree

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with the old painter who came every summer to paint the elms of the St. Barnaby meadows. He contended that she needed to be a man in order to amount to anything; but in this theory he was opposed by an authority, of his own sex, whom the lady sketchers believed to speak with more impartiality in a matter concerning them as much as Alma Leighton. He said that instruction would do, and he was not only, younger and handsomer, but he was fresher from the schools than old Harrington, who, even the lady sketchers could see, painted in an obsolescent manner. His name was Beaton—-Angus Beaton; but he was not Scotch, or not more Scotch than Mary Queen of Scots was. His father was a Scotchman, but Beaton was born in Syracuse, New York, and it had taken only three years in Paris to obliterate many traces of native and ancestral manner in him. He wore his black beard cut shorter than his mustache, and a little pointed; he stood with his shoulders well thrown back and with a lateral curve of his person when he talked about art, which would alone have carried conviction even if he had not had a thick, dark bang coming almost to the brows of his mobile gray eyes, and had not spoken English with quick, staccato impulses, so as to give it the effect of epigrammatic and sententious French. One of the ladies said that you always thought of him as having spoken French after it was over, and accused herself of wrong in not being able to feel afraid of him. None of the ladies was afraid of him, though they could not believe that he was really so deferential to their work as he seemed; and they knew, when he would not criticise Mr. Harrington's work, that he was just acting from principle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I don’t see anything to her. What’s she doing?”

“Oh, just being made love to, I suppose.”

“She’s perfectly insipid!”

“You’re awfully articulate, mamma! Now, if Mr. Wetmore were to criticise that picture he’d draw a circle round it in the air, and look at it through that, and tilt his head first on one side and then on the other, and then look at you, as if you were a figure in it, and then collapse awhile, and moan a little and gasp, ’Isn’t your young lady a little too-too—’ and then he’d try to get the word out of you, and groan and suffer some more; and you’d say, ‘She is, rather,’ and that would give him courage, and he’d say, ‘I don’t mean that she’s so very—’ ’Of course not.’ ‘You understand?’ ‘Perfectly. I see it myself, now.’ ’Well, then’——and he’d take your pencil and begin to draw—’I should give her a little more—Ah?’ ‘Yes, I see the difference.’—’You see the difference?’ And he’d go off to some one else, and you’d know that you’d been doing the wishy-washiest thing in the

world, though he hadn't spoken a word of criticism, and couldn't. But he wouldn't have noticed the expression at all; he'd have shown you where your drawing was bad. He doesn't care for what he calls the literature of a thing; he says that will take care of itself if the drawing's good. He doesn't like my doing these chic things; but I'm going to keep it up, for I think it's the nearest way to illustrating."

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

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

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

“It’s a little strange he doesn’t call.”

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

“What new model?”

“The one Mr. Wetmore was telling us about the old German; he’s splendid. He’s got the most beautiful head; just like the old masters’ things. He used to be Humphrey Williams’s model for his Biblical-pieces; but since he’s dead, the old man hardly gets anything to do. Mr. Wetmore says there isn’t anybody in the Bible that Williams didn’t paint him as. He’s the Law and the Prophets in all his Old Testament pictures, and he’s Joseph, Peter, Judas Iscariot, and the Scribes and Pharisees in the New.”

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

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

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

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

“And what do you believe?”

“Oh, I can express myself, too.”

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

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

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“I suppose he has his pension,” said Mrs. Leighton.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Thank you. Papa wasn’t quite a tombstone-cutter, mamma.”

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

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

“Why, no, Alma,” returned her mother.

“Well, then,” said Alma.

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

“That what, mamma?” demanded the girl.

“That he influenced us a great deal in coming—”

“He didn’t. If he dared to presume to think such a thing—”

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

“Drop us!” cried Alma, in a fury. “Oh!”

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

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

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

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

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

II.

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

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

“What shall we do?” asked Mrs. Leighton, helplessly.

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

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

“Oh, dear! what shall we do? Perhaps it’s a despatch.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Ah’m a hoasekeepah mahself,” Miss Woodburn joined in, “and Ah know ho’ to accyoant fo’ everything.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Why, he most be chomming,” said Miss Woodburn. “Perhaps Ah maght get the lessons for nothing from him. Well, Ah believe in my soul Ah’ll trah. Now ho’ did you begin? and ho’ do you expect to get anything oat of it?” She turned on Alma eyes brimming with a shrewd mixture of fun and earnest, and Alma made note of the fact that she had an

early nineteenth-century face, round, arch, a little coquettish, but extremely sensible and unspoiled-looking, such as used to be painted a good deal in miniature at that period; a tendency of her brown hair to twine and twist at the temples helped the effect; a high comb would have completed

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it, Alma felt, if she had her bonnet off. It was almost a Yankee country-girl type; but perhaps it appeared so to Alma because it was, like that, pure Anglo-Saxon. Alma herself, with her dull, dark skin, slender in figure, slow in speech, with aristocratic forms in her long hands, and the oval of her fine face pointed to a long chin, felt herself much more Southern in style than this blooming, bubbling, bustling Virginian.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"She doesn't know any more about art," said Alma, "than—nothing at all. But she's jolly and good-hearted. She praised everything that was bad in my sketches, and said she

was going to take lessons herself. When a person talks about taking lessons, as if they could learn it, you know where they belong artistically."

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

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

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

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“She talked as if they were poor; poo’ she called it.”

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

“Mamma! If that’s the way you’re going to act!”

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

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

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

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

III.

Arnus Beaton’s studio looked at first glance like many other painters’ studios. A gray wall quadrangularly vaulted to a large north light; casts of feet, hands, faces hung to nails about; prints, sketches in oil and water-color stuck here and there lower down; a rickety table, with paint and palettes and bottles of varnish and siccative tossed comfortlessly on it; an easel, with a strip of some faded mediaeval silk trailing from it; a lay figure simpering in incomplete nakedness, with its head on one side, and a stocking on one leg, and a Japanese dress dropped before it; dusty rugs and skins kicking over the varnished floor; canvases faced to the mop-board; an open trunk overflowing with costumes: these features one might notice anywhere. But, besides, there was a bookcase with an unusual number of books in it, and there was an open colonial writing-desk, claw-footed, brass-handled, and scutcheoned, with foreign periodicals—French and English—littering its leaf, and some pages of manuscript scattered among them. Above all, there was a sculptor’s revolving stand, supporting a bust which Beaton was modelling, with an eye fixed as simultaneously as possible on the clay and on the head of the old man who sat on the platform beside it.

Few men have been able to get through the world with several gifts to advantage in all; and most men seem handicapped for the race if they have more than one. But they are apparently immensely interested as well as distracted by them. When Beaton was writing, he would have agreed, up to a certain point, with any one who said literature was his proper expression; but, then, when he was painting, up to a certain point, he would have maintained against the world that he was a colorist, and supremely a colorist. At the certain point in either art he was apt to break away in a frenzy of disgust and wreak himself upon some other. In these moods he sometimes designed

elevations of buildings, very striking, very original, very chic, very everything but habitable. It was in this way that he had tried his hand on sculpture, which he had at first approached rather slightingly

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as a mere decorative accessory of architecture. But it had grown in his respect till he maintained that the accessory business ought to be all the other way: that temples should be raised to enshrine statues, not statues made to ornament temples; that was putting the cart before the horse with a vengeance. This was when he had carried a plastic study so far that the sculptors who saw it said that Beaton might have been an architect, but would certainly never be a sculptor. At the same time he did some hurried, nervous things that had a popular charm, and that sold in plaster reproductions, to the profit of another. Beaton justly despised the popular charm in these, as well as in the paintings he sold from time to time; he said it was flat burglary to have taken money for them, and he would have been living almost wholly upon the bounty of the old tombstone-cutter in Syracuse if it had not been for the syndicate letters which he supplied to Fulkerson for ten dollars a week.

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

One art trod upon another's heels with Beaton. The day before he had rushed upon canvas the conception of a picture which he said to himself was glorious, and to others (at the table d'hote of Maroni) was not bad. He had worked at it in a fury till the light failed him, and he execrated the dying day. But he lit his lamp and transferred the process of his thinking from the canvas to the opening of the syndicate letter which he knew Fulkerson would be coming for in the morning. He remained talking so long after dinner in the same strain as he had painted and written in that he could not finish his letter that night. The next morning, while he was making his tea for breakfast, the postman brought him a letter from his father enclosing a little check, and begging him with tender, almost deferential, urgence to come as lightly upon him as possible, for just now his expenses were very heavy. It brought tears of shame into Beaton's eyes—the fine, smouldering, floating eyes that many ladies admired, under the thick bang—and he said to himself that if he were half a man he would go home and go to work cutting gravestones in his father's shop. But he would wait, at least, to finish his picture; and as a sop to his conscience, to stay its immediate ravening, he resolved to finish that syndicate letter first, and borrow enough money from Fulkerson

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to be able to send his father's check back; or, if not that, then to return the sum of it partly in Fulkerson's check. While he still teemed with both of these good intentions the old man from whom he was modelling his head of Judas came, and Beaton saw that he must get through with him before he finished either the picture or the letter; he would have to pay him for the time, anyway. He utilized the remorse with which he was tingling to give his Judas an expression which he found novel in the treatment of that character—a look of such touching, appealing self-abhorrence that Beaton's artistic joy in it amounted to rapture; between the breathless moments when he worked in dead silence for an effect that was trying to escape him, he sang and whistled fragments of comic opera.

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

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

"Can you come to-morrow, Lindau?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“No; I don’t want your letter; I want you.”

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

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

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

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

Beaton shook his head. “I’m not your man, Fulkerson,” he said, compassionately. “You want a more practical hand, one that’s in touch with what’s going. I’m getting further and further away from this century and its claptrap. I don’t believe in your enterprise; I don’t respect it, and I won’t have anything to do with it. It would-choke me, that kind of thing.”

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

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

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

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

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

“No, you don’t.”

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

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

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

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

“Oh yes; I can understand that first-rate. I don’t want to buy you; I want to borrow you. It’s all right. See? Come round when you can; I’d like to introduce you to old March. That’s going to be our address.” He put a card on the table beside the envelope, and

Beaton allowed him to go without making him take the check back. He had remembered his father's plea;

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that unnerved him, and he promised himself again to return his father's poor little check and to work on that picture and give it to Fulkerson for the check he had left and for his back debts. He resolved to go to work on the picture at once; he had set his palette for it; but first he looked at Fulkerson's check. It was for only fifty dollars, and the canny Scotch blood in Beaton rebelled; he could not let this picture go for any such money; he felt a little like a man whose generosity has been trifled with. The conflict of emotions broke him up, and he could not work.

IV

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

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

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

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

“I believe so. They are in town—yes. I haven’t seen them.”

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

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“In West Eleventh Street somewhere. Miss Leighton is in Mr. Wetmore’s class.”

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

“Not at the moment. I can find out.”

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

“I don’t know,” said Beaton.

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

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

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

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

Beaton got himself away and out of the house with a much briefer adieu to the niece than he had meant to make. The patronizing compassion of Mrs. Horn for the Leightons filled him with indignation toward her, toward himself. There was no reason why he should not have ignored them as he had done; but there was a feeling. It was his nature to be careless, and he had been spoiled into recklessness; he neglected everybody, and only remembered them when it suited his whim or his convenience; but he fiercely resented the inattentions of others toward himself. He had no scruple about breaking an engagement or failing to keep an appointment; he made promises without thinking of their fulfilment, and not because he was a faithless person, but because he was imaginative, and expected at the time to do what he said, but was fickle, and so did not. As most of his shortcomings were of a society sort, no great harm was done to anybody else. He had contracted somewhat the circle of his acquaintance by what some people called his rudeness, but most people treated it as his oddity, and were patient with it. One lady said she valued his coming when he said he would come because it had the charm of the unexpected. “Only it shows that it isn’t always the unexpected that happens,” she explained.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Yes."

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

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

"Oh, they ought to get divorced."

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

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

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

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

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

“Thank you; no. I have an engagement.”

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

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

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

"What—who is it?"

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

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

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

V.

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

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

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

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

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

"In New York City!" she exclaimed.

“Surely, Alma,” said her mother, “you remember Mr. Beaton’s telling us he lived in New York.”

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

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

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

“I was at Munich, too. I met Wetmore there.”

“Oh, do you know Mr. Wetmore?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Oh no—”

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

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

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

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

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

“Yes, that was obvious in her case.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“He’s not required to make anything of me,” said Alma.

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

“Impossible to say, mamma.”

“Well, I don’t think it was quite right, Alma.”

“I’ll leave him to you the next time. Miss Woodburn said you were freezing him to death when I came down.”

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

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

VI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VII.

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

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

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

"I see," said Beaton.

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

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

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

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

"Did he take the books?"

"Yes, he took the books."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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“What old dynamiter of mine?”

“That old one-handed Dutchman—friend of your youth—the one we saw at Maroni’s—”

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

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

“Four or five, yes.”

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

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

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

“Yes, it will. I’ll look him up. Thank you for the suggestion, Fulkerson.”

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

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

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

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

“Mother isn’t very formal,” said the young man. “She would be very glad to see you.”

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

“Not much before Christmas. He’s trying to settle up some things at Moffitt.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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VII.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Well, Basil, I didn’t take the gimcrackery. That was your—”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“What?” asked the girl.

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

“I’m a very bad Bostonian, Mrs. Mandel. I suspect myself of preferring Verdi,” March answered.

Miss Dryfoos looked down at her fan again, and said, “I like ‘Trovatore’ the best.”

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

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

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

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

“Then I should go every night,” March said.

“Most of the ladies were low neck—”

March interposed, “Well, I shouldn’t go low-neck.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I don’t know that I understand you,” said March.

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

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

“The exhibition?” She looked at Mrs. Mandel.

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

“No; we haven’t been yet. Is it good?” She had turned to Mrs. March again.

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

“I don’t believe I care much about pictures,” said Christine. “I don’t understand them.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IX.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Well, as far as the kicking goes, yes.”

“And how is it with you, Mrs. March?”

“Oh, I want to flatter him up.”

“No; really? Why? Hold on! I’ve got the change.”

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

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

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

“Well, slightly, Mr. Fulkerson.”

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

“An ideal ’busted’?” March suggested.

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

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

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

“Oh! that’s tragical,” said March.

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

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

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

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

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

“Of yours?” cried Mrs. March.

“Of course!” exclaimed her husband.

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

“Can’t you imagine?” she answered, with a kindly, smile.

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

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

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

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“Yes, I can see,” said Mrs. March.

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

“Mr. March’s widow?” said his wife, looking at him with provisional severity.

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

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

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

“Poor things!” sighed Mrs. March. “I hope they’ll go back to the country.”

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

“Instantly.”

Fulkerson laughed out a tolerant incredulity.

X

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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“If you’ll come to St. Barnaby next summer, you shall have all the winter you want,” said Alma.

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

“Yes?” returned Alma, coolly. “I didn’t know you were so fond of the climate.”

“I never think of it as a climate. It’s a landscape. It doesn’t matter whether it’s hot or cold.”

“With the thermometer twenty below, you’d find that it mattered,” Alma persisted.

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

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

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

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

Alma kept her place, away from the table.

“Mah goodness! Ho’ exciting!” said Miss Woodburn. “May anybody look?”

“Everybody,” said Beaton.

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

“What lines are these?” Mrs. Leighton asked, pointing to Beaton’s pencil scratches.

“They’re suggestions of modifications,” he replied.

“I don’t think they improve it much. What do you think, Alma?”

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

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

“I supposed so,” said Alma, calmly.

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

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

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He did not unbend his dreamy gaze. “You’re quite right. The suggestions are stupid.”

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

“Ah nevah hoad anything lahke it!”

“And the design itself?” Beaton persisted.

“Oh, I’m not an art editor,” Alma answered, with a laugh of exultant evasion.

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

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

“Yarn, yarn, Colonel Woodburn!” Alma shouted. “You’re quite incorrigible. A spade is a spade!”

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

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

Beaton explained just how much.

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

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

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

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

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

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“Must you go?” she asked, in surprise.

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

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

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

“Oh, isn’t he choming!” Miss Woodburn whispered to Mrs. Leighton when Beaton left the room.

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

“Why?” He looked at her in gloomy hesitation.

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

Alma interrupted him. “Has it been accepted?”

“It will be accepted, if you will let it.”

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

“Purely. Good-night.”

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

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

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

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

"Surely not, my dear young lady."

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

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

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

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

“Oh, mah goodness! Didn’t you say, sir, that Mr. Beaton had bad manners?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“The system won’t accept destruction on any othah tomes,” said Miss Woodburn, demurely.

XI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He would like that. He would get two paragraphs out of the fact, and your name would go into the 'Literary Notes' of all the newspapers."

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

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“Then you’d better not say anything about ‘Every Other Week’. Fulkerson is preternaturally unscrupulous.”

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

“Why, I thought you liked Bevans’s novels?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I should imagine,” March assented.

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

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

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

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

“Well written?”

“I reckon so; I don’t know. The Colonel read it mighty eloquently.”

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

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

“Well, try it. I’ve a notion it might be a curious thing.”

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

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

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

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

“Well, that’s right. We want the first number to be the keynote in every way.”

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

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

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

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

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He jumped to his feet and shouted, “March, I’ll do it!”

“What?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Well, I shouldn’t mind your killing Beaton,” said March, tranquilly, as he went out.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

XII.

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

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

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

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

> "Braver Mann, er schafft mir zu essen."

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

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

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“Yes. I have chust gome here,” said Lindau. “Idt is not very coy, Neigh?”

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

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

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

“Pusiness?” Lindau lifted his eyebrows. “You gome on pusiness?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

aristograt. I thought I was nodt like these beople down here, when I gome down once to look aroundt; I thought I must be somethings else, and zo I zaid I better take myself in time, and I gome here among my brothers—the becears and the thiefs!" A noise made itself heard in the next room, as if the door were furtively opened, and a faint sound of tiptoeing and of hands clawing on a table.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I will come,” said Lindau, gently.

“Shall I give you your book?” asked March.

“No; I gidt oap bretty soon.”

“And—and—can you dress yourself?”

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

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

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

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

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

XIII.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

XIV.

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

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

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

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

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“What do you mean, Fulkerson?” March demanded, sternly.

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

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

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

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

“Didn’t I tell you so?” Fulkerson persisted.

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

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

“Oh yes,” said March, with eager meekness, “it’s Beaton that’s done it.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"No! Truly?"

He explained, and she began to spend the divvy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Why, I don't know—If you object—?

“I do, sir—decidedly,” said the Colonel.

“Then that settles it, of course,—I only meant—”

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

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

“This sketch belongs to me,” Alma interposed. “I’m not going to let it be printed.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“It’s a question of his courage, then?” said Alma.

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

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

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

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

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

“Poo’ Mr. Fulkerson! Poo’ Mr. Fulkerson! Papa thoat you wanted him to go.”

“Wanted him to go?” repeated Fulkerson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Why, Ah thoat you lahked to toak about the staff of yo’ magazine,” said Miss Woodburn.

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

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

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

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

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

“Ah think that your whole publication revolves aroand the Leighton family,” said Miss Woodburn.

“That’s pretty much so,” Fulkerson admitted. “Anyhow, the publisher seems disposed to do so.”

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

“It is.”

“Oh!”

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

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

Miss Woodburn asked, “And is Mr. Dryfoos senio’ anything like ouah Mr. Dryfoos?”

“Not the least.”

“But he’s jost as exemplary?”

“Yes; in his way.”

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

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

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

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

“Mah goodness! And who’ll the head of the publishing department represent?”

“He can represent you,” said Alma.

“Well, Ah want to be represented, someho’.”

“We’ll have the banquet the night before you appear on the cover of our fourth number,” said Fulkerson.

“Ah thoat that was doubly fo’bidden,” said Miss Woodburn. “By the stern parent and the envious awtust.”

“We’ll get Beaton to get round them, somehow. I guess we can trust him to manage that.”

Mrs. Leighton sighed her resentment of the implication.

“I always feel that Mr. Beaton doesn’t do himself justice,” she began.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I don’t.”

“You don’t? You know better than that. You know that, you did care for him.”

“Oh! that’s a very different thing. That’s a thing that can be got over.”

“Got over!” repeated Mrs. Leighton, aghast.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“He has never said so.”

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

“I can’t very well refuse him till he does say so.”

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

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

“Alma!”

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

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

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

PG EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS:

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

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

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

By William Dean Howells

PART THIRD

I.

The scheme of a banquet to celebrate the initial success of 'Every Other Week' expanded in Fulkerson's fancy into a series. Instead of the publishing and editorial force, with certain of the more representative artists and authors sitting down to a modest supper in Mrs. Leighton's parlors, he conceived of a dinner at Delmonico's, with the principal literary and artistic, people throughout the country as guests, and an inexhaustible hospitality to reporters and correspondents, from whom paragraphs, prophetic and historic, would flow weeks before and after the

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first of the series. He said the thing was a new departure in magazines; it amounted to something in literature as radical as the American Revolution in politics: it was the idea of self government in the arts; and it was this idea that had never yet been fully developed in regard to it. That was what must be done in the speeches at the dinner, and the speeches must be reported. Then it would go like wildfire. He asked March whether he thought Mr. Depew could be got to come; Mark Twain, he was sure, would come; he was a literary man. They ought to invite Mr. Evarts, and the Cardinal and the leading Protestant divines. His ambition stopped at nothing, nothing but the question of expense; there he had to wait the return of the elder Dryfoos from the West, and Dryfoos was still delayed at Moffitt, and Fulkerson openly confessed that he was afraid he would stay there till his own enthusiasm escaped in other activities, other plans.

Fulkerson was as little likely as possible to fall under a superstitious subjection to another man; but March could not help seeing that in this possible measure Dryfoos was Fulkerson's fetish. He did not revere him, March decided, because it was not in Fulkerson's nature to revere anything; he could like and dislike, but he could not respect. Apparently, however, Dryfoos daunted him somehow; and besides the homage which those who have not pay to those who have, Fulkerson rendered Dryfoos the tribute of a feeling which March could only define as a sort of bewilderment. As well as March could make out, this feeling was evoked by the spectacle of Dryfoos's unfailing luck, which Fulkerson was fond of dazzling himself with. It perfectly consisted with a keen sense of whatever was sordid and selfish in a man on whom his career must have had its inevitable effect. He liked to philosophize the case with March, to recall Dryfoos as he was when he first met him still somewhat in the sap, at Moffitt, and to study the processes by which he imagined him to have dried into the hardened speculator, without even the pretence to any advantage but his own in his ventures. He was aware of painting the character too vividly, and he warned March not to accept it exactly in those tints, but to subdue them and shade it for himself. He said that where his advantage was not concerned, there was ever so much good in Dryfoos, and that if in some things he had grown inflexible, he had expanded in others to the full measure of the vast scale on which he did business. It had seemed a little odd to March that a man should put money into such an enterprise as 'Every Other Week' and go off about other affairs, not only without any sign of anxiety, but without any sort of interest. But Fulkerson said that was the splendid side of Dryfoos. He had a courage, a magnanimity, that was equal to the strain of any such uncertainty. He had faced the music once for all, when he asked Fulkerson what the thing would cost in the different degrees of potential

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failure; and then he had gone off, leaving everything to Fulkerson and the younger Dryfoos, with the instruction simply to go ahead and not bother him about it. Fulkerson called that pretty tall for an old fellow who used to bewail the want of pigs and chickens to occupy his mind. He alleged it as another proof of the versatility of the American mind, and of the grandeur of institutions and opportunities that let every man grow to his full size, so that any man in America could run the concern if necessary. He believed that old Dryfoos could step into Bismarck's shoes and run the German Empire at ten days' notice, or about as long as it would take him to go from New York to Berlin. But Bismarck would not know anything about Dryfoos's plans till Dryfoos got ready to show his hand. Fulkerson himself did not pretend to say what the old man had been up to since he went West. He was at Moffitt first, and then he was at Chicago, and then he had gone out to Denver to look after some mines he had out there, and a railroad or two; and now he was at Moffitt again. He was supposed to be closing up his affairs there, but nobody could say.

Fulkerson told March the morning after Dryfoos returned that he had not only not pulled out at Moffitt, but had gone in deeper, ten times deeper than ever. He was in a royal good-humor, Fulkerson reported, and was going to drop into the office on his way up from the Street (March understood Wall Street) that afternoon. He was tickled to death with 'Every Other Week' so far as it had gone, and was anxious to pay his respects to the editor.

March accounted for some rhetoric in this, but let it flatter him, and prepared himself for a meeting about which he could see that Fulkerson was only less nervous than he had shown himself about the public reception of the first number. It gave March a disagreeable feeling of being owned and of being about to be inspected by his proprietor; but he fell back upon such independence as he could find in the thought of those two thousand dollars of income beyond the caprice of his owner, and maintained an outward serenity.

He was a little ashamed afterward of the resolution it had cost him to do so. It was not a question of Dryfoos's physical presence: that was rather effective than otherwise, and carried a suggestion of moneyed indifference to convention in the gray business suit of provincial cut, and the low, wide-brimmed hat of flexible black felt. He had a stick with an old-fashioned top of buckhorn worn smooth and bright by the palm of his hand, which had not lost its character in fat, and which had a history of former work in its enlarged knuckles, though it was now as soft as March's, and must once have been small even for a man of Mr. Dryfoos's stature; he was below the average size. But what struck March was the fact that Dryfoos seemed furtively conscious of being a country person, and of being aware that in their meeting he was to be tried by other tests than those

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which would have availed him as a shrewd speculator. He evidently had some curiosity about March, as the first of his kind whom he bad encountered; some such curiosity as the country school trustee feels and tries to hide in the presence of the new schoolmaster. But the whole affair was, of course, on a higher plane; on one side Dryfoos was much more a man of the world than March was, and he probably divined this at once, and rested himself upon the fact in a measure. It seemed to be his preference that his son should introduce them, for he came upstairs with Conrad, and they had fairly made acquaintance before Fulkerson joined them.

Conrad offered to leave them at once, but his father made him stay. "I reckon Mr. March and I haven't got anything so private to talk about that we want to keep it from the other partners. Well, Mr. March, are you getting used to New York yet? It takes a little time."

"Oh yes. But not so much time as most places. Everybody belongs more or less in New York; nobody has to belong here altogether."

"Yes, that is so. You can try it, and go away if you don't like it a good deal easier than you could from a smaller place. Wouldn't make so much talk, would it?" He glanced at March with a jocose light in his shrewd eyes. "That is the way I feel about it all the time: just visiting. Now, it wouldn't be that way in Boston, I reckon?"

"You couldn't keep on visiting there your whole life," said March.

Dryfoos laughed, showing his lower teeth in a way that was at once simple and fierce. "Mr. Fulkerson didn't hardly know as he could get you to leave. I suppose you got used to it there. I never been in your city."

"I had got used to it; but it was hardly my city, except by marriage. My wife's a Bostonian."

"She's been a little homesick here, then," said Dryfoos, with a smile of the same quality as his laugh.

"Less than I expected," said March. "Of course, she was very much attached to our old home."

"I guess my wife won't ever get used to New York," said Dryfoos, and he drew in his lower lip with a sharp sigh. "But my girls like it; they're young. You never been out our way yet, Mr. March? Out West?"

"Well, only for the purpose of being born, and brought up. I used to live in Crawfordsville, and then Indianapolis."

“Indianapolis is bound to be a great place,” said Dryfoos. “I remember now, Mr. Fulkerson told me you was from our State.” He went on to brag of the West, as if March were an Easterner and had to be convinced. “You ought to see all that country. It’s a great country.”

“Oh yes,” said March, “I understand that.” He expected the praise of the great West to lead up to some comment on ‘Every Other Week’; and there was abundant suggestion of that topic in the manuscripts, proofs of letter-press and illustrations, with advance copies of the latest number strewn over his table.

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But Dryfoos apparently kept himself from looking at these things. He rolled his head about on his shoulders to take in the character of the room, and said to his son, “You didn’t change the woodwork, after all.”

“No; the architect thought we had better let it be, unless we meant to change the whole place. He liked its being old-fashioned.”

“I hope you feel comfortable here, Mr. March,” the old man said, bringing his eyes to bear upon him again after their tour of inspection.

“Too comfortable for a working-man,” said March, and he thought that this remark must bring them to some talk about his work, but the proprietor only smiled again.

“I guess I sha’n’t lose much on this house,” he returned, as if musing aloud. “This down-town property is coming up. Business is getting in on all these side streets. I thought I paid a pretty good price for it, too.” He went on to talk of real estate, and March began to feel a certain resentment at his continued avoidance of the only topic in which they could really have a common interest. “You live down this way somewhere, don’t you?” the old man concluded.

“Yes. I wished to be near my work.” March was vexed with himself for having recurred to it; but afterward he was not sure but Dryfoos shared his own diffidence in the matter, and was waiting for him to bring it openly into the talk. At times he seemed wary and masterful, and then March felt that he was being examined and tested; at others so simple that March might well have fancied that he needed encouragement, and desired it. He talked of his wife and daughters in a way that invited March to say friendly things of his family, which appeared to give the old man first an undue pleasure and then a final distrust. At moments he turned, with an effect of finding relief in it, to his son and spoke to him across March of matters which he was unacquainted with; he did not seem aware that this was rude, but the young man must have felt it so; he always brought the conversation back, and once at some cost to himself when his father made it personal.

“I want to make a regular New York business man out of that fellow,” he said to March, pointing at Conrad with his stick. “You s’pose I’m ever going to do it?”

“Well, I don’t know,” said March, trying to fall in with the joke. “Do you mean nothing but a business man?”

The old man laughed at whatever latent meaning he fancied in this, and said: “You think he would be a little too much for me there? Well, I’ve seen enough of ’em to know it don’t always take a large pattern of a man to do a large business. But I want him to get the business training, and then if he wants to go into something else he knows what the world is, anyway. Heigh?”

“Oh yes!” March assented, with some compassion for the young man reddening patiently under his father’s comment.

Dryfoos went on as if his son were not in hearing. “Now that boy wanted to be a preacher. What does a preacher know about the world he preaches against when he’s been brought up a preacher? He don’t know so much as a bad little boy in his Sunday-school; he knows about as much as a girl. I always told him, You be a man first, and then you be a preacher, if you want to. Heigh?”

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“Precisely.” March began to feel some compassion for himself in being witness of the young fellow’s discomfort under his father’s homily.

“When we first come to New York, I told him, Now here’s your chance to see the world on a big scale. You know already what work and saving and steady habits and sense will bring a man, to; you don’t want to go round among the rich; you want to go among the poor, and see what laziness and drink and dishonesty and foolishness will bring men to. And I guess he knows, about as well as anybody; and if he ever goes to preaching he’ll know what he’s preaching about.” The old man smiled his fierce, simple smile, and in his sharp eyes March fancied contempt of the ambition he had balked in his son. The present scene must have been one of many between them, ending in meek submission on the part of the young man, whom his father, perhaps without realizing his cruelty, treated as a child. March took it hard that he should be made to suffer in the presence of a co-ordinate power like himself, and began to dislike the old man out of proportion to his offence, which might have been mere want of taste, or an effect of mere embarrassment before him. But evidently, whatever rebellion his daughters had carried through against him, he had kept his dominion over this gentle spirit unbroken. March did not choose to make any response, but to let him continue, if he would, entirely upon his own impulse.

II.

A silence followed, of rather painful length. It was broken by the cheery voice of Fulkerson, sent before him to herald Fulkerson’s cheery person. “Well, I suppose you’ve got the glorious success of ‘Every Other Week’ down pretty cold in your talk by this time. I should have been up sooner to join you, but I was nipping a man for the last page of the cover. I guess we’ll have to let the Muse have that for an advertisement instead of a poem the next time, March. Well, the old gentleman given you boys your scolding?” The person of Fulkerson had got into the room long before he reached this question, and had planted itself astride a chair. Fulkerson looked over the chairback, now at March, and now at the elder Dryfoos as he spoke.

March answered him. “I guess we must have been waiting for you, Fulkerson. At any rate, we hadn’t got to the scolding yet.”

“Why, I didn’t suppose Mr. Dryfoos could ‘a’ held in so long. I understood he was awful mad at the way the thing started off, and wanted to give you a piece of his mind, when he got at you. I inferred as much from a remark that he made.” March and Dryfoos looked foolish, as men do when made the subject of this sort of merry misrepresentation.

“I reckon my scolding will keep awhile yet,” said the old man, dryly.

“Well, then, I guess it’s a good chance to give Mr. Dryfoos an idea of what we’ve really done—just while we’re resting, as Artemus Ward says. Heigh, March?”

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“I will let you blow the trumpet, Fulkerson. I think it belongs strictly to the advertising department,” said March. He now distinctly resented the old man’s failure to say anything to him of the magazine; he made his inference that it was from a suspicion of his readiness to presume upon a recognition of his share in the success, and he was determined to second no sort of appeal for it.

“The advertising department is the heart and soul of every business,” said Fulkerson, hardily, “and I like to keep my hand in with a little practise on the trumpet in private. I don’t believe Mr. Dryfoos has got any idea of the extent of this thing. He’s been out among those Rackensackens, where we were all born, and he’s read the notices in their seven by nine dailies, and he’s seen the thing selling on the cars, and he thinks he appreciates what’s been done. But I should just like to take him round in this little old metropolis awhile, and show him ’Every Other Week’ on the centre tables of the millionaires—the Vanderbilts and the Astors—and in the homes of culture and refinement everywhere, and let him judge for himself. It’s the talk of the clubs and the dinner-tables; children cry for it; it’s the Castoria of literature and the Pearline of art, the ’Won’t-be-happy-till-he-gets-it of every en lightened man, woman, and child in this vast city. I knew we could capture the country; but, my goodness! I didn’t expect to have New York fall into our hands at a blow. But that’s just exactly what New York has done. Every Other Week supplies the long-felt want that’s been grinding round in New York and keeping it awake nights ever since the war. It’s the culmination of all the high and ennobling ideals of the past.”

“How much,” asked Dryfoos, “do you expect to get out of it the first year, if it keeps the start it’s got?”

“Comes right down to business, every time!” said Fulkerson, referring the characteristic to March with a delighted glance. “Well, sir, if everything works right, and we get rain enough to fill up the springs, and it isn’t a grasshopper year, I expect to clear above all expenses something in the neighborhood of twenty-five thousand dollars.”

“Humph! And you are all going to work a year—editor, manager, publisher, artists, writers, printers, and the rest of ’em—to clear twenty-five thousand dollars?—I made that much in half a day in Moffitt once. I see it made in half a minute in Wall Street, sometimes.” The old man presented this aspect of the case with a good-natured contempt, which included Fulkerson and his enthusiasm in an obvious liking.

His son suggested, “But when we make that money here, no one loses it.”

“Can you prove that?” His father turned sharply upon him. “Whatever is won is lost. It’s all a game; it don’t make any difference what you bet on. Business is business, and a business man takes his risks with his eyes open.”

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“Ah, but the glory!” Fulkerson insinuated with impudent persiflage. “I hadn’t got to the glory yet, because it’s hard to estimate it; but put the glory at the lowest figure, Mr. Dryfoos, and add it to the twenty-five thousand, and you’ve got an annual income from ’Every Other Week’ of dollars enough to construct a silver railroad, double-track, from this office to the moon. I don’t mention any of the sister planets because I like to keep within bounds.”

Dryfoos showed his lower teeth for pleasure in Fulkerson’s fooling, and said, “That’s what I like about you, Mr. Fulkerson—you always keep within bounds.”

“Well, I ain’t a shrinking Boston violet, like March, here. More sunflower in my style of diffidence; but I am modest, I don’t deny it,” said Fulkerson. “And I do hate to have a thing overstated.”

“And the glory—you do really think there’s something in the glory that pays?”

“Not a doubt of it! I shouldn’t care for the paltry return in money,” said Fulkerson, with a burlesque of generous disdain, “if it wasn’t for the glory along with it.”

“And how should you feel about the glory, if there was no money along with it?”

“Well, sir, I’m happy to say we haven’t come to that yet.”

“Now, Conrad, here,” said the old man, with a sort of pathetic rancor, “would rather have the glory alone. I believe he don’t even care much for your kind of glory, either, Mr. Fulkerson.”

Fulkerson ran his little eyes curiously over Conrad’s face and then March’s, as if searching for a trace there of something gone before which would enable him to reach Dryfoos’s whole meaning. He apparently resolved to launch himself upon conjecture. “Oh, well, we know how Conrad feels about the things of this world, anyway. I should like to take ’em on the plane of another sphere, too, sometimes; but I noticed a good while ago that this was the world I was born into, and so I made up my mind that I would do pretty much what I saw the rest of the folks doing here below. And I can’t see but what Conrad runs the thing on business principles in his department, and I guess you’ll find it so if you look into it. I consider that we’re a whole team and big dog under the wagon with you to draw on for supplies, and March, here, at the head of the literary business, and Conrad in the counting-room, and me to do the heavy lying in the advertising part. Oh, and Beaton, of course, in the art. I ’most forgot Beaton—Hamlet with Hamlet left out.”

Dryfoos looked across at his son. “Wasn’t that the fellow’s name that was there last night?”

“Yes,” said Conrad.

The old man rose. “Well, I reckon I got to be going. You ready to go up-town, Conrad?”

“Well, not quite yet, father.”

The old man shook hands with March, and went downstairs, followed by his son.

Fulkerson remained.

“He didn’t jump at the chance you gave him to compliment us all round, Fulkerson,” said March, with a smile not wholly of pleasure.

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Fulkerson asked, with as little joy in the grin he had on, “Didn’t he say anything to you before I came in?”

“Not a word.”

“Dogged if I know what to make of it,” sighed Fulkerson, “but I guess he’s been having a talk with Conrad that’s soured on him. I reckon maybe he came back expecting to find that boy reconciled to the glory of this world, and Conrad’s showed himself just as set against it as ever.”

“It might have been that,” March admitted, pensively. “I fancied something of the kind myself from words the old man let drop.”

Fulkerson made him explain, and then he said:

“That’s it, then; and it’s all right. Conrad ’ll come round in time; and all we’ve got to do is to have patience with the old man till he does. I know he likes you.” Fulkerson affirmed this only interrogatively, and looked so anxiously to March for corroboration that March laughed.

“He dissembled his love,” he said; but afterward, in describing to his wife his interview with Mr. Dryfoos, he was less amused with this fact.

When she saw that he was a little cast down by it, she began to encourage him. “He’s just a common, ignorant man, and probably didn’t know how to express himself. You may be perfectly sure that he’s delighted with the success of the magazine, and that he understands as well as you do that he owes it all to you.”

“Ah, I’m not so sure. I don’t believe a man’s any better for having made money so easily and rapidly as Dryfoos has done, and I doubt if he’s any wiser. I don’t know just the point he’s reached in his evolution from grub to beetle, but I do know that so far as it’s gone the process must have involved a bewildering change of ideals and criterions. I guess he’s come to despise a great many things that he once respected, and that intellectual ability is among them—what we call intellectual ability. He must have undergone a moral deterioration, an atrophy of the generous instincts, and I don’t see why it shouldn’t have reached his mental make-up. He has sharpened, but he has narrowed; his sagacity has turned into suspicion, his caution to meanness, his courage to ferocity. That’s the way I philosophize a man of Dryfoos’s experience, and I am not very proud when I realize that such a man and his experience are the ideal and ambition of most Americans. I rather think they came pretty near being mine, once.”

“No, dear, they never did,” his wife protested.

“Well, they’re not likely to be in the future. The Dryfoos feature of ‘Every Other Week’ is thoroughly distasteful to me.”

“Why, but he hasn’t really got anything to do with it, has he, beyond furnishing the money?”

“That’s the impression that Fulkerson has allowed us to get. But the man that holds the purse holds the reins. He may let us guide the horse, but when he likes he can drive. If we don’t like his driving, then we can get down.”

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Mrs. March was less interested in this figure of speech than in the personal aspects involved. “Then you think Mr. Fulkerson has deceived you?”

“Oh no!” said her husband, laughing. “But I think he has deceived himself, perhaps.”

“How?” she pursued.

“He may have thought he was using Dryfoos, when Dryfoos was using him, and he may have supposed he was not afraid of him when he was very much so. His courage hadn’t been put to the test, and courage is a matter of proof, like proficiency on the fiddle, you know: you can’t tell whether you’ve got it till you try.”

“Nonsense! Do you mean that he would ever sacrifice you to Mr. Dryfoos?”

“I hope he may not be tempted. But I’d rather be taking the chances with Fulkerson alone than with Fulkerson and Dryfoos to back him. Dryfoos seems, somehow, to take the poetry and the pleasure out of the thing.”

Mrs. March was a long time silent. Then she began, “Well, my dear, I never wanted to come to New York—”

“Neither did I,” March promptly put in.

“But now that we’re here,” she went on, “I’m not going to have you letting every little thing discourage you. I don’t see what there was in Mr. Dryfoos’s manner to give you any anxiety. He’s just a common, stupid, inarticulate country person, and he didn’t know how to express himself, as I said in the beginning, and that’s the reason he didn’t say anything.”

“Well, I don’t deny you’re right about it.”

“It’s dreadful,” his wife continued, “to be mixed up with such a man and his family, but I don’t believe he’ll ever meddle with your management, and, till he does, all you need do is to have as little to do with him as possible, and go quietly on your own way.”

“Oh, I shall go on quietly enough,” said March. “I hope I sha’n’t begin going stealthily.”

“Well, my dear,” said Mrs. March, “just let me know when you’re tempted to do that. If ever you sacrifice the smallest grain of your honesty or your self-respect to Mr. Dryfoos, or anybody else, I will simply renounce you.”

“In view of that I’m rather glad the management of ‘Every Other Week’ involves tastes and not convictions,” said March.

III.

That night Dryfoos was wakened from his after-dinner nap by the sound of gay talk and nervous giggling in the drawing-room. The talk, which was Christine's, and the giggling, which was Mela's, were intershot with the heavier tones of a man's voice; and Dryfoos lay awhile on the leathern lounge in his library, trying to make out whether he knew the voice. His wife sat in a deep chair before the fire, with her eyes on his face, waiting for him to wake.

"Who is that out there?" he asked, without opening his eyes.

"Indeed, indeed, I don't know, Jacob," his wife answered. "I reckon it's just some visitor of the girls'."

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“Was I snoring?”

“Not a bit. You was sleeping as quiet! I did hate to have ’em wake you, and I was just goin’ out to shoo them. They’ve been playin’ something, and that made them laugh.”

“I didn’t know but I had snored,” said the old man, sitting up.

“No,” said his wife. Then she asked, wistfully, “Was you out at the old place, Jacob?”

“Yes.”

“Did it look natural?”

“Yes; mostly. They’re sinking the wells down in the woods pasture.”

“And—the children’s graves?”

“They haven’t touched that part. But I reckon we got to have ’em moved to the cemetery. I bought a lot.”

The old woman began softly to weep. “It does seem too hard that they can’t be let to rest in peace, pore little things. I wanted you and me to lay there, too, when our time come, Jacob. Just there, back o’ the beehives and under them shoomakes—my, I can see the very place! And I don’t believe I’ll ever feel at home anywheres else. I woon’t know where I am when the trumpet sounds. I have to think before I can tell where the east is in New York; and what if I should git faced the wrong way when I raise? Jacob, I wonder you could sell it!” Her head shook, and the firelight shone on her tears as she searched the folds of her dress for her pocket.

A peal of laughter came from the drawing-room, and then the sound of chords struck on the piano.

“Hush! Don’t you cry, ’Liz’beth!” said Dryfoos. “Here; take my handkerchief. I’ve got a nice lot in the cemetery, and I’m goin’ to have a monument, with two lambs on it—like the one you always liked so much. It ain’t the fashion, any more, to have family buryin’ grounds; they’re collectin’ ’em into the cemeteries, all round.”

“I reckon I got to bear it,” said his wife, muffling her face in his handkerchief. “And I suppose the Lord kin find me, wherever I am. But I always did want to lay just there. You mind how we used to go out and set there, after milkin’, and watch the sun go down, and talk about where their angels was, and try to figger it out?”

“I remember, ’Liz’beth.”

The man's voice in the drawing-room sang a snatch of French song, insolent, mocking, salient; and then Christine's attempted the same strain, and another cry of laughter from Mela followed.

"Well, I always did expect to lay there. But I reckon it's all right. It won't be a great while, now, anyway. Jacob, I don't believe I'm a-goin' to live very long. I know it don't agree with me here."

"Oh, I guess it does, 'Liz'beth. You're just a little pulled down with the weather. It's coming spring, and you feel it; but the doctor says you're all right. I stopped in, on the way up, and he says so."

"I reckon he don't know everything," the old woman persisted: "I've been runnin' down ever since we left Moffitt, and I didn't feel any too well there, even. It's a very strange thing, Jacob, that the richer you git, the less you ain't able to stay where you want to, dead or alive."

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“It’s for the children we do it,” said Dryfoos. “We got to give them their chance in the world.”

“Oh, the world! They ought to bear the yoke in their youth, like we done. I know it’s what Coonrod would like to do.”

Dryfoos got upon his feet. “If Coonrod ’ll mind his own business, and do what I want him to, he’ll have yoke enough to bear.” He moved from his wife, without further effort to comfort her, and pottered heavily out into the dining-room. Beyond its obscurity stretched the glitter of the deep drawing-room. His feet, in their broad; flat slippers, made no sound on the dense carpet, and he came unseen upon the little group there near the piano. Mela perched upon the stool with her back to the keys, and Beaton bent over Christine, who sat with a banjo in her lap, letting him take her hands and put them in the right place on the instrument. Her face was radiant with happiness, and Mela was watching her with foolish, unselfish pleasure in her bliss.

There was nothing wrong in the affair to a man of Dryfoos’s traditions and perceptions, and if it had been at home in the farm sitting-room, or even in his parlor at Moffitt, he would not have minded a young man’s placing his daughter’s hands on a banjo, or even holding them there; it would have seemed a proper, attention from him if he was courting her. But here, in such a house as this, with the daughter of a man who had made as much money as he had, he did not know but it was a liberty. He felt the angry doubt of it which beset him in regard to so many experiences of his changed life; he wanted to show his sense of it, if it was a liberty, but he did not know how, and he did not know that it was so. Besides, he could not help a touch of the pleasure in Christine’s happiness which Mela showed; and he would have gone back to the library, if he could, without being discovered.

But Beaton had seen him, and Dryfoos, with a nonchalant nod to the young man, came forward. “What you got there, Christine?”

“A banjo,” said the girl, blushing in her father’s presence.

Mela gurgled. “Mr. Beaton is learnun’ her the first position.”

Beaton was not embarrassed. He was in evening dress, and his face, pointed with its brown beard, showed extremely handsome above the expanse of his broad, white shirt-front. He gave back as nonchalant a nod as he had got, and, without further greeting to Dryfoos, he said to Christine: “No, no. You must keep your hand and arm so.” He held them in position. “There! Now strike with your right hand. See?”

“I don’t believe I can ever learn,” said the girl, with a fond upward look at him.

“Oh yes, you can,” said Beaton.

They both ignored Dryfoos in the little play of protests which followed, and he said, half jocosely, half suspiciously, “And is the banjo the fashion, now?” He remembered it as the emblem of low-down show business, and associated it with end-men and blackened faces and grotesque shirt-collars.

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“It’s all the rage,” Mela shouted, in answer for all. “Everybody plays it. Mr. Beaton borrowed this from a lady friend of his.”

“Humph! Pity I got you a piano, then,” said Dryfoos. “A banjo would have been cheaper.”

Beaton so far admitted him to the conversation as to seem reminded of the piano by his mentioning it. He said to Mela, “Oh, won’t you just strike those chords?” and as Mela wheeled about and beat the keys he took the banjo from Christine and sat down with it. “This way!” He strummed it, and murmured the tune Dryfoos had heard him singing from the library, while he kept his beautiful eyes floating on Christine’s. “You try that, now; it’s very simple.”

“Where is Mrs. Mandel?” Dryfoos demanded, trying to assert himself.

Neither of the girls seemed to have heard him at first in the chatter they broke into over what Beaton proposed. Then Mela said, absently, “Oh, she had to go out to see one of her friends that’s sick,” and she struck the piano keys. “Come; try it, Chris!”

Dryfoos turned about unheeded and went back to the library. He would have liked to put Beaton out of his house, and in his heart he burned against him as a contumacious hand; he would have liked to discharge him from the art department of ‘Every Other Week’ at once. But he was aware of not having treated Beaton with much ceremony, and if the young man had returned his behavior in kind, with an electrical response to his own feeling, had he any right to complain? After all, there was no harm in his teaching Christine the banjo.

His wife still sat looking into the fire. “I can’t see,” she said, “as we’ve got a bit more comfort of our lives, Jacob, because we’ve got such piles and piles of money. I wisht to gracious we was back on the farm this minute. I wisht you had held out ag’inst the childern about sellin’ it; ’twould ‘a’ bin the best thing fur ’em, I say. I believe in my soul they’ll git spoiled here in New York. I kin see a change in ’em a’ready—in the girls.”

Dryfoos stretched himself on the lounge again. “I can’t see as Coonrod is much comfort, either. Why ain’t he here with his sisters? What does all that work of his on the East Side amount to? It seems as if he done it to cross me, as much as anything.” Dryfoos complained to his wife on the basis of mere affectional habit, which in married life often survives the sense of intellectual equality. He did not expect her to reason with him, but there was help in her listening, and though she could only soothe his fretfulness with soft answers which were often wide of the purpose, he still went to her for solace. “Here, I’ve gone into this newspaper business, or whatever it is, on his account, and he don’t seem any more satisfied than ever. I can see he hain’t got his heart in it.”

“The pore boy tries; I know he does, Jacob; and he wants to please you. But he give up a good deal when he give up bein’ a preacher; I s’pose we ought to remember that.”

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“A preacher!” sneered Dryfoos. “I reckon bein’ a preacher wouldn’t satisfy him now. He had the impudence to tell me this afternoon that he would like to be a priest; and he threw it up to me that he never could be because I’d kept him from studyin’.”

“He don’t mean a Catholic priest—not a Roman one, Jacob,” the old woman explained, wistfully. “He’s told me all about it. They ain’t the kind o’ Catholics we been used to; some sort of ’Piscopalians; and they do a heap o’ good amongst the poor folks over there. He says we ain’t got any idea how folks lives in them tenement houses, hundreds of ’em in one house, and whole families in a room; and it burns in his heart to help ’em like them Fathers, as he calls ’em, that gives their lives to it. He can’t be a Father, he says, because he can’t git the eddication now; but he can be a Brother; and I can’t find a word to say ag’inst it, when it gits to talkin’, Jacob.”

“I ain’t saying anything against his priests, ’Liz’beth,” said Dryfoos. “They’re all well enough in their way; they’ve given up their lives to it, and it’s a matter of business with them, like any other. But what I’m talking about now is Coonrod. I don’t object to his doin’ all the charity he wants to, and the Lord knows I’ve never been stingy with him about it. He might have all the money he wants, to give round any way he pleases.”

“That’s what I told him once, but he says money ain’t the thing—or not the only thing you got to give to them poor folks. You got to give your time and your knowledge and your love—I don’t know what all you got to give yourself, if you expect to help ’em. That’s what Coonrod says.”

“Well, I can tell him that charity begins at home,” said Dryfoos, sitting up in his impatience. “And he’d better give himself to us a little—to his old father and mother. And his sisters. What’s he doin’ goin’ off there to his meetings, and I don’t know what all, an’ leavin’ them here alone?”

“Why, ain’t Mr. Beaton with ’em?” asked the old woman. “I thought I heared his voice.”

“Mr. Beaton! Of course he is! And who’s Mr. Beaton, anyway?”

“Why, ain’t he one of the men in Coonrod’s office? I thought I heared—”

“Yes, he is! But who is he? What’s he doing round here? Is he makin’ up to Christine?”

“I reckon he is. From Mely’s talk, she’s about crazy over the fellow. Don’t you like him, Jacob?”

“I don’t know him, or what he is. He hasn’t got any manners. Who brought him here? How’d he come to come, in the first place?”

“Mr. Fulkerson brung him, I believe,” said the old woman, patiently.

“Fulkerson!” Dryfoos snorted. “Where’s Mrs. Mandel, I should like to know? He brought her, too. Does she go traipsin’ off this way every evening?”

“No, she seems to be here pretty regular most o’ the time. I don’t know how we could ever git along without her, Jacob; she seems to know just what to do, and the girls would be ten times as outbreakin’ without her. I hope you ain’t thinkin’ o’ turnin’ her off, Jacob?”

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Dryfoos did not think it necessary to answer such a question. “It’s all Fulkerson, Fulkerson, Fulkerson. It seems to me that Fulkerson about runs this family. He brought Mrs. Mandel, and he brought that Beaton, and he brought that Boston fellow! I guess I give him a dose, though; and I’ll learn Fulkerson that he can’t have everything his own way. I don’t want anybody to help me spend my money. I made it, and I can manage it. I guess Mr. Fulkerson can bear a little watching now. He’s been travelling pretty free, and he’s got the notion he’s driving, maybe. I’m a-going to look after that book a little myself.”

“You’ll kill yourself, Jacob,” said his wife, “tryin’ to do so many things. And what is it all fur? I don’t see as we’re better off, any, for all the money. It’s just as much care as it used to be when we was all there on the farm together. I wisht we could go back, Ja—”

“We can’t go back!” shouted the old man, fiercely. “There’s no farm any more to go back to. The fields is full of gas-wells and oil-wells and hell-holes generally; the house is tore down, and the barn’s goin’—”

“The barn!” gasped the old woman. “Oh, my!”

“If I was to give all I’m worth this minute, we couldn’t go back to the farm, any more than them girls in there could go back and be little children. I don’t say we’re any better off, for the money. I’ve got more of it now than I ever had; and there’s no end to the luck; it pours in. But I feel like I was tied hand and foot. I don’t know which way to move; I don’t know what’s best to do about anything. The money don’t seem to buy anything but more and more care and trouble. We got a big house that we ain’t at home in; and we got a lot of hired girls round under our feet that hinder and don’t help. Our children don’t mind us, and we got no friends or neighbors. But it had to be. I couldn’t help but sell the farm, and we can’t go back to it, for it ain’t there. So don’t you say anything more about it, ’Liz’beth.”

“Pore Jacob!” said his wife. “Well, I woon’t, dear.”

IV

It was clear to Beaton that Dryfoos distrusted him; and the fact heightened his pleasure in Christine’s liking for him. He was as sure of this as he was of the other, though he was not so sure of any reason for his pleasure in it. She had her charm; the charm of wildness to which a certain wildness in himself responded; and there were times when his fancy contrived a common future for them, which would have a prosperity forced from the old fellow’s love of the girl. Beaton liked the idea of this compulsion better than he liked the idea of the money; there was something a little repulsive in that; he imagined himself rejecting it; he almost wished he was enough in love with the girl to

marry her without it; that would be fine. He was taken with her in a certain' measure, in a certain way; the question was in what measure, in what way.

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It was partly to escape from this question that he hurried down-town, and decided to spend with the Leightons the hour remaining on his hands before it was time to go to the reception for which he was dressed. It seemed to him important that he should see Alma Leighton. After all, it was her charm that was most abiding with him; perhaps it was to be final. He found himself very happy in his present relations with her. She had dropped that barrier of pretences and ironical surprise. It seemed to him that they had gone back to the old ground of common artistic interest which he had found so pleasant the summer before. Apparently she and her mother had both forgiven his neglect of them in the first months of their stay in New York; he was sure that Mrs. Leighton liked him as well as ever, and, if there was still something a little provisional in Alma's manner at times, it was something that piqued more than it discouraged; it made him curious, not anxious.

He found the young ladies with Fulkerson when he rang. He seemed to be amusing them both, and they were both amused beyond the merit of so small a pleasantry, Beaton thought, when Fulkerson said: "Introduce myself, Mr. Beaton: Mr. Fulkerson of 'Every Other Week.' Think I've met you at our place." The girls laughed, and Alma explained that her mother was not very well, and would be sorry not to see him. Then she turned, as he felt, perversely, and went on talking with Fulkerson and left him to Miss Woodburn.

She finally recognized his disappointment: "Ah don't often get a chance at you, Mr. Beaton, and Ah'm just goin' to toak yo' to death. Yo' have been Soath yo'self, and yo' know ho' we do toak."

"I've survived to say yes," Beaton admitted.

"Oh, now, do you think we toak so much mo' than you do in the No'th?" the young lady deprecated.

"I don't know. I only know you can't talk too much for me. I should like to hear you say Soath and house and about for the rest of my life."

"That's what Ah call raght personal, Mr. Beaton. Now Ah'm goin' to be personal, too." Miss Woodburn flung out over her lap the square of cloth she was embroidering, and asked him: "Don't you think that's beautiful? Now, as an awtust—a great awtust?"

"As a great awtust, yes," said Beaton, mimicking her accent. "If I were less than great I might have something to say about the arrangement of colors. You're as bold and original as Nature."

"Really? Oh, now, do tell me yo' favo'ite colo', Mr. Beaton."

“My favorite color? Bless my soul, why should I prefer any? Is blue good, or red wicked? Do people have favorite colors?” Beaton found himself suddenly interested.

“Of co’se they do,” answered the girl. “Don’t awtusts?”

“I never heard of one that had—consciously.”

“Is it possible? I supposed they all had. Now mah favo’ite colo’ is gawnet. Don’t you think it’s a pretty colo’?”

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“It depends upon how it’s used. Do you mean in neckties?” Beaton stole a glance at the one Fulkerson was wearing.

Miss Woodburn laughed with her face bowed upon her wrist. “Ah do think you gentlemen in the No’th awe ten tahms as lahvely as the ladies.”

“Strange,” said Beaton. “In the South—Soath, excuse me! I made the observation that the ladies were ten times as lively as the gentlemen. What is that you’re working?”

“This?” Miss Woodburn gave it another flirt, and looked at it with a glance of dawning recognition. “Oh, this is a table-covah. Wouldn’t you lahke to see where it’s to go?”

“Why, certainly.”

“Well, if you’ll be raght good I’ll let yo’ give me some professional advass about putting something in the co’ners or not, when you have seen it on the table.”

She rose and led the way into the other room. Beaton knew she wanted to talk with him about something else; but he waited patiently to let her play her comedy out. She spread the cover on the table, and he advised her, as he saw she wished, against putting anything in the corners; just run a line of her stitch around the edge, he said.

“Mr. Fulkerson and Ah, why, we’ve been having a regular faght aboat it,” she commented. “But we both agreed, fahnally, to leave it to you; Mr. Fulkerson said you’d be sure to be raght. Ah’m so glad you took mah sahde. But he’s a great admahrer of yours, Mr. Beaton,” she concluded, demurely, suggestively.

“Is he? Well, I’m a great admirer of Fulkerson,” said Beaton, with a capricious willingness to humor her wish to talk about Fulkerson. “He’s a capital fellow; generous, magnanimous, with quite an ideal of friendship and an eye single to the main chance all the time. He would advertise ‘Every Other Week’ on his family vault.”

Miss Woodburn laughed, and said she should tell him what Beaton had said.

“Do. But he’s used to defamation from me, and he’ll think you’re joking.”

“Ah suppose,” said Miss Woodburn, “that he’s quahte the tahpe of a New York business man.” She added, as if it followed logically, “He’s so different from what I thought a New York business man would be.”

“It’s your Virginia tradition to despise business,” said Beaton, rudely.

Miss Woodburn laughed again. “Despahse it? Mah goodness! we want to get into it and woak it fo’ all it’s wo’th,’ as Mr. Fulkerson says. That tradition is all past. You don’t know what the Soath is now. Ah suppose mah fathaw despahses business, but he’s a

tradition himself, as Ah tell him." Beaton would have enjoyed joining the young lady in anything she might be going to say in derogation of her father, but he restrained himself, and she went on more and more as if she wished to account for her father's habitual hauteur with Beaton, if not to excuse it. "Ah tell him he don't understand the rising generation. He was brought up in the old school,

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and he thinks we're all just lahke he was when he was young, with all those ahdeals of chivalry and family; but, mah goodness! it's money that cyoants no'adays in the Soath, just lahke it does everywhere else. Ah suppose, if we could have slavery back in the fawm mah fathaw thinks it could have been brought up to, when the commercial spirit wouldn't let it alone, it would be the best thing; but we can't have it back, and Ah tell him we had better have the commercial spirit as the next best thing."

Miss Woodburn went on, with sufficient loyalty and piety, to expose the difference of her own and her father's ideals, but with what Beaton thought less reference to his own unsympathetic attention than to a knowledge finally of the personnel and materiel of 'Every Other Week.' and Mr. Fulkerson's relation to the enterprise. "You most excuse my asking so many questions, Mr. Beaton. You know it's all mah doing that we awe heah in New York. Ah just told mah fathaw that if he was evah goin' to do anything with his wrahtings, he had got to come No'th, and Ah made him come. Ah believe he'd have stayed in the Soath all his lahfe. And now Mr. Fulkerson wants him to let his editor see some of his wrahtings, and Ah wanted to know something aboat the magazine. We awe a great deal excited aboat it in this hoase, you know, Mr. Beaton," she concluded, with a look that now transferred the interest from Fulkerson to Alma. She led the way back to the room where they were sitting, and went up to triumph over Fulkerson with Beaton's decision about the table-cover.

Alma was left with Beaton near the piano, and he began to talk about the Dryfooses as he sat down on the piano-stool. He said he had been giving Miss Dryfoos a lesson on the banjo; he had borrowed the banjo of Miss Vance. Then he struck the chord he had been trying to teach Christine, and played over the air he had sung.

"How do you like that?" he asked, whirling round.

"It seems rather a disrespectful little tune, somehow," said Alma, placidly.

Beaton rested his elbow on the corner of the piano and gazed dreamily at her. "Your perceptions are wonderful. It is disrespectful. I played it, up there, because I felt disrespectful to them."

"Do you claim that as a merit?"

"No, I state it as a fact. How can you respect such people?"

"You might respect yourself, then," said the girl. "Or perhaps that wouldn't be so easy, either."

"No, it wouldn't. I like to have you say these things to me," said Beaton, impartially.

“Well, I like to say them,” Alma returned.

“They do me good.”

“Oh, I don’t know that that was my motive.”

“There is no one like you—no one,” said Beaton, as if apostrophizing her in her absence. “To come from that house, with its assertions of money—you can hear it chink; you can smell the foul old banknotes; it stifles you—into an atmosphere like this, is like coming into another world.”

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“Thank you,” said Alma. “I’m glad there isn’t that unpleasant odor here; but I wish there was a little more of the chinking.”

“No, no! Don’t say that!” he implored. “I like to think that there is one soul uncontaminated by the sense of money in this big, brutal, sordid city.”

“You mean two,” said Alma, with modesty. “But if you stifle at the Dryfooses’, why do you go there?”

“Why do I go?” he mused. “Don’t you believe in knowing all the natures, the types, you can? Those girls are a strange study: the young one is a simple, earthly creature, as common as an oat-field and the other a sort of sylvan life: fierce, flashing, feline—”

Alma burst out into a laugh. “What apt alliteration! And do they like being studied? I should think the sylvan life might—scratch.”

“No,” said Beaton, with melancholy absence, “it only-purrs.”

The girl felt a rising indignation. “Well, then, Mr. Beaton, I should hope it would scratch, and bite, too. I think you’ve no business to go about studying people, as you do. It’s abominable.”

“Go on,” said the young man. “That Puritan conscience of yours! It appeals to the old Covenanter strain in me—like a voice of pre-existence. Go on—”

“Oh, if I went on I should merely say it was not only abominable, but contemptible.”

“You could be my guardian angel, Alma,” said the young man, making his eyes more and more slumbrous and dreamy.

“Stuff! I hope I have a soul above buttons!”

He smiled, as she rose, and followed her across the room. “Good-night; Mr. Beaton,” she said.

Miss Woodburn and Fulkerson came in from the other room. “What! You’re not going, Beaton?”

“Yes; I’m going to a reception. I stopped in on my way.”

“To kill time,” Alma explained.

“Well,” said Fulkerson, gallantly, “this is the last place I should like to do it. But I guess I’d better be going, too. It has sometimes occurred to me that there is such a thing as

staying too late. But with Brother Beaton, here, just starting in for an evening's amusement, it does seem a little early yet. Can't you urge me to stay, somebody?"

The two girls laughed, and Miss Woodburn said:

"Mr. Beaton is such a butterfly of fashion! Ah wish Ah was on mah way to a pawty. Ah feel quahte envious."

"But he didn't say it to make you," Alma explained, with meek softness.

"Well, we can't all be swells. Where is your party, anyway, Beaton?" asked Fulkerson. "How do you manage to get your invitations to those things? I suppose a fellow has to keep hinting round pretty lively, Neigh?"

Beaton took these mockeries serenely, and shook hands with Miss Woodburn, with the effect of having already shaken hands with Alma. She stood with hers clasped behind her.

V.

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Beaton went away with the smile on his face which he had kept in listening to Fulkerson, and carried it with him to the reception. He believed that Alma was vexed with him for more personal reasons than she had implied; it flattered him that she should have resented what he told her of the Dryfooses. She had scolded him in their behalf apparently; but really because he had made her jealous by his interest, of whatever kind, in some one else. What followed, had followed naturally. Unless she had been quite a simpleton she could not have met his provisional love-making on any other terms; and the reason why Beaton chiefly liked Alma Leighton was that she was not a simpleton. Even up in the country, when she was overawed by his acquaintance, at first, she was not very deeply overawed, and at times she was not overawed at all. At such times she astonished him by taking his most solemn histrionics with flippant incredulity, and even burlesquing them. But he could see, all the same, that he had caught her fancy, and he admired the skill with which she punished his neglect when they met in New York. He had really come very near forgetting the Leightons; the intangible obligations of mutual kindness which hold some men so fast, hung loosely upon him; it would not have hurt him to break from them altogether; but when he recognized them at last, he found that it strengthened them indefinitely to have Alma ignore them so completely. If she had been sentimental, or softly reproachful, that would have been the end; he could not have stood it; he would have had to drop her. But when she met him on his own ground, and obliged him to be sentimental, the game was in her hands. Beaton laughed, now, when he thought of that, and he said to himself that the girl had grown immensely since she had come to New York; nothing seemed to have been lost upon her; she must have kept her eyes uncommonly wide open. He noticed that especially in their talks over her work; she had profited by everything she had seen and heard; she had all of Wetmore's ideas pat; it amused Beaton to see how she seized every useful word that he dropped, too, and turned him to technical account whenever she could. He liked that; she had a great deal of talent; there was no question of that; if she were a man there could be no question of her future. He began to construct a future for her; it included provision for himself, too; it was a common future, in which their lives and work were united.

He was full of the glow of its prosperity when he met Margaret Vance at the reception.

The house was one where people might chat a long time together without publicly committing themselves to an interest in each other except such a grew out of each other's ideas. Miss Vance was there because she united in her catholic sympathies or ambitions the objects of the fashionable people and of the aesthetic people who met there on common ground. It was almost the only house in New York where this happened

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often, and it did not happen very often there. It was a literary house, primarily, with artistic qualifications, and the frequenters of it were mostly authors and artists; Wetmore, who was always trying to fit everything with a phrase, said it was the unfrequenters who were fashionable. There was great ease there, and simplicity; and if there was not distinction, it was not for want of distinguished people, but because there seems to be some solvent in New York life that reduces all men to a common level, that touches everybody with its potent magic and brings to the surface the deeply underlying nobody. The effect for some temperaments, for consciousness, for egotism, is admirable; for curiosity, for hero worship, it is rather baffling. It is the spirit of the street transferred to the drawing-room; indiscriminating, levelling, but doubtless finally wholesome, and witnessing the immensity of the place, if not consenting to the grandeur of reputations or presences.

Beaton now denied that this house represented a salon at all, in the old sense; and he held that the salon was impossible, even undesirable, with us, when Miss Vance sighed for it. At any rate, he said that this turmoil of coming and going, this bubble and babble, this cackling and hissing of conversation was not the expression of any such civilization as had created the salon. Here, he owned, were the elements of intellectual delightfulness, but he said their assemblage in such quantity alone denied the salon; there was too much of a good thing. The French word implied a long evening of general talk among the guests, crowned with a little chicken at supper, ending at cock-crow. Here was tea, with milk or with lemon-baths of it and claret-cup for the hardier spirits throughout the evening. It was very nice, very pleasant, but it was not the little chicken—not the salon. In fact, he affirmed, the salon descended from above, out of the great world, and included the aesthetic world in it. But our great world—the rich people, were stupid, with no wish to be otherwise; they were not even curious about authors and artists. Beaton fancied himself speaking impartially, and so he allowed himself to speak bitterly; he said that in no other city in the world, except Vienna, perhaps, were such people so little a part of society.

“It isn’t altogether the rich people’s fault,” said Margaret; and she spoke impartially, too. “I don’t believe that the literary men and the artists would like a salon that descended to them. Madame Geoffrin, you know, was very plebeian; her husband was a business man of some sort.”

“He would have been a howling swell in New York,” said Beaton, still impartially.

Wetmore came up to their corner, with a scroll of bread and butter in one hand and a cup of tea in the other. Large and fat, and clean-shaven, he looked like a monk in evening dress.

“We were talking about salons,” said Margaret.

“Why don’t you open a salon yourself?” asked Wetmore, breathing thickly from the anxiety of getting through the crowd without spilling his tea.

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“Like poor Lady Barberina Lemon?” said the girl, with a laugh. “What a good story! That idea of a woman who couldn’t be interested in any of the arts because she was socially and traditionally the material of them! We can, never reach that height of nonchalance in this country.”

“Not if we tried seriously?” suggested the painter. “I’ve an idea that if the Americans ever gave their minds to that sort of thing, they could take the palm—or the cake, as Beaton here would say—just as they do in everything else. When we do have an aristocracy, it will be an aristocracy that will go ahead of anything the world has ever seen. Why don’t somebody make a beginning, and go in openly for an ancestry, and a lower middle class, and an hereditary legislature, and all the rest? We’ve got liveries, and crests, and palaces, and caste feeling. We’re all right as far as we’ve gone, and we’ve got the money to go any length.”

“Like your natural-gas man, Mr. Beaton,” said the girl, with a smiling glance round at him.

“Ah!” said Wetmore, stirring his tea, “has Beaton got a natural-gas man?”

“My natural-gas man,” said Beaton, ignoring Wetmore’s question, “doesn’t know how to live in his palace yet, and I doubt if he has any caste feeling. I fancy his family believe themselves victims of it. They say—one of the young ladies does—that she never saw such an unsociable place as New York; nobody calls.”

“That’s good!” said Wetmore. “I suppose they’re all ready for company, too: good cook, furniture, servants, carriages?”

“Galore,” said Beaton.

“Well, that’s too bad. There’s a chance for you, Miss Vance. Doesn’t your philanthropy embrace the socially destitute as well as the financially? Just think of a family like that, without a friend, in a great city! I should think common charity had a duty there—not to mention the uncommon.”

He distinguished that kind as Margaret’s by a glance of ironical deference. She had a repute for good works which was out of proportion to the works, as it always is, but she was really active in that way, under the vague obligation, which we now all feel, to be helpful. She was of the church which seems to have found a reversion to the imposing ritual of the past the way back to the early ideals of Christian brotherhood.

“Oh, they seem to have Mr. Beaton,” Margaret answered, and Beaton felt obscurely flattered by her reference to his patronage of the Dryfooses.

He explained to Wetmore: “They have me because they partly own me. Dryfoos is Fulkerson’s financial backer in ’Every Other Week’.”

“Is that so? Well, that’s interesting, too. Aren’t you rather astonished, Miss Vance, to see what a petty thing Beaton is making of that magazine of his?”

“Oh,” said Margaret, “it’s so very nice, every way; it makes you feel as if you did have a country, after all. It’s as chic—that detestable little word!—as those new French books.”

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“Beaton modelled it on them. But you mustn’t suppose he does everything about ‘Every Other Week’; he’d like you to. Beaton, you haven’t come up to that cover of your first number, since. That was the design of one of my pupils, Miss Vance—a little girl that Beaton discovered down in New Hampshire last summer.”

“Oh yes. And have you great hopes of her, Mr. Wetmore?”

“She seems to have more love of it and knack for it than any one of her sex I’ve seen yet. It really looks like a case of art for art’s sake, at times. But you can’t tell. They’re liable to get married at any moment, you know. Look here, Beaton, when your natural-gas man gets to the picture-buying stage in his development, just remember your old friends, will you? You know, Miss Vance, those new fellows have their regular stages. They never know what to do with their money, but they find out that people buy pictures, at one point. They shut your things up in their houses where nobody comes, and after a while they overeat themselves—they don’t know what, else to do—and die of apoplexy, and leave your pictures to a gallery, and then they see the light. It’s slow, but it’s pretty sure. Well, I see Beaton isn’t going to move on, as he ought to do; and so I must. He always was an unconventional creature.”

Wetmore went away, but Beaton remained, and he outstayed several other people who came up to speak to Miss Vance. She was interested in everybody, and she liked the talk of these clever literary, artistic, clerical, even theatrical people, and she liked the sort of court with which they recognized her fashion as well as her cleverness; it was very pleasant to be treated intellectually as if she were one of themselves, and socially as if she was not habitually the same, but a sort of guest in Bohemia, a distinguished stranger. If it was Arcadia rather than Bohemia, still she felt her quality of distinguished stranger. The flattery of it touched her fancy, and not her vanity; she had very little vanity. Beaton’s devotion made the same sort of appeal; it was not so much that she liked him as she liked being the object of his admiration. She was a girl of genuine sympathies, intellectual rather than sentimental. In fact, she was an intellectual person, whom qualities of the heart saved from being disagreeable, as they saved her on the other hand from being worldly or cruel in her fashionableness. She had read a great many books, and had ideas about them, quite courageous and original ideas; she knew about pictures—she had been in Wetmore’s class; she was fond of music; she was willing to understand even politics; in Boston she might have been agnostic, but in New York she was sincerely religious; she was very accomplished; and perhaps it was her goodness that prevented her feeling what was not best in Beaton.

“Do you think,” she said, after the retreat of one of the comers and goers left her alone with him again, “that those young ladies would like me to call on them?”

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“Those young ladies?” Beaton echoed. “Miss Leighton and—”

“No; I have been there with my aunt’s cards already.”

“Oh yes,” said Beaton, as if he had known of it; he admired the pluck and pride with which Alma had refrained from ever mentioning the fact to him, and had kept her mother from mentioning it, which must have been difficult.

“I mean the Miss Dryfooses. It seems really barbarous, if nobody goes near them. We do all kinds of things, and help all kinds of people in some ways, but we let strangers remain strangers unless they know how to make their way among us.”

“The Dryfooses certainly wouldn’t know how to make their way among you,” said Beaton, with a sort of dreamy absence in his tone.

Miss Vance went on, speaking out the process of reasoning in her mind, rather than any conclusions she had reached. “We defend ourselves by trying to believe that they must have friends of their own, or that they would think us patronizing, and wouldn’t like being made the objects of social charity; but they needn’t really suppose anything of the kind.”

“I don’t imagine they would,” said Beaton. “I think they’d be only too happy to have you come. But you wouldn’t know what to do with each other, indeed, Miss Vance.”

“Perhaps we shall like each other,” said the girl, bravely, “and then we shall know. What Church are they of?”

“I don’t believe they’re of any,” said Beaton. “The mother was brought up a Dunkard.”

“A Dunkard?”

Beaton told what he knew of the primitive sect, with its early Christian polity, its literal interpretation of Christ’s ethics, and its quaint ceremonial of foot-washing; he made something picturesque of that. “The father is a Mammon-worshipper, pure and simple. I suppose the young ladies go to church, but I don’t know where. They haven’t tried to convert me.”

“I’ll tell them not to despair—after I’ve converted them,” said Miss Vance. “Will you let me use you as a ‘point d’appui’, Mr. Beaton?”

“Any way you like. If you’re really going to see them, perhaps I’d better make a confession. I left your banjo with them, after I got it put in order.”

“How very nice! Then we have a common interest already.”

“Do you mean the banjo, or—”

“The banjo, decidedly. Which of them plays?”

“Neither. But the eldest heard that the banjo was ‘all the rage,’ as the youngest says. Perhaps you can persuade them that good works are the rage, too.”

Beaton had no very lively belief that Margaret would go to see the Dryfooses; he did so few of the things he proposed that he went upon the theory that others must be as faithless. Still, he had a cruel amusement in figuring the possible encounter between Margaret Vance, with her intellectual elegance, her eager sympathies and generous ideals, and those girls with their rude past, their false and distorted perspective, their sordid and hungry selfishness, and their faith in the omnipotence of their father’s wealth wounded by their experience of its present social impotence. At the bottom of his heart he sympathized with them rather than with her; he was more like them.

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People had ceased coming, and some of them were going. Miss Vance said she must go, too, and she was about to rise, when the host came up with March; Beaton turned away.

“Miss Vance, I want to introduce Mr. March, the editor of ’Every Other Week.’ You oughtn’t to be restricted to the art department. We literary fellows think that arm of the service gets too much of the glory nowadays.” His banter was for Beaton, but he was already beyond ear-shot, and the host went on:

Mr. March can talk with you about your favorite Boston. He’s just turned his back on it.”

“Oh, I hope not!” said Miss Vance. “I can’t imagine anybody voluntarily leaving Boston.”

“I don’t say he’s so bad as that,” said the host, committing March to her. “He came to New York because he couldn’t help it—like the rest of us. I never know whether that’s a compliment to New York or not.”

They talked Boston a little while, without finding that they had common acquaintance there; Miss Vance must have concluded that society was much larger in Boston than she had supposed from her visits there, or else that March did not know many people in it. But she was not a girl to care much for the inferences that might be drawn from such conclusions; she rather prided herself upon despising them; and she gave herself to the pleasure of being talked to as if she were of March’s own age. In the glow of her sympathetic beauty and elegance he talked his best, and tried to amuse her with his jokes, which he had the art of tingeing with a little seriousness on one side. He made her laugh; and he flattered her by making her think; in her turn she charmed him so much by enjoying what he said that he began to brag of his wife, as a good husband always does when another woman charms him; and she asked, Oh was Mrs. March there; and would he introduce her?

She asked Mrs. March for her address, and whether she had a day; and she said she would come to see her, if she would let her. Mrs. March could not be so enthusiastic about her as March was, but as they walked home together they talked the girl over, and agreed about her beauty and her amiability. Mrs. March said she seemed very unspoiled for a person who must have been so much spoiled. They tried to analyze her charm, and they succeeded in formulating it as a combination of intellectual fashionableness and worldly innocence. “I think,” said Mrs. March, “that city girls, brought up as she must have been, are often the most innocent of all. They never imagine the wickedness of the world, and if they marry happily they go through life as innocent as children. Everything combines to keep them so; the very hollowness of society shields them. They are the loveliest of the human race. But perhaps the rest have to pay too much for them.”

“For such an exquisite creature as Miss Vance,” said March, “we couldn’t pay too much.”

A wild laughing cry suddenly broke upon the air at the street-crossing in front of them. A girl’s voice called out: “Run, run, Jen! The copper is after you.” A woman’s figure rushed stumbling across the way and into the shadow of the houses, pursued by a burly policeman.

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“Ah, but if that’s part of the price?”

They went along fallen from the gay spirit of their talk into a silence which he broke with a sigh. “Can that poor wretch and the radiant girl we left yonder really belong to the same system of things? How impossible each makes the other seem!”

VI.

Mrs. Horn believed in the world and in society and its unwritten constitution devoutly, and she tolerated her niece’s benevolent activities as she tolerated her aesthetic sympathies because these things, however oddly, were tolerated—even encouraged—-by society; and they gave Margaret a charm. They made her originality interesting. Mrs. Horn did not intend that they should ever go so far as to make her troublesome; and it was with a sense of this abeyant authority of her aunt’s that the girl asked her approval of her proposed call upon the Dryfooses. She explained as well as she could the social destitution of these opulent people, and she had of course to name Beaton as the source of her knowledge concerning them.

“Did Mr. Beaton suggest your calling on them?”

“No; he rather discouraged it.”

“And why do you think you ought to go in this particular instance? New York is full of people who don’t know anybody.”

Margaret laughed. “I suppose it’s like any other charity: you reach the cases you know of. The others you say you can’t help, and you try to ignore them.”

“It’s very romantic,” said Mrs. Horn. “I hope you’ve counted the cost; all the possible consequences.”

Margaret knew that her aunt had in mind their common experience with the Leightons, whom, to give their common conscience peace, she had called upon with her aunt’s cards and excuses, and an invitation for her Thursdays, somewhat too late to make the visit seem a welcome to New York. She was so coldly received, not so much for herself as in her quality of envoy, that her aunt experienced all the comfort which vicarious penance brings. She did not perhaps consider sufficiently her niece’s guiltlessness in the expiation. Margaret was not with her at St. Barnaby in the fatal fortnight she passed there, and never saw the Leightons till she went to call upon them. She never complained: the strain of asceticism, which mysteriously exists in us all, and makes us put peas, boiled or unboiled, in our shoes, gave her patience with the snub which the Leightons presented her for her aunt. But now she said, with this in mind: “Nothing seems simpler than to get rid of people if you don’t want them. You merely have to let them alone.”

“It isn’t so pleasant, letting them alone,” said Mrs. Horn.

“Or having them let you alone,” said Margaret; for neither Mrs. Leighton nor Alma had ever come to enjoy the belated hospitality of Mrs. Horn’s Thursdays.

“Yes, or having them let you alone,” Mrs. Horn courageously consented. “And all that I ask you, Margaret, is to be sure that you really want to know these people.”

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“I don’t,” said the girl, seriously, “in the usual way.”

“Then the question is whether you do in the un usual way. They will build a great deal upon you,” said Mrs. Horn, realizing how much the Leightons must have built upon her, and how much out of proportion to her desert they must now dislike her; for she seemed to have had them on her mind from the time they came, and had always meant to recognize any reasonable claim they had upon her.

“It seems very odd, very sad,” Margaret returned, “that you never could act unselfishly in society affairs. If I wished to go and see those girls just to do them a pleasure, and perhaps because if they’re strange and lonely, I might do them good, even—it would be impossible.”

“Quite,” said her aunt. “Such a thing would be quixotic. Society doesn’t rest upon any such basis. It can’t; it would go to pieces, if people acted from unselfish motives.”

“Then it’s a painted savage!” said the girl. “All its favors are really bargains. It’s gifts are for gifts back again.”

“Yes, that is true,” said Mrs. Horn, with no more sense of wrong in the fact than the political economist has in the fact that wages are the measure of necessity and not of merit. “You get what you pay for. It’s a matter of business.” She satisfied herself with this formula, which she did not invent, as fully as if it were a reason; but she did not dislike her niece’s revolt against it. That was part of Margaret’s originality, which pleased her aunt in proportion to her own conventionality; she was really a timid person, and she liked the show of courage which Margaret’s magnanimity often reflected upon her. She had through her a repute, with people who did not know her well, for intellectual and moral qualities; she was supposed to be literary and charitable; she almost had opinions and ideals, but really fell short of their possession. She thought that she set bounds to the girl’s originality because she recognized them. Margaret understood this better than her aunt, and knew that she had consulted her about going to see the Dryfooses out of deference, and with no expectation of luminous instruction. She was used to being a law to herself, but she knew what she might and might not do, so that she was rather a by-law. She was the kind of girl that might have fancies for artists and poets, but might end by marrying a prosperous broker, and leavening a vast lump of moneyed and fashionable life with her culture, generosity, and good-will. The intellectual interests were first with her, but she might be equal to sacrificing them; she had the best heart, but she might know how to harden it; if she was eccentric, her social orbit was defined; comets themselves traverse space on fixed lines. She was like every one else, a congeries of contradictions and inconsistencies, but obedient to the general expectation of what a girl of her position must and must not finally be. Provisionally, she was very much what she liked to be.

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VII

Margaret Vance tried to give herself some reason for going to call upon the Dryfooses, but she could find none better than the wish to do a kind thing. This seemed queerer and less and less sufficient as she examined it, and she even admitted a little curiosity as a harmless element in her motive, without being very well satisfied with it. She tried to add a slight sense of social duty, and then she decided to have no motive at all, but simply to pay her visit as she would to any other eligible strangers she saw fit to call upon. She perceived that she must be very careful not to let them see that any other impulse had governed her; she determined, if possible, to let them patronize her; to be very modest and sincere and diffident, and, above all, not to play a part. This was easy, compared with the choice of a manner that should convey to them the fact that she was not playing a part. When the hesitating Irish serving-man had acknowledged that the ladies were at home, and had taken her card to them, she sat waiting for them in the drawing-room. Her study of its appointments, with their impersonal costliness, gave her no suggestion how to proceed; the two sisters were upon her before she had really decided, and she rose to meet them with the conviction that she was going to play a part for want of some chosen means of not doing so. She found herself, before she knew it, making her banjo a property in the little comedy, and professing so much pleasure in the fact that Miss Dryfoos was taking it up; she had herself been so much interested by it. Anything, she said, was a relief from the piano; and then, between the guitar and the banjo, one must really choose the banjo, unless one wanted to devote one's whole natural life to the violin. Of course, there was the mandolin; but Margaret asked if they did not feel that the bit of shell you struck it with interposed a distance between you and the real soul of the instrument; and then it did have such a faint, mosquitoy little tone! She made much of the question, which they left her to debate alone while they gazed solemnly at her till she characterized the tone of the mandolin, when Mela broke into a large, coarse laugh.

"Well, that's just what it does sound like," she explained defiantly to her sister. "I always feel like it was going to settle somewhere, and I want to hit myself a slap before it begins to bite. I don't see what ever brought such a thing into fashion."

Margaret had not expected to be so powerfully seconded, and she asked, after gathering herself together, "And you are both learning the banjo?" "My, no!" said Mela, "I've gone through enough with the piano. Christine is learnun' it."

"I'm so glad you are making my banjo useful at the outset, Miss Dryfoos." Both girls stared at her, but found it hard to cope with the fact that this was the lady friend whose banjo Beaton had lent them. "Mr. Beaton mentioned that he had left it here. I hope you'll keep it as long as you find it useful."

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At this amiable speech even Christine could not help thanking her. "Of course," she said, "I expect to get another, right off. Mr. Beaton is going to choose it for me."

"You are very fortunate. If you haven't a teacher yet I should so like to recommend mine."

Mela broke out in her laugh again. "Oh, I guess Christine's pretty well suited with the one she's got," she said, with insinuation. Her sister gave her a frowning glance, and Margaret did not tempt her to explain.

"Then that's much better," she said. "I have a kind of superstition in such matters; I don't like to make a second choice. In a shop I like to take the first thing of the kind I'm looking for, and even if I choose further I come back to the original."

"How funny!" said Mela. "Well, now, I'm just the other way. I always take the last thing, after I've picked over all the rest. My luck always seems to be at the bottom of the heap. Now, Christine, she's more like you. I believe she could walk right up blindfolded and put her hand on the thing she wants every time."

"I'm like father," said Christine, softened a little by the celebration of her peculiarity. "He says the reason so many people don't get what they want is that they don't want it bad enough. Now, when I want a thing, it seems to me that I want it all through."

"Well, that's just like father, too," said Mela. "That's the way he done when he got that eighty-acre piece next to Moffitt that he kept when he sold the farm, and that's got some of the best gas-wells on it now that there is anywhere." She addressed the explanation to her sister, to the exclusion of Margaret, who, nevertheless, listened with a smiling face and a resolutely polite air of being a party to the conversation. Mela rewarded her amiability by saying to her, finally, "You've never been in the natural-gas country, have you?"

"Oh no! And I should so much like to see it!" said Margaret, with a fervor that was partly, voluntary.

"Would you? Well, we're kind of sick of it, but I suppose it would strike a stranger."

"I never got tired of looking at the big wells when they lit them up," said Christine. "It seems as if the world was on fire."

"Yes, and when you see the surface-gas burnun' down in the woods, like it used to by our spring-house-so still, and never spreadun' any, just like a bed of some kind of wild flowers when you ketch sight of it a piece off."

They began to tell of the wonders of their strange land in an antiphony of reminiscences and descriptions; they unconsciously imputed a merit to themselves from the number

and violence of the wells on their father's property; they bragged of the high civilization of Moffitt, which they compared to its advantage with that of New York. They became excited by Margaret's interest in natural gas, and forgot to be suspicious and envious.

She said, as she rose, "Oh, how much I should like to see it all!" Then she made a little pause, and added:

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“I’m so sorry my aunt’s Thursdays are over; she never has them after Lent, but we’re to have some people Tuesday evening at a little concert which a musical friend is going to give with some other artists. There won’t be any banjos, I’m afraid, but there’ll be some very good singing, and my aunt would be so glad if you could come with your mother.”

She put down her aunt’s card on the table near her, while Mela gurgled, as if it were the best joke: “Oh, my! Mother never goes anywhere; you couldn’t get her out for love or money.” But she was herself overwhelmed with a simple joy at Margaret’s politeness, and showed it in a sensuous way, like a child, as if she had been tickled. She came closer to Margaret and seemed about to fawn physically upon her.

“Ain’t she just as lovely as she can live?” she demanded of her sister when Margaret was gone.

“I don’t know,” said Christine. “I guess she wanted to know who Mr. Beaton had been lending her banjo to.”

“Pshaw! Do you suppose she’s in love with him?” asked Mela, and then she broke into her hoarse laugh at the look her sister gave her. “Well, don’t eat me, Christine! I wonder who she is, anyway? I’m goun’ to git it out of Mr. Beaton the next time he calls. I guess she’s somebody. Mrs. Mandel can tell. I wish that old friend of hers would hurry up and git well—or something. But I guess we appeared about as well as she did. I could see she was afraid of you, Christine. I reckon it’s gittun’ around a little about father; and when it does I don’t believe we shall want for callers. Say, are you goun’? To that concert of theirs?”

“I don’t know. Not till I know who they are first.”

“Well, we’ve got to hump ourselves if we’re goun’ to find out before Tuesday.”

As she went home Margaret felt wrought in her that most incredible of the miracles, which, nevertheless, any one may make his experience. She felt kindly to these girls because she had tried to make them happy, and she hoped that in the interest she had shown there had been none of the poison of flattery. She was aware that this was a risk she ran in such an attempt to do good. If she had escaped this effect she was willing to leave the rest with Providence.

VIII.

The notion that a girl of Margaret Vance’s traditions would naturally form of girls like Christine and Mela Dryfoos would be that they were abashed in the presence of the new conditions of their lives, and that they must receive the advance she had made them with a certain grateful humility. However they received it, she had made it upon principle, from a romantic conception of duty; but this was the way she imagined they

would receive it, because she thought that she would have done so if she had been as ignorant and unbred as they. Her error was in arguing their attitude from her own temperament, and endowing them, for the

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purposes of argument, with her perspective. They had not the means, intellectual or moral, of feeling as she fancied. If they had remained at home on the farm where they were born, Christine would have grown up that embodiment of impassioned suspicion which we find oftenest in the narrowest spheres, and Mela would always have been a good-natured simpleton; but they would never have doubted their equality with the wisest and the finest. As it was, they had not learned enough at school to doubt it, and the splendor of their father's success in making money had blinded them forever to any possible difference against them. They had no question of themselves in the social abeyance to which they had been left in New York. They had been surprised, mystified; it was not what they had expected; there must be some mistake.

They were the victims of an accident, which would be repaired as soon as the fact of their father's wealth had got around. They had been steadfast in their faith, through all their disappointment, that they were not only better than most people by virtue of his money, but as good as any; and they took Margaret's visit, so far as they, investigated its motive, for a sign that at last it was beginning to get around; of course, a thing could not get around in New York so quick as it could in a small place. They were confirmed in their belief by the sensation of Mrs. Mandel when she returned to duty that afternoon, and they consulted her about going to Mrs. Horn's musicale. If she had felt any doubt at the name for there were Horns and Horns—the address on the card put the matter beyond question; and she tried to make her charges understand what a precious chance had befallen them. She did not succeed; they had not the premises, the experience, for a sufficient impression; and she undid her work in part by the effort to explain that Mrs. Horn's standing was independent of money; that though she was positively rich, she was comparatively poor. Christine inferred that Miss Vance had called because she wished to be the first to get in with them since it had begun to get around. This view commended itself to Mela, too, but without warping her from her opinion that Miss Vance was all the same too sweet for anything. She had not so vivid a consciousness of her father's money as Christine had; but she reposed perhaps all the more confidently upon its power. She was far from thinking meanly of any one who thought highly of her for it; that seemed so natural a result as to be amiable, even admirable; she was willing that any such person should get all the good there was in such an attitude toward her.

They discussed the matter that night at dinner before their father and mother, who mostly sat silent at their meals; the father frowning absently over his plate, with his head close to it, and making play into his mouth with the back of his knife (he had got so far toward the use of his fork as to despise those who still ate from the edge of their knives), and the mother partly missing hers at times in the nervous tremor that shook her face from side to side.

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After a while the subject of Mela's hoarse babble and of Christine's high-pitched, thin, sharp forays of assertion and denial in the field which her sister's voice seemed to cover, made its way into the old man's consciousness, and he perceived that they were talking with Mrs. Mandel about it, and that his wife was from time to time offering an irrelevant and mistaken comment. He agreed with Christine, and silently took her view of the affair some time before he made any sign of having listened. There had been a time in his life when other things besides his money seemed admirable to him. He had once respected himself for the hard-headed, practical common sense which first gave him standing among his country neighbors; which made him supervisor, school trustee, justice of the peace, county commissioner, secretary of the Moffitt County Agricultural Society. In those days he had served the public with disinterested zeal and proud ability; he used to write to the Lake Shore Farmer on agricultural topics; he took part in opposing, through the Moffitt papers, the legislative waste of the people's money; on the question of selling a local canal to the railroad company, which killed that fine old State work, and let the dry ditch grow up to grass, he might have gone to the Legislature, but he contented himself with defeating the Moffitt member who had voted for the job. If he opposed some measures for the general good, like high schools and school libraries, it was because he lacked perspective, in his intense individualism, and suspected all expense of being spendthrift. He believed in good district schools, and he had a fondness, crude but genuine, for some kinds of reading—history, and forensics of an elementary sort.

With his good head for figures he doubted doctors and despised preachers; he thought lawyers were all rascals, but he respected them for their ability; he was not himself litigious, but he enjoyed the intellectual encounters of a difficult lawsuit, and he often attended a sitting of the fall term of court, when he went to town, for the pleasure of hearing the speeches. He was a good citizen, and a good husband. As a good father, he was rather severe with his children, and used to whip them, especially the gentle Conrad, who somehow crossed him most, till the twins died. After that he never struck any of them; and from the sight of a blow dealt a horse he turned as if sick. It was a long time before he lifted himself up from his sorrow, and then the will of the man seemed to have been breached through his affections. He let the girls do as they pleased—the twins had been girls; he let them go away to school, and got them a piano. It was they who made him sell the farm. If Conrad had only had their spirit he could have made him keep it, he felt; and he resented the want of support he might have found in a less yielding spirit than his son's.

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His moral decay began with his perception of the opportunity of making money quickly and abundantly, which offered itself to him after he sold his farm. He awoke to it slowly, from a desolation in which he tasted the last bitter of homesickness, the utter misery of idleness and listlessness. When he broke down and cried for the hard-working, wholesome life he had lost, he was near the end of this season of despair, but he was also near the end of what was best in himself. He devolved upon a meaner ideal than that of conservative good citizenship, which had been his chief moral experience: the money he had already made without effort and without merit bred its unholy self-love in him; he began to honor money, especially money that had been won suddenly and in large sums; for money that had been earned painfully, slowly, and in little amounts, he had only pity and contempt. The poison of that ambition to go somewhere and be somebody which the local speculators had instilled into him began to work in the vanity which had succeeded his somewhat scornful self-respect; he rejected Europe as the proper field for his expansion; he rejected Washington; he preferred New York, whither the men who have made money and do not yet know that money has made them, all instinctively turn. He came where he could watch his money breed more money, and bring greater increase of its kind in an hour of luck than the toil of hundreds of men could earn in a year. He called it speculation, stocks, the Street; and his pride, his faith in himself, mounted with his luck. He expected, when he had sated his greed, to begin to spend, and he had formulated an intention to build a great house, to add another to the palaces of the country-bred millionaires who have come to adorn the great city. In the mean time he made little account of the things that occupied his children, except to fret at the ungrateful indifference of his son to the interests that could alone make a man of him. He did not know whether his daughters were in society or not; with people coming and going in the house he would have supposed they must be so, no matter who the people were; in some vague way he felt that he had hired society in Mrs. Mandel, at so much a year. He never met a superior himself except now and then a man of twenty or thirty millions to his one or two, and then he felt his soul creep within him, without a sense of social inferiority; it was a question of financial inferiority; and though Dryfoos's soul bowed itself and crawled, it was with a gambler's admiration of wonderful luck. Other men said these many-millioned millionaires were smart, and got their money by sharp practices to which lesser men could not attain; but Dryfoos believed that he could compass the same ends, by the same means, with the same chances; he respected their money, not them.

When he now heard Mrs. Mandel and his daughters talking of that person, whoever she was, that Mrs. Mandel seemed to think had honored his girls by coming to see them, his curiosity was pricked as much as his pride was galled.

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“Well, anyway,” said Mela, “I don’t care whether Christine’s goon’ or not; I am. And you got to go with me, Mrs. Mandel.”

“Well, there’s a little difficulty,” said Mrs. Mandel, with her unfailing dignity and politeness. “I haven’t been asked, you know.”

“Then what are we goun’ to do?” demanded Mela, almost crossly. She was physically too amiable, she felt too well corporeally, ever to be quite cross. “She might ‘a’ knowed—well known—we couldn’t ‘a’ come alone, in New York. I don’t see why, we couldn’t. I don’t call it much of an invitation.”

“I suppose she thought you could come with your mother,” Mrs. Mandel suggested.

“She didn’t say anything about mother: Did she, Christine? Or, yes, she did, too. And I told her she couldn’t git mother out. Don’t you remember?”

“I didn’t pay much attention,” said Christine. “I wasn’t certain we wanted to go.”

“I reckon you wasn’t goun’ to let her see that we cared much,” said Mela, half reproachful, half proud of this attitude of Christine. “Well, I don’t see but what we got to stay at home.” She laughed at this lame conclusion of the matter.

“Perhaps Mr. Conrad—you could very properly take him without an express invitation—” Mrs. Mandel began.

Conrad looked up in alarm and protest. “I—I don’t think I could go that evening—”

“What’s the reason?” his father broke in, harshly. “You’re not such a sheep that you’re afraid to go into company with your sisters? Or are you too good to go with them?”

“If it’s to be anything like that night when them hussies come out and danced that way,” said Mrs. Dryfoos, “I don’t blame Coonrod for not wantun’ to go. I never saw the beat of it.”

Mela sent a yelling laugh across the table to her mother. “Well, I wish Miss Vance could ‘a’ heard that! Why, mother, did you think it like the ballet?”

“Well, I didn’t know, Mely, child,” said the old woman. “I didn’t know what it was like. I hain’t never been to one, and you can’t be too keerful where you go, in a place like New York.”

“What’s the reason you can’t go?” Dryfoos ignored the passage between his wife and daughter in making this demand of his son, with a sour face.

“I have an engagement that night—it’s one of our meetings.”

“I reckon you can let your meeting go for one night,” said Dryfoos. “It can’t be so important as all that, that you must disappoint your sisters.”

“I don’t like to disappoint those poor creatures. They depend so much upon the meetings—”

“I reckon they can stand it for one night,” said the old man. He added, “The poor ye have with you always.”

“That’s so, Coonrod,” said his mother. “It’s the Saviour’s own words.”

“Yes, mother. But they’re not meant just as father used them.”

“How do you know how they were meant? Or how I used them?” cried the father. “Now you just make your plans to go with the girls, Tuesday night. They can’t go alone, and Mrs. Mandel can’t go with them.”

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“Pshaw!” said Mela. “We don’t want to take Conrad away from his meetun’, do we, Chris?”

“I don’t know,” said Christine, in her high, fine voice. “They could get along without him for one night, as father says.”

“Well, I’m not a-goun’ to take him,” said Mela. “Now, Mrs. Mandel, just think out some other way. Say! What’s the reason we couldn’t get somebody else to take us just as well? Ain’t that rulable?”

“It would be allowable—”

“Allowable, I mean,” Mela corrected herself.

“But it might look a little significant, unless it was some old family friend.”

“Well, let’s get Mr. Fulkerson to take us. He’s the oldest family friend we got.”

“I won’t go with Mr. Fulkerson,” said Christine, serenely.

“Why, I’m sure, Christine,” her mother pleaded, “Mr. Fulkerson is a very good young man, and very nice appearun’.”

Mela shouted, “He’s ten times as pleasant as that old Mr. Beaton of Christine’s!”

Christine made no effort to break the constraint that fell upon the table at this sally, but her father said: “Christine is right, Mela. It wouldn’t do for you to go with any other young man. Conrad will go with you.”

“I’m not certain I want to go, yet,” said Christine.

“Well, settle that among yourselves. But if you want to go, your brother will go with you.”

“Of course, Coonrod ’ll go, if his sisters wants him to,” the old woman pleaded. “I reckon it ain’t agoun’ to be anything very bad; and if it is, Coonrod, why you can just git right up and come out.”

“It will be all right, mother. And I will go, of course.”

“There, now, I knowed you would, Coonrod. Now, fawther!” This appeal was to make the old man say something in recognition of Conrad’s sacrifice.

“You’ll always find,” he said, “that it’s those of your own household that have the first claim on you.”

“That’s so, Coonrod,” urged his mother. “It’s Bible truth. Your fawther ain’t a perfesser, but he always did read his Bible. Search the Scriptures. That’s what it means.”

“Laws!” cried Mely, “a body can see, easy enough from mother, where Conrad’s wantun’ to be a preacher comes from. I should ‘a’ thought she’d ‘a’ wanted to been one herself.”

“Let your women keep silence in the churches,” said the old woman, solemnly.

“There you go again, mother! I guess if you was to say that to some of the lady ministers nowadays, you’d git yourself into trouble.” Mela looked round for approval, and gurgled out a hoarse laugh.

IX.

The Dryfooses went late to Mrs. Horn’s musicale, in spite of Mrs. Mandel’s advice. Christine made the delay, both because she wished to show Miss Vance that she was (not) anxious, and because she had some vague notion of the distinction of arriving late at any sort of entertainment. Mrs. Mandel insisted upon the difference between this musicale and an ordinary reception; but Christine rather fancied disturbing a company that had got seated, and perhaps making people rise and stand, while she found her way to her place, as she had seen them do for a tardy comer at the theatre.

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Mela, whom she did not admit to her reasons or feelings always, followed her with the servile admiration she had for all that Christine did; and she took on trust as somehow successful the result of Christine's obstinacy, when they were allowed to stand against the wall at the back of the room through the whole of the long piece begun just before they came in. There had been no one to receive them; a few people, in the rear rows of chairs near them, turned their heads to glance at them, and then looked away again. Mela had her misgivings; but at the end of the piece Miss Vance came up to them at once, and then Mela knew that she had her eyes on them all the time, and that Christine must have been right. Christine said nothing about their coming late, and so Mela did not make any excuse, and Miss Vance seemed to expect none. She glanced with a sort of surprise at Conrad, when Christine introduced him; Mela did not know whether she liked their bringing him, till she shook hands with him, and said: "Oh, I am very glad indeed! Mr. Dryfoos and I have met before." Without explaining where or when, she led them to her aunt and presented them, and then said, "I'm going to put you with some friends of yours," and quickly seated them next the Marches. Mela liked that well enough; she thought she might have some joking with Mr. March, for all his wife was so stiff; but the look which Christine wore seemed to forbid, provisionally at least, any such recreation. On her part, Christine was cool with the Marches. It went through her mind that they must have told Miss Vance they knew her; and perhaps they had boasted of her intimacy. She relaxed a little toward them when she saw Beaton leaning against the wall at the end of the row next Mrs. March. Then she conjectured that he might have told Miss Vance of her acquaintance with the Marches, and she bent forward and nodded to Mrs. March across Conrad, Mela, and Mr. March. She conceived of him as a sort of hand of her father's, but she was willing to take them at their apparent social valuation for the time. She leaned back in her chair, and did not look up at Beaton after the first furtive glance, though she felt his eyes on her.

The music began again almost at once, before Mela had time to make Conrad tell her where Miss Vance had met him before. She would not have minded interrupting the music; but every one else seemed so attentive, even Christine, that she had not the courage. The concert went onto an end without realizing for her the ideal of pleasure which one ought to find. in society. She was not exacting, but it seemed to her there were very few young men, and when the music was over, and their opportunity came to be sociable, they were not very sociable. They were not introduced, for one thing; but it appeared to Mela that they might have got introduced, if they had any sense; she saw them looking at her, and she was glad she had dressed so much; she was dressed more than any other lady there,

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and either because she was the most dressed of any person there, or because it had got around who her father was, she felt that she had made an impression on the young men. In her satisfaction with this, and from her good nature, she was contented to be served with her refreshments after the concert by Mr. March, and to remain joking with him. She was at her ease; she let her hoarse voice out in her largest laugh; she accused him, to the admiration of those near, of getting her into a perfect gale. It appeared to her, in her own pleasure, her mission to illustrate to the rather subdued people about her what a good time really was, so that they could have it if they wanted it. Her joy was crowned when March modestly professed himself unworthy to monopolize her, and explained how selfish he felt in talking to a young lady when there were so many young men dying to do so.

“Oh, pshaw, dyun’, yes!” cried Mela, tasting the irony. “I guess I see them!”

He asked if he might really introduce a friend of his to her, and she said, Well, yes, if he thought he could live to get to her; and March brought up a man whom he thought very young and Mela thought very old. He was a contributor to ‘Every Other Week,’ and so March knew him; he believed himself a student of human nature in behalf of literature, and he now set about studying Mela. He tempted her to express her opinion on all points, and he laughed so amiably at the boldness and humorous vigor of her ideas that she was delighted with him. She asked him if he was a New-Yorker by birth; and she told him she pitied him, when he said he had never been West. She professed herself perfectly sick of New York, and urged him to go to Moffitt if he wanted to see a real live town. He wondered if it would do to put her into literature just as she was, with all her slang and brag, but he decided that he would have to subdue her a great deal: he did not see how he could reconcile the facts of her conversation with the facts of her appearance: her beauty, her splendor of dress, her apparent right to be where she was. These things perplexed him; he was afraid the great American novel, if true, must be incredible. Mela said he ought to hear her sister go on about New York when they first came; but she reckoned that Christine was getting so she could put up with it a little better, now. She looked significantly across the room to the place where Christine was now talking with Beaton; and the student of human nature asked, Was she here? and, Would she introduce him? Mela said she would, the first chance she got; and she added, They would be much pleased to have him call. She felt herself to be having a beautiful time, and she got directly upon such intimate terms with the student of human nature that she laughed with him about some peculiarities of his, such as his going so far about to ask things he wanted to know from her; she said she never did believe in beating about the bush much. She had

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noticed the same thing in Miss Vance when she came to call that day; and when the young man owned that he came rather a good deal to Mrs. Horn's house, she asked him, Well, what sort of a girl was Miss Vance, anyway, and where did he suppose she had met her brother? The student of human nature could not say as to this, and as to Miss Vance he judged it safest to treat of the non-society side of her character, her activity in charity, her special devotion to the work among the poor on the East Side, which she personally engaged in.

"Oh, that's where Conrad goes, too!" Mela interrupted. "I'll bet anything that's where she met him. I wisht I could tell Christine! But I suppose she would want to kill me, if I was to speak to her now."

The student of human nature said, politely, "Oh, shall I take you to her?"

Mela answered, "I guess you better not!" with a laugh so significant that he could not help his inferences concerning both Christine's absorption in the person she was talking with and the habitual violence of her temper. He made note of how Mela helplessly spoke of all her family by their names, as if he were already intimate with them; he fancied that if he could get that in skillfully, it would be a valuable color in his study; the English lord whom she should astonish with it began to form himself out of the dramatic nebulosity in his mind, and to whirl on a definite orbit in American society. But he was puzzled to decide whether Mela's willingness to take him into her confidence on short notice was typical or personal: the trait of a daughter of the natural-gas millionaire, or a foible of her own.

Beaton talked with Christine the greater part of the evening that was left after the concert. He was very grave, and took the tone of a fatherly friend; he spoke guardedly of the people present, and moderated the severity of some of Christine's judgments of their looks and costumes. He did this out of a sort of unreasoned allegiance to Margaret, whom he was in the mood of wishing to please by being very kind and good, as she always was. He had the sense also of atoning by this behavior for some reckless things he had said before that to Christine; he put on a sad, reproving air with her, and gave her the feeling of being held in check.

She chafed at it, and said, glancing at Margaret in talk with her brother, "I don't think Miss Vance is so very pretty, do you?"

"I never think whether she's pretty or not," said Becton, with dreamy, affectation. "She is merely perfect. Does she know your brother?"

"So she says. I didn't suppose Conrad ever went anywhere, except to tenement-houses."

“It might have been there,” Becton suggested. “She goes among friendless people everywhere.”

“Maybe that’s the reason she came to see us!” said Christine.

Becton looked at her with his smouldering eyes, and felt the wish to say, “Yes, it was exactly that,” but he only allowed himself to deny the possibility of any such motive in that case. He added: “I am so glad you know her, Miss Dryfoos. I never met Miss Vance without feeling myself better and truer, somehow; or the wish to be so.”

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“And you think we might be improved, too?” Christine retorted. “Well, I must say you’re not very flattering, Mr. Becton, anyway.”

Becton would have liked to answer her according to her cattishness, with a good clawing sarcasm that would leave its smart in her pride; but he was being good, and he could not change all at once. Besides, the girl’s attitude under the social honor done her interested him. He was sure she had never been in such good company before, but he could see that she was not in the least affected by the experience. He had told her who this person and that was; and he saw she had understood that the names were of consequence; but she seemed to feel her equality with them all. Her serenity was not obviously akin to the savage stoicism in which Beaton hid his own consciousness of social inferiority; but having won his way in the world so far by his talent, his personal quality, he did not conceive the simple fact in her case. Christine was self-possessed because she felt that a knowledge of her father’s fortune had got around, and she had the peace which money gives to ignorance; but Beaton attributed her poise to indifference to social values. This, while he inwardly sneered at it, avenged him upon his own too keen sense of them, and, together with his temporary allegiance to Margaret’s goodness, kept him from retaliating Christine’s vulgarity. He said, “I don’t see how that could be,” and left the question of flattery to settle itself.

The people began to go away, following each other up to take leave of Mrs. Horn. Christine watched them with unconcern, and either because she would not be governed by the general movement, or because she liked being with Beaton, gave no sign of going. Mela was still talking to the student of human nature, sending out her laugh in deep gurgles amid the unimaginable confidences she was making him about herself, her family, the staff of ‘Every Other Week,’ Mrs. Mandel, and the kind of life they had all led before she came to them. He was not a blind devotee of art for art’s sake, and though he felt that if one could portray Mela just as she was she would be the richest possible material, he was rather ashamed to know some of the things she told him; and he kept looking anxiously about for a chance of escape. The company had reduced itself to the Dryfoos groups and some friends of Mrs. Horn’s who had the right to linger, when Margaret crossed the room with Conrad to Christine and Beaton.

“I’m so glad, Miss Dryfoos, to find that I was not quite a stranger to you all when I ventured to call, the other day. Your brother and I are rather old acquaintances, though I never knew who he was before. I don’t know just how to say we met where he is valued so much. I suppose I mustn’t try to say how much,” she added, with a look of deep regard at him.

Conrad blushed and stood folding his arms tight over his breast, while his sister received Margaret’s confession with the suspicion which was her first feeling in regard to any new thing. What she concluded was that this girl was trying to get in with them, for reasons of her own. She said: “Yes; it’s the first I ever heard of his knowing you. He’s so much taken up with his meetings, he didn’t want to come to-night.”

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Margaret drew in her lip before she answered, without apparent resentment of the awkwardness or ungraciousness, whichever she found it: "I don't wonder! You become so absorbed in such work that you think nothing else is worth while. But I'm glad Mr. Dryfoos could come with you; I'm so glad you could all come; I knew you would enjoy the music. Do sit down—"

"No," said Christine, bluntly; "we must be going. Mela!" she called out, "come!"

The last group about Mrs. Horn looked round, but Christine advanced upon them undismayed, and took the hand Mrs. Horn promptly gave her. "Well, I must bid you good-night."

"Oh, good-night," murmured the elder lady. "So very kind of you to come."

"I've had the best kind of a time," said Mela, cordially. "I hain't laughed so much, I don't know when."

"Oh, I'm glad you enjoyed it," said Mrs. Horn, in the same polite murmur she had used with Christine; but she said nothing to either sister about any future meeting.

They were apparently not troubled. Mela said over her shoulder to the student of human nature, "The next time I see you I'll give it to you for what you said about Moffitt."

Margaret made some entreating paces after them, but she did not succeed in covering the retreat of the sisters against critical conjecture. She could only say to Conrad, as if recurring to the subject, "I hope we can get our friends to play for us some night. I know it isn't any real help, but such things take the poor creatures out of themselves for the time being, don't you think?"

"Oh yes," he answered. "They're good in that way." He turned back hesitatingly to Mrs. Horn, and said, with a blush, "I thank you for a happy evening."

"Oh, I am very glad," she replied, in her murmur.

One of the old friends of the house arched her eyebrows in saying good-night, and offered the two young men remaining seats home in her carriage. Beaton gloomily refused, and she kept herself from asking the student of human nature, till she had got him into her carriage, "What is Moffitt, and what did you say about it?"

"Now you see, Margaret," said Mrs. Horn, with bated triumph, when the people were all gone.

"Yes, I see," the girl consented. "From one point of view, of course it's been a failure. I don't think we've given Miss Dryfoos a pleasure, but perhaps nobody could. And at least we've given her the opportunity of enjoying herself."

“Such people,” said Mrs. Horn, philosophically, “people with their money, must of course be received sooner or later. You can’t keep them out. Only, I believe I would rather let some one else begin with them. The Leightons didn’t come?”

“I sent them cards. I couldn’t call again.”

Mrs. Horn sighed a little. “I suppose Mr. Dryfoos is one of your fellow-philanthropists?”

“He’s one of the workers,” said Margaret. “I met him several times at the Hall, but I only knew his first name. I think he’s a great friend of Father Benedict; he seems devoted to the work. Don’t you think he looks good?”

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“Very,” said Mrs. Horn, with a color of censure in her assent. “The younger girl seemed more amiable than her sister. But what manners!”

“Dreadful!” said Margaret, with knit brows, and a pursed mouth of humorous suffering. “But she appeared to feel very much at home.”

“Oh, as to that, neither of them was much abashed. Do you suppose Mr. Beaton gave the other one some hints for that quaint dress of hers? I don’t imagine that black and lace is her own invention. She seems to have some sort of strange fascination for him.”

“She’s very picturesque,” Margaret explained. “And artists see points in people that the rest of us don’t.”

“Could it be her money?” Mrs. Horn insinuated. “He must be very poor.”

“But he isn’t base,” retorted the girl, with a generous indignation that made her aunt smile.

“Oh no; but if he fancies her so picturesque, it doesn’t follow that he would object to her being rich.”

“It would with a man like Mr. Beaton!”

“You are an idealist, Margaret. I suppose your Mr. March has some disinterested motive in paying court to Miss Mela—Pamela, I suppose, is her name. He talked to her longer than her literature would have lasted.”

“He seems a very kind person,” said Margaret.

“And Mr. Dryfoos pays his salary?”

“I don’t know anything about that. But that wouldn’t make any difference with him.”

Mrs. Horn laughed out at this security; but she was not displeased by the nobleness which it came from. She liked Margaret to be high-minded, and was really not distressed by any good that was in her.

The Marches walked home, both because it was not far, and because they must spare in carriage hire at any rate. As soon as they were out of the house, she applied a point of conscience to him.

“I don’t see how you could talk to that girl so long, Basil, and make her laugh so.”

“Why, there seemed no one else to do it, till I thought of Kendricks.”

“Yes, but I kept thinking, Now he’s pleasant to her because he thinks it’s to his interest. If she had no relation to ‘Every Other Week,’ he wouldn’t waste his time on her.”

“Isabel,” March complained, “I wish you wouldn’t think of me in he, him, and his; I never personalize you in my thoughts: you remain always a vague unindividualized essence, not quite without form and void, but nounless and pronounless. I call that a much more beautiful mental attitude toward the object of one’s affections. But if you must he and him and his me in your thoughts, I wish you’d have more kindly thoughts of me.”

“Do you deny that it’s true, Basil?”

“Do you believe that it’s true, Isabel?”

“No matter. But could you excuse it if it were?”

“Ah, I see you’d have been capable of it in my, place, and you’re ashamed.”

“Yes,” sighed the wife, “I’m afraid that I should. But tell me that you wouldn’t, Basil!”

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“I can tell you that I wasn’t. But I suppose that in a real exigency, I could truckle to the proprietary Dryfooses as well as you.”

“Oh no; you mustn’t, dear! I’m a woman, and I’m dreadfully afraid. But you must always be a man, especially with that horrid old Mr. Dryfoos. Promise me that you’ll never yield the least point to him in a matter of right and wrong!”

“Not if he’s right and I’m wrong?”

“Don’t trifle, dear! You know what I mean. Will you promise?”

“I’ll promise to submit the point to you, and let you do the yielding. As for me, I shall be adamant. Nothing I like better.”

“They’re dreadful, even that poor, good young fellow, who’s so different from all the rest; he’s awful, too, because you feel that he’s a martyr to them.”

“And I never did like martyrs a great deal,” March interposed.

“I wonder how they came to be there,” Mrs. March pursued, unmindful of his joke.

“That is exactly what seemed to be puzzling Miss Mela about us. She asked, and I explained as well as I could; and then she told me that Miss Vance had come to call on them and invited them; and first they didn’t know how they could come till they thought of making Conrad bring them. But she didn’t say why Miss Vance called on them. Mr. Dryfoos doesn’t employ her on ‘Every Other Week.’ But I suppose she has her own vile little motive.”

“It can’t be their money; it can’t be!” sighed Mrs. March.

“Well, I don’t know. We all respect money.”

“Yes, but Miss Vance’s position is so secure. She needn’t pay court to those stupid, vulgar people.”

“Well, let’s console ourselves with the belief that she would, if she needed. Such people as the Dryfooses are the raw material of good society. It isn’t made up of refined or meritorious people—professors and litterateurs, ministers and musicians, and their families. All the fashionable people there to-night were like the Dryfooses a generation or two ago. I dare say the material works up faster now, and in a season or two you won’t know the Dryfooses from the other plutocrats. *They* will—a little better than they do now; they’ll see a difference, but nothing radical, nothing painful. People who get up in the world by service to others—through letters, or art, or science—may have their modest little misgivings as to their social value, but people that rise by money—-especially if their gains are sudden—never have. And that’s the kind of people that form

our nobility; there's no use pretending that we haven't a nobility; we might as well pretend we haven't first-class cars in the presence of a vestibuled Pullman. Those girls had no more doubt of their right to be there than if they had been duchesses: we thought it was very nice of Miss Vance to come and ask us, but they didn't; they weren't afraid, or the least embarrassed; they were perfectly natural—like born aristocrats. And you may be sure that if the plutocracy that now owns the country ever sees fit to take on the outward signs of an aristocracy—titles, and arms, and ancestors—it won't falter from any inherent question of its worth. Money prizes and honors itself, and if there is anything it hasn't got, it believes it can buy it."

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“Well, Basil,” said his wife, “I hope you won’t get infected with Lindau’s ideas of rich people. Some of them are very good and kind.”

“Who denies that? Not even Lindau himself. It’s all right. And the great thing is that the evening’s enjoyment is over. I’ve got my society smile off, and I’m radiantly happy. Go on with your little pessimistic diatribes, Isabel; you can’t spoil my pleasure.”

“I could see,” said Mela, as she and Christine drove home together, “that she was as jealous as she could be, all the time you was talkun’ to Mr. Beaton. She pretended to be talkun’ to Conrad, but she kep’ her eye on you pretty close, I can tell you. I bet she just got us there to see how him and you would act together. And I reckon she was satisfied. He’s dead gone on you, Chris.”

Christine listened with a dreamy pleasure to the flatteries with which Mela plied her in the hope of some return in kind, and not at all because she felt spitefully toward Miss Vance, or in anywise wished her ill. “Who was that fellow with you so long?” asked Christine. “I suppose you turned yourself inside out to him, like you always do.”

Mela was transported by the cruel ingratitude. “It’s a lie! I didn’t tell him a single thing.”

Conrad walked home, choosing to do so because he did not wish to hear his sisters’ talk of the evening, and because there was a tumult in his spirit which he wished to let have its way. In his life with its single purpose, defeated by stronger wills than his own, and now struggling partially to fulfil itself in acts of devotion to others, the thought of women had entered scarcely more than in that of a child. His ideals were of a virginal vagueness; faces, voices, gestures had filled his fancy at times, but almost passionately; and the sensation that he now indulged was a kind of worship, ardent, but reverent and exalted. The brutal experiences of the world make us forget that there are such natures in it, and that they seem to come up out of the lowly earth as well as down from the high heaven. In the heart of this man well on toward thirty there had never been left the stain of a base thought; not that suggestion and conjecture had not visited him, but that he had not entertained them, or in any-wise made them his. In a Catholic age and country, he would have been one of those monks who are sainted after death for the angelic purity of their lives, and whose names are invoked by believers in moments of trial, like San Luigi Gonzaga. As he now walked along thinking, with a lover’s beatified smile on his face, of how Margaret Vance had spoken and looked, he dramatized scenes in which he approved himself to her by acts of goodness and unselfishness, and died to please her for the sake of others. He made her praise him for them, to his face, when he disclaimed their merit, and after his death, when he could not. All the time he was poignantly sensible of her grace, her elegance, her style; they seemed to intoxicate him; some tones of her voice thrilled through his nerves, and some looks turned his brain with a delicious, swooning sense of her beauty; her refinement bewildered him. But all this did not admit the idea of possession, even of aspiration. At

the most his worship only set her beyond the love of other men as far as beyond his own.

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PG EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Affectional habit
Brag of his wife, as a good husband always does
But when we make that money here, no one loses it
Courage hadn't been put to the test
Family buryin' grounds
Homage which those who have not pay to those who have
Hurry up and git well—or something
Made money and do not yet know that money has made them
Society: All its favors are really bargains
Wages are the measure of necessity and not of merit
Without realizing his cruelty, treated as a child

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

By William Dean Howells

PART FOURTH

I.

Not long after Lent, Fulkerson set before Dryfoos one day his scheme for a dinner in celebration of the success of 'Every Other Week.' Dryfoos had never meddled in any manner with the conduct of the periodical; but Fulkerson easily saw that he was proud of his relation to it, and he proceeded upon the theory that he would be willing to have this relation known: On the days when he had been lucky in stocks, he was apt to drop in at the office on Eleventh Street, on his way up-town, and listen to Fulkerson's talk. He was on good enough terms with March, who revised his first impressions of the man, but they had not much to say to each other, and it seemed to March that Dryfoos was even a little afraid of him, as of a piece of mechanism he had acquired, but did not quite understand; he left the working of it to Fulkerson, who no doubt bragged of it sufficiently. The old man seemed to have as little to say to his son; he shut himself up with Fulkerson, where the others could hear the manager begin and go on with an unstinted flow of talk about 'Every Other Week;' for Fulkerson never talked of anything else if he could help it, and was always bringing the conversation back to it if it strayed:

The day he spoke of the dinner he rose and called from his door: "March, I say, come down here a minute, will you? Conrad, I want you, too."

The editor and the publisher found the manager and the proprietor seated on opposite sides of the table. "It's about those funeral baked meats, you know," Fulkerson

explained, “and I was trying to give Mr. Dryfoos some idea of what we wanted to do. That is, what I wanted to do,” he continued, turning from March to Dryfoos. “March, here, is opposed to it, of course. He’d like to publish ‘Every Other Week’ on the sly; keep it out of the papers, and off the newsstands; he’s a modest Boston petunia, and he shrinks from publicity; but I am not that kind of herb myself, and I want all the publicity we can get—beg, borrow, or steal—for this thing. I say that you can’t work the sacred rites of hospitality in a better cause, and what I propose is a little

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dinner for the purpose of recognizing the hit we've made with this thing. My idea was to strike you for the necessary funds, and do the thing on a handsome scale. The term little dinner is a mere figure of speech. A little dinner wouldn't make a big talk, and what we want is the big talk, at present, if we don't lay up a cent. My notion was that pretty soon after Lent, now, when everybody is feeling just right, we should begin to send out our paragraphs, affirmative, negative, and explanatory, and along about the first of May we should sit down about a hundred strong, the most distinguished people in the country, and solemnize our triumph. There it is in a nutshell. I might expand and I might expound, but that's the sum and substance of it."

Fulkerson stopped, and ran his eyes eagerly over the faces of his three listeners, one after the other. March was a little surprised when Dryfoos turned to him, but that reference of the question seemed to give Fulkerson particular pleasure: "What do you think, Mr. March?"

The editor leaned back in his chair. "I don't pretend to have Mr. Fulkerson's genius for advertising; but it seems to me a little early yet. We might celebrate later when we've got more to celebrate. At present we're a pleasing novelty, rather than a fixed fact."

"Ah, you don't get the idea!" said Fulkerson. "What we want to do with this dinner is to fix the fact."

"Am I going to come in anywhere?" the old man interrupted.

"You're going to come in at the head of the procession! We are going to strike everything that is imaginative and romantic in the newspaper soul with you and your history and your fancy for going in for this thing. I can start you in a paragraph that will travel through all the newspapers, from Maine to Texas and from Alaska to Florida. We have had all sorts of rich men backing up literary enterprises, but the natural-gas man in literature is a new thing, and the combination of your picturesque past and your aesthetic present is something that will knock out the sympathies of the American public the first round. I feel," said Fulkerson, with a tremor of pathos in his voice, "that 'Every Other Week' is at a disadvantage before the public as long as it's supposed to be my enterprise, my idea. As far as I'm known at all, I'm known simply as a syndicate man, and nobody in the press believes that I've got the money to run the thing on a grand scale; a suspicion of insolvency must attach to it sooner or later, and the fellows on the press will work up that impression, sooner or later, if we don't give them something else to work up. Now, as soon as I begin to give it away to the correspondents that you're in it, with your untold millions—that, in fact, it was your idea from the start, that you originated it to give full play to the humanitarian tendencies of Conrad here, who's always had these theories of co-operation, and longed to realize them for the benefit of our struggling young writers and artists—"

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March had listened with growing amusement to the mingled burlesque and earnest of Fulkerson's self-sacrificing impudence, and with wonder as to how far Dryfoos was consenting to his preposterous proposition, when Conrad broke out: "Mr. Fulkerson, I could not allow you to do that. It would not be true; I did not wish to be here; and—and what I think—what I wish to do—that is something I will not let any one put me in a false position about. No!" The blood rushed into the young man's gentle face, and he met his father's glance with defiance.

Dryfoos turned from him to Fulkerson without speaking, and Fulkerson said, caressingly: "Why, of course, Coonrod! I know how you feel, and I shouldn't let anything of that sort go out uncontradicted afterward. But there isn't anything in these times that would give us better standing with the public than some hint of the way you feel about such things. The publics expects to be interested, and nothing would interest it more than to be told that the success of 'Every Other Week' sprang from the first application of the principle of Live and let Live to a literary enterprise. It would look particularly well, coming from you and your father, but if you object, we can leave that part out; though if you approve of the principle I don't see why you need object. The main thing is to let the public know that it owes this thing to the liberal and enlightened spirit of one of the foremost capitalists of the country; and that his purposes are not likely to be betrayed in the hands of his son, I should get a little cut made from a photograph of your father, and supply it gratis with the paragraphs."

"I guess," said the old man, "we will get along without the cut."

Fulkerson laughed. "Well, well! Have it your own way, But the sight of your face in the patent outsides of the country press would be worth half a dozen subscribers in every school district throughout the length and breadth of this fair land."

"There was a fellow," Dryfoos explained, in an aside to March, "that was getting up a history of Moffitt, and he asked me to let him put a steel engraving of me in. He said a good many prominent citizens were going to have theirs in, and his price was a hundred and fifty dollars. I told him I couldn't let mine go for less than two hundred, and when he said he could give me a splendid plate for that money, I said I should want it cash, You never saw a fellow more astonished when he got it through him. that I expected him to pay the two hundred."

Fulkerson laughed in keen appreciation of the joke. "Well, sir, I guess 'Every Other Week' will pay you that much. But if you won't sell at any price, all right; we must try to worry along without the light of your countenance on, the posters, but we got to have it for the banquet."

"I don't seem to feel very hungry, yet," said they old man, dryly.

“Oh, ‘l’appeit vient en mangeant’, as our French friends say. You’ll be hungry enough when you see the preliminary Little Neck clam. It’s too late for oysters.”

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“Doesn’t that fact seem to point to a postponement till they get back, sometime in October,” March suggested,

“No, no!” said Fulkerson, “you don’t catch on to the business end of this thing, my friends. You’re proceeding on something like the old exploded idea that the demand creates the supply, when everybody knows, if he’s watched the course of modern events, that it’s just as apt to be the other way. I contend that we’ve got a real substantial success to celebrate now; but even if we hadn’t, the celebration would do more than anything else to create the success, if we got it properly before the public. People will say: Those fellows are not fools; they wouldn’t go and rejoice over their magazine unless they had got a big thing in it. And the state of feeling we should produce in the public mind would make a boom of perfectly unprecedented grandeur for E. O. W. Heigh?”

He looked sunnily from one to the other in succession. The elder Dryfoos said, with his chin on the top of his stick, “I reckon those Little Neck clams will keep.”

“Well, just as you say,” Fulkerson cheerfully assented. “I understand you to agree to the general principle of a little dinner?”

“The smaller the better,” said the old man.

“Well, I say a little dinner because the idea of that seems to cover the case, even if we vary the plan a little. I had thought of a reception, maybe, that would include the lady contributors and artists, and the wives and daughters of the other contributors. That would give us the chance to ring in a lot of society correspondents and get the thing written up in first-class shape. By-the-way!” cried Fulkerson, slapping himself on the leg, “why not have the dinner and the reception both?”

“I don’t understand,” said Dryfoos.

“Why, have a select little dinner for ten or twenty choice spirits of the male persuasion, and then, about ten o’clock, throw open your palatial drawing-rooms and admit the females to champagne, salads, and ices. It is the very thing! Come!”

“What do you think of it, Mr. March?” asked Dryfoos, on whose social inexperience Fulkerson’s words projected no very intelligible image, and who perhaps hoped for some more light.

“It’s a beautiful vision,” said March, “and if it will take more time to realize it I think I approve. I approve of anything that will delay Mr. Fulkerson’s advertising orgie.”

“Then,” Fulkerson pursued, “we could have the pleasure of Miss Christine and Miss Mela’s company; and maybe Mrs. Dryfoos would look in on us in the course of the

evening. There's no hurry, as Mr. March suggests, if we can give the thing this shape. I will cheerfully adopt the idea of my honorable colleague."

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March laughed at his impudence, but at heart he was ashamed of Fulkerson for proposing to make use of Dryfoos and his house in that way. He fancied something appealing in the look that the old man turned on him, and something indignant in Conrad's flush; but probably this was only his fancy. He reflected that neither of them could feel it as people of more worldly knowledge would, and he consoled himself with the fact that Fulkerson was really not such a charlatan as he seemed. But it went through his mind that this was a strange end for all Dryfoos's money-making to come to; and he philosophically accepted the fact of his own humble fortunes when he reflected how little his money could buy for such a man. It was an honorable use that Fulkerson was putting it to in 'Every Other Week;' it might be far more creditably spent on such an enterprise than on horses, or wines, or women, the usual resources of the brute rich; and if it were to be lost, it might better be lost that way than in stocks. He kept a smiling face turned to Dryfoos while these irreverent considerations occupied him, and hardened his heart against father and son and their possible emotions.

The old man rose to put an end to the interview. He only repeated, "I guess those clams will keep till fall."

But Fulkerson was apparently satisfied with the progress he had made; and when he joined March for the stroll homeward after office hours, he was able to detach his mind from the subject, as if content to leave it.

"This is about the best part of the year in New York," he said; In some of the areas the grass had sprouted, and the tender young foliage had loosened itself froze the buds on a sidewalk tree here and there; the soft air was full of spring, and the delicate sky, far aloof, had the look it never wears at any other season. "It ain't a time of year to complain much of, anywhere; but I don't want anything better than the month of May in New York. Farther South it's too hot, and I've been in Boston in May when that east wind of yours made every nerve in my body get up and howl. I reckon the weather has a good deal to do with the local temperament. The reason a New York man takes life so easily with all his rush is that his climate don't worry him. But a Boston man must be rasped the whole while by the edge in his air. That accounts for his sharpness; and when he's lived through twenty-five or thirty Boston Mays, he gets to thinking that Providence has some particular use for him, or he wouldn't have survived, and that makes him conceited. See?"

"I see," said March. "But I don't know how you're going to work that idea into an advertisement, exactly."

"Oh, pahaw, now, March! You don't think I've got that on the brain all the time?"

"You were gradually leading up to 'Every Other Week', somehow."

“No, sir; I wasn’t. I was just thinking what a different creature a Massachusetts man is from a Virginian, And yet I suppose they’re both as pure English stock as you’ll get anywhere in America. Marsh, I think Colonel Woodburn’s paper is going to make a hit.”

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“You’ve got there! When it knocks down the sale about one-half, I shall know it’s made a hit.”

“I’m not afraid,” said Fulkerson. “That thing is going to attract attention. It’s well written—you can take the pomposity out of it, here and there and it’s novel. Our people like a bold strike, and it’s going to shake them up tremendously to have serfdom advocated on high moral grounds as the only solution of the labor problem. You see, in the first place, he goes for their sympathies by the way he portrays the actual relations of capital and labor; he shows how things have got to go from bad to worse, and then he trots out his little old hobby, and proves that if slavery had not been interfered with, it would have perfected itself in the interest of humanity. He makes a pretty strong plea for it.”

March threw back his head and laughed. “He’s converted you! I swear, Fulkerson, if we had accepted and paid for an article advocating cannibalism as the only resource for getting rid of the superfluous poor, you’d begin to believe in it.”

Fulkerson smiled in approval of the joke, and only said: “I wish you could meet the colonel in the privacy of the domestic circle, March. You’d like him. He’s a splendid old fellow; regular type. Talk about spring!

“You ought to see the widow’s little back yard these days. You know that glass gallery just beyond the dining-room? Those girls have got the pot-plants out of that, and a lot more, and they’ve turned the edges of that back yard, along the fence, into a regular bower; they’ve got sweet peas planted, and nasturtiums, and we shall be in a blaze of glory about the beginning of June. Fun to see ’em work in the garden, and the bird bossing the job in his cage under the cherry-tree. Have to keep the middle of the yard for the clothesline, but six days in the week it’s a lawn, and I go over it with a mower myself. March, there ain’t anything like a home, is there? Dear little cot of your own, heigh? I tell you, March, when I get to pushing that mower round, and the colonel is smoking his cigar in the gallery, and those girls are pottering over the flowers, one of these soft evenings after dinner, I feel like a human being. Yes, I do. I struck it rich when I concluded to take my meals at the widow’s. For eight dollars a week I get good board, refined society, and all the advantages of a Christian home. By-the-way, you’ve never had much talk with Miss Woodburn, have you, March?”

“Not so much as with Miss Woodburn’s father.”

“Well, he is rather apt to scoop the conversation. I must draw his fire, sometime, when you and Mrs. March are around, and get you a chance with Miss Woodburn.”

“I should like that better, I believe,” said March.

“Well, I shouldn’t wonder if you did. Curious, but Miss Woodburn isn’t at all your idea of a Southern girl. She’s got lots of go; she’s never idle a minute; she keeps the old

gentleman in first-class shape, and she don't believe a bit in the slavery solution of the labor problem; says she's glad it's gone, and if it's anything like the effects of it, she's glad it went before her time. No, sir, she's as full of snap as the liveliest kind of a Northern girl. None of that sunny Southern languor you read about."

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“I suppose the typical Southerner, like the typical anything else, is pretty difficult to find,” said March. “But perhaps Miss Woodburn represents the new South. The modern conditions must be producing a modern type.”

“Well, that’s what she and the colonel both say. They say there ain’t anything left of that Walter Scott dignity and chivalry in the rising generation; takes too much time. You ought to see her sketch the old-school, high-and-mighty manners, as they survive among some of the antiques in Charlottesburg. If that thing could be put upon the stage it would be a killing success. Makes the old gentleman laugh in spite of himself. But he’s as proud of her as Punch, anyway. Why don’t you and Mrs. March come round oftener? Look here! How would it do to have a little excursion, somewhere, after the spring fairly gets in its work?”

“Reporters present?”

“No, no! Nothing of that kind; perfectly sincere and disinterested enjoyment.”

“Oh, a few handbills to be scattered around: ‘Buy Every Other Week,’ ’Look out for the next number of “Every Other Week,"’ ’Every Other Week at all the news-stands.’ Well, I’ll talk it over with Mrs. March. I suppose there’s no great hurry.”

March told his wife of the idyllic mood in which he had left Fulkerson at the widow’s door, and she said he must be in love.

“Why, of course! I wonder I didn’t think of that. But Fulkerson is such an impartial admirer of the whole sex that you can’t think of his liking one more than another. I don’t know that he showed any unjust partiality, though, in his talk of ‘those girls,’ as he called them. And I always rather fancied that Mrs. Mandel—he’s done so much for her, you know; and she is such a well-balanced, well-preserved person, and so lady-like and correct——”

“Fulkerson had the word for her: academic. She’s everything that instruction and discipline can make of a woman; but I shouldn’t think they could make enough of her to be in love with.”

“Well, I don’t know. The academic has its charm. There are moods in which I could imagine myself in love with an academic person. That regularity of line; that reasoned strictness of contour; that neatness of pose; that slightly conventional but harmonious grouping of the emotions and morals—you can see how it would have its charm, the Wedgwood in human nature? I wonder where Mrs. Mandel keeps her urn and her willow.”

“I should think she might have use for them in that family, poor thing!” said Mrs. March.

“Ah, that reminds me,” said her husband, “that we had another talk with the old gentleman, this afternoon, about Fulkerson’s literary, artistic, and advertising orgie, and it’s postponed till October.”

“The later the better, I should think,” said Mrs: March, who did not really think about it at all, but whom the date fixed for it caused to think of the intervening time. “We have got to consider what we will do about the summer, before long, Basil.”

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“Oh, not yet, not yet,” he pleaded; with that man’s willingness to abide in the present, which is so trying to a woman. “It’s only the end of April.”

“It will be the end of June before we know. And these people wanting the Boston house another year complicates it. We can’t spend the summer there, as we planned.”

“They oughtn’t to have offered us an increased rent; they have taken an advantage of us.”

“I don’t know that it matters,” said Mrs. March. “I had decided not to go there.”

“Had you? This is a surprise.”

“Everything is a surprise to you, Basil, when it happens.”

“True; I keep the world fresh, that way.”

“It wouldn’t have been any change to go from one city to another for the summer. We might as well have stayed in New York.”

“Yes, I wish we had stayed,” said March, idly humoring a conception of the accomplished fact. “Mrs. Green would have let us have the gimcrackery very cheap for the summer months; and we could have made all sorts of nice little excursions and trips off and been twice as well as if we had spent the summer away.”

“Nonsense! You know we couldn’t spend the summer in New York.”

“I know I could.”

“What stuff! You couldn’t manage.”

“Oh yes, I could. I could take my meals at Fulkerson’s widow’s; or at Maroni’s, with poor old Lindau: he’s got to dining there again. Or, I could keep house, and he could dine with me here.”

There was a teasing look in March’s eyes, and he broke into a laugh, at the firmness with which his wife said: “I think if there is to be any housekeeping, I will stay, too; and help to look after it. I would try not intrude upon you and your guest.”

“Oh, we should be only too glad to have you join us,” said March, playing with fire.

“Very well, then, I wish you would take him off to Maroni’s, the next time he comes to dine here!” cried his wife.

The experiment of making March's old friend free of his house had not given her all the pleasure that so kind a thing ought to have afforded so good a woman. She received Lindau at first with robust benevolence, and the high resolve not to let any of his little peculiarities alienate her from a sense of his claim upon her sympathy and gratitude, not only as a man who had been so generously fond of her husband in his youth, but a hero who had suffered for her country. Her theory was that his mutilation must not be ignored, but must be kept in mind as a monument of his sacrifice, and she fortified Bella with this conception, so that the child bravely sat next his maimed arm at table and helped him to dishes he could not reach, and cut up his meat for him. As for Mrs. March herself, the thought of his mutilation made her a little faint; she was not without a bewildered resentment of its presence as a sort of oppression. She did not like his drinking so much of March's

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beer, either; it was no harm, but it was somehow unworthy, out of character with a hero of the war. But what she really could not reconcile herself to was the violence of Lindau's sentiments concerning the whole political and social fabric. She did not feel sure that he should be allowed to say such things before the children, who had been nurtured in the faith of Bunker Hill and Appomattox, as the beginning and the end of all possible progress in human rights. As a woman she was naturally an aristocrat, but as an American she was theoretically a democrat; and it astounded, it alarmed her, to hear American democracy denounced as a shuffling evasion. She had never cared much for the United States Senate, but she doubted if she ought to sit by when it was railed at as a rich man's club. It shocked her to be told that the rich and poor were not equal before the law in a country where justice must be paid for at every step in fees and costs, or where a poor man must go to war in his own person, and a rich man might hire someone to go in his. Mrs. March felt that this rebellious mind in Lindau really somehow outlawed him from sympathy, and retroactively undid his past suffering for the country: she had always particularly valued that provision of the law, because in forecasting all the possible mischances that might befall her own son, she had been comforted by the thought that if there ever was another war, and Tom were drafted, his father could buy him a substitute. Compared with such blasphemy as this, Lindau's declaration that there was not equality of opportunity in America, and that fully one-half the people were debarred their right to the pursuit of happiness by the hopeless conditions of their lives, was flattering praise. She could not listen to such things in silence, though, and it did not help matters when Lindau met her arguments with facts and reasons which she felt she was merely not sufficiently instructed to combat, and he was not quite gentlemanly to urge. "I am afraid for the effect on the children," she said to her husband. "Such perfectly distorted ideas—Tom will be ruined by them."

"Oh, let Tom find out where they're false," said March. "It will be good exercise for his faculties of research. At any rate, those things are getting said nowadays; he'll have to hear them sooner or later."

"Had he better hear them at home?" demanded his wife.

"Why, you know, as you're here to refute them, Isabel," he teased, "perhaps it's the best place. But don't mind poor old Lindau, my dear. He says himself that his parg is worse than his pidte, you know."

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“Ah, it’s too late now to mind him,” she sighed. In a moment of rash good feeling, or perhaps an exalted conception of duty, she had herself proposed that Lindau should come every week and read German with Tom; and it had become a question first how they could get him to take pay for it, and then how they could get him to stop it. Mrs. March never ceased to wonder at herself for having brought this about, for she had warned her husband against making any engagement with Lindau which would bring him regularly to the house: the Germans stuck so, and were so unscrupulously dependent. Yet, the deed being done, she would not ignore the duty of hospitality, and it was always she who made the old man stay to their Sunday-evening tea when he lingered near the hour, reading Schiller and Heine and Uhland with the boy, in the clean shirt with which he observed the day; Lindau’s linen was not to be trusted during the week. She now concluded a season of mournful reflection by saying, “He will get you into trouble, somehow, Basil.”

“Well, I don’t know how, exactly. I regard Lindau as a political economist of an unusual type; but I shall not let him array me against the constituted authorities. Short of that, I think I am safe.”

“Well, be careful, Basil; be careful. You know you are so rash.”

“I suppose I may continue to pity him? He is such a poor, lonely old fellow. Are you really sorry he’s come into our lives, my dear?”

“No, no; not that. I feel as you do about it; but I wish I felt easier about him—sure, that is, that we’re not doing wrong to let him keep on talking so.”

“I suspect we couldn’t help it,” March returned, lightly. “It’s one of what Lindau calls his ‘brincibles’ to say what he thinks.”

II.

The Marches had no longer the gross appetite for novelty which urges youth to a surfeit of strange scenes, experiences, ideas; and makes travel, with all its annoyances and fatigues, an inexhaustible delight. But there is no doubt that the chief pleasure of their life in New York was from its quality of foreignness: the flavor of olives, which, once tasted, can never be forgotten. The olives may not be of the first excellence; they may be a little stale, and small and poor, to begin with, but they are still olives, and the fond palate craves them. The sort which grew in New York, on lower Sixth Avenue and in the region of Jefferson Market and on the soft exposures south of Washington Square, were none the less acceptable because they were of the commonest Italian variety.

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The Marches spent a good deal of time and money in a grocery of that nationality, where they found all the patriotic comestibles and potables, and renewed their faded Italian with the friendly family in charge. Italian table d'hotes formed the adventure of the week, on the day when Mrs. March let her domestics go out, and went herself to dine abroad with her husband and children; and they became adepts in the restaurants where they were served, and which they varied almost from dinner to dinner. The perfect decorum of these places, and their immunity from offence in any, emboldened the Marches to experiment in Spanish restaurants, where red pepper and beans insisted in every dinner, and where once they chanced upon a night of 'olla podrida', with such appeals to March's memory of a boyish ambition to taste the dish that he became poetic and then pensive over its cabbage and carrots, peas and bacon. For a rare combination of international motives they prized most the table d'hote of a French lady, who had taken a Spanish husband in a second marriage, and had a Cuban negro for her cook, with a cross-eyed Alsation for waiter, and a slim young South-American for cashier. March held that some thing of the catholic character of these relations expressed itself in the generous and tolerant variety of the dinner, which was singularly abundant for fifty cents, without wine. At one very neat French place he got a dinner at the same price with wine, but it was not so abundant; and March inquired in fruitless speculation why the table d'hote of the Italians, a notoriously frugal and abstemious people, should be usually more than you wanted at seventy-five cents and a dollar, and that of the French rather less at half a dollar. He could not see that the frequenters were greatly different at the different places; they were mostly Americans, of subdued manners and conjecturably subdued fortunes, with here and there a table full of foreigners. There was no noise and not much smoking anywhere; March liked going to that neat French place because there Madame sat enthroned and high behind a 'comptoir' at one side of the room, and every body saluted her in going out. It was there that a gentle-looking young couple used to dine, in whom the Marches became effectlessly interested, because they thought they looked like that when they were young. The wife had an aesthetic dress, and defined her pretty head by wearing her back-hair pulled up very tight under her bonnet; the husband had dreamy eyes set wide apart under a pure forehead. "They are artists, August, I think," March suggested to the waiter, when he had vainly asked about them. "Oh, hartis, cedenly," August consented; but Heaven knows whether they were, or what they were: March never learned.

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This immunity from acquaintance, this touch-and go quality in their New York sojourn, this almost loss of individuality at times, after the intense identification of their Boston life, was a relief, though Mrs. March had her misgivings, and questioned whether it were not perhaps too relaxing to the moral fibre. March refused to explore his conscience; he allowed that it might be so; but he said he liked now and then to feel his personality in that state of solution. They went and sat a good deal in the softening evenings among the infants and dotards of Latin extraction in Washington Square, safe from all who ever knew them, and enjoyed the advancing season, which thickened the foliage of the trees and flattered out of sight the church warden's Gothic of the University Building. The infants were sometimes cross, and cried in their weary mothers' or little sisters' arms; but they did not disturb the dotards, who slept, some with their heads fallen forward, and some with their heads fallen back; March arbitrarily distinguished those with the drooping faces as tipsy and ashamed to confront the public. The small Italian children raced up and down the asphalt paths, playing American games of tag and hide and-whoop; larger boys passed ball, in training for potential championships. The Marches sat and mused, or quarrelled fitfully about where they should spend the summer, like sparrows, he once said, till the electric lights began to show distinctly among the leaves, and they looked round and found the infants and dotards gone and the benches filled with lovers. That was the signal for the Marches to go home. He said that the spectacle of so much courtship as the eye might take in there at a glance was not, perhaps, oppressive, but the thought that at the same hour the same thing was going on all over the country, wherever two young fools could get together, was more than he could bear; he did not deny that it was natural, and, in a measureuthorized, but he declared that it was hackneyed; and the fact that it must go on forever, as long as the race lasted, made him tired.

At home, generally, they found that the children had not missed them, and were perfectly safe. It was one of the advantages of a flat that they could leave the children there whenever they liked without anxiety. They liked better staying there than wandering about in the evening with their parents, whose excursions seemed to them somewhat aimless, and their pleasures insipid. They studied, or read, or looked out of the window at the street sights; and their mother always came back to them with a pang for their lonesomeness. Bella knew some little girls in the house, but in a ceremonious way; Tom had formed no friendships among the boys at school such as he had left in Boston; as nearly as he could explain, the New York fellows carried canes at an age when they would have had them broken for them by the other boys at Boston; and they were both sissyish and fast. It was probably prejudice; he never

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could say exactly what their demerits were, and neither he nor Bella was apparently so homesick as they pretended, though they answered inquirers, the one that New York was a hole, and the other that it was horrid, and that all they lived for was to get back to Boston. In the mean time they were thrown much upon each other for society, which March said was well for both of them; he did not mind their cultivating a little gloom and the sense of a common wrong; it made them better comrades, and it was providing them with amusing reminiscences for the future. They really enjoyed Bohemianizing in that harmless way: though Tom had his doubts of its respectability; he was very punctilious about his sister, and went round from his own school every day to fetch her home from hers. The whole family went to the theatre a good deal, and enjoyed themselves together in their desultory explorations of the city.

They lived near Greenwich Village, and March liked strolling through its quaintness toward the waterside on a Sunday, when a hereditary Sabbatarianism kept his wife at home; he made her observe that it even kept her at home from church. He found a lingering quality of pure Americanism in the region, and he said the very bells called to worship in a nasal tone. He liked the streets of small brick houses, with here and there one painted red, and the mortar lines picked out in white, and with now and then a fine wooden portal of fluted pillars and a bowed transom. The rear of the tenement-houses showed him the picturesqueness of clothes-lines fluttering far aloft, as in Florence; and the new apartment-houses, breaking the old sky-line with their towering stories, implied a life as alien to the American manner as anything in continental Europe. In fact, foreign faces and foreign tongues prevailed in Greenwich Village, but no longer German or even Irish tongues or faces. The eyes and earrings of Italians twinkled in and out of the alleyways and basements, and they seemed to abound even in the streets, where long ranks of trucks drawn up in Sunday rest along the curbstones suggested the presence of a race of sturdier strength than theirs. March liked the swarthy, strange visages; he found nothing menacing for the future in them; for wickedness he had to satisfy himself as he could with the sneering, insolent, clean-shaven mug of some rare American of the b'hoy type, now almost as extinct in New York as the dodo or the volunteer fireman. When he had found his way, among the ash-barrels and the groups of decently dressed church-goers, to the docks, he experienced a sufficient excitement in the recent arrival of a French steamer, whose sheds were thronged with hacks and express-wagons, and in a tacit inquiry into the emotions of the passengers, fresh from the cleanliness of Paris, and now driving up through the filth of those streets.

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Some of the streets were filthier than others; there was at least a choice; there were boxes and barrels of kitchen offal on all the sidewalks, but not everywhere manure-heaps, and in some places the stench was mixed with the more savory smell of cooking. One Sunday morning, before the winter was quite gone, the sight of the frozen refuse melting in heaps, and particularly the loathsome edges of the rotting ice near the gutters, with the strata of waste-paper and straw litter, and egg-shells and orange peel, potato-skins and cigar-stumps, made him unhappy. He gave a whimsical shrug for the squalor of the neighboring houses, and said to himself rather than the boy who was with him: "It's curious, isn't it, how fond the poor people are of these unpleasant thoroughfares? You always find them living in the worst streets."

"The burden of all the wrong in the world comes on the poor," said the boy. "Every sort of fraud and swindling hurts them the worst. The city wastes the money it's paid to clean the streets with, and the poor have to suffer, for they can't afford to pay twice, like the rich."

March stopped short. "Hallo, Tom! Is that your wisdom?"

"It's what Mr. Lindau says," answered the boy, doggedly, as if not pleased to have his ideas mocked at, even if they were second-hand.

"And you didn't tell him that the poor lived in dirty streets because they liked them, and were too lazy and worthless to have them cleaned?"

"No; I didn't."

"I'm surprised. What do you think of Lindau, generally speaking, Tom?"

"Well, sir, I don't like the way he talks about some things. I don't suppose this country is perfect, but I think it's about the best there is, and it don't do any good to look at its drawbacks all the time."

"Sound, my son," said March, putting his hand on the boy's shoulder and beginning to walk on. "Well?"

"Well, then, he says that it isn't the public frauds only that the poor have to pay for, but they have to pay for all the vices of the rich; that when a speculator fails, or a bank cashier defaults, or a firm suspends, or hard times come, it's the poor who have to give up necessaries where the rich give up luxuries."

"Well, well! And then?"

"Well, then I think the crank comes in, in Mr. Lindau. He says there's no need of failures or frauds or hard times. It's ridiculous. There always have been and there always will be. But if you tell him that, it seems to make him perfectly furious."

March repeated the substance of this talk to his wife. “I’m glad to know that Tom can see through such ravings. He has lots of good common sense.”

It was the afternoon of the same Sunday, and they were sauntering up Fifth Avenue, and admiring the wide old double houses at the lower end; at one corner they got a distinct pleasure out of the gnarled elbows that a pollarded wistaria leaned upon the top of a garden wall—for its convenience in looking into the street, he said. The line of these comfortable dwellings, once so fashionable, was continually broken by the facades of shops; and March professed himself vulgarized by a want of style in the people they met in their walk to Twenty-third Street.

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“Take me somewhere to meet my fellow-exclusives, Isabel,” he demanded. “I pine for the society of my peers.”

He hailed a passing omnibus, and made his wife get on the roof with him. “Think of our doing such a thing in Boston!” she sighed, with a little shiver of satisfaction in her immunity from recognition and comment.

“You wouldn’t be afraid to do it in London or Paris?”

“No; we should be strangers there—just as we are in New York. I wonder how long one could be a stranger here.”

“Oh, indefinitely, in our way of living. The place is really vast, so much larger than it used to seem, and so heterogeneous.”

When they got down very far up-town, and began to walk back by Madison Avenue, they found themselves in a different population from that they dwelt among; not heterogeneous at all; very homogeneous, and almost purely American; the only qualification was American Hebrew. Such a well-dressed, well-satisfied, well-fed looking crowd poured down the broad sidewalks before the handsome, stupid houses that March could easily pretend he had got among his fellow-plutocrats at last. Still he expressed his doubts whether this Sunday afternoon parade, which seemed to be a thing of custom, represented the best form among the young people of that region; he wished he knew; he blamed himself for becoming of a fastidious conjecture; he could not deny the fashion and the richness and the indigeneity of the spectacle; the promenaders looked New-Yorky; they were the sort of people whom you would know for New-Yorkers elsewhere,—so well equipped and so perfectly kept at all points. Their silk hats shone, and their boots; their frocks had the right distension behind, and their bonnets perfect poise and distinction.

The Marches talked of these and other facts of their appearance, and curiously questioned whether this were the best that a great material civilization could come to; it looked a little dull. The men’s faces were shrewd and alert, and yet they looked dull; the women’s were pretty and knowing, and yet dull. It was, probably, the holiday expression of the vast, prosperous commercial class, with unlimited money, and no ideals that money could not realize; fashion and comfort were all that they desired to compass, and the culture that furnishes showily, that decorates and that tells; the culture, say, of plays and operas, rather than books.

Perhaps the observers did the promenaders injustice; they might not have been as common-minded as they looked. “But,” March said, “I understand now why the poor people don’t come up here and live in this clean, handsome, respectable quarter of the town; they would be bored to death. On the whole, I think I should prefer Mott Street myself.”

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In other walks the Marches tried to find some of the streets they had wandered through the first day of their wedding journey in New York, so long ago. They could not make sure of them; but once they ran down to the Battery, and easily made sure of that, though not in its old aspect. They recalled the hot morning, when they sauntered over the trodden weed that covered the sickly grass-plots there, and sentimentalized the sweltering paupers who had crept out of the squalid tenements about for a breath of air after a sleepless night. Now the paupers were gone, and where the old mansions that had fallen to their use once stood, there towered aloft and abroad those heights and masses of many-storied brick-work for which architecture has yet no proper form and aesthetics no name. The trees and shrubs, all in their young spring green, blew briskly over the guarded turf in the south wind that came up over the water; and in the well-paved alleys the ghosts of eighteenth-century fashion might have met each other in their old haunts, and exchanged stately congratulations upon its vastly bettered condition, and perhaps puzzled a little over the colossal lady on Bedloe's Island, with her lifted torch, and still more over the curving tracks and chalet-stations of the Elevated road. It is an outlook of unrivalled beauty across the bay, that smokes and flashes with the in numerable stacks and sails of commerce, to the hills beyond, where the moving forest of masts halts at the shore, and roots itself in the groves of the many villaged uplands. The Marches paid the charming prospects a willing duty, and rejoiced in it as generously as if it had been their own. Perhaps it was, they decided. He said people owned more things in common than they were apt to think; and they drew the consolations of proprietorship from the excellent management of Castle Garden, which they penetrated for a moment's glimpse of the huge rotunda, where the immigrants first set foot on our continent. It warmed their hearts, so easily moved to any cheap sympathy, to see the friendly care the nation took of these humble guests; they found it even pathetic to hear the proper authority calling out the names of such as had kin or acquaintance waiting there to meet them. No one appeared troubled or anxious; the officials had a conscientious civility; the government seemed to manage their welcome as well as a private company or corporation could have done. In fact, it was after the simple strangers had left the government care that March feared their woes might begin; and he would have liked the government to follow each of them to his home, wherever he meant to fix it within our borders. He made note of the looks of the licensed runners and touters waiting for the immigrants outside the government premises; he intended to work them up into a dramatic effect in some sketch, but they remained mere material in his memorandum-book, together with some quaint old houses on the Sixth Avenue road, which he had noticed on the way down.

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On the way up, these were superseded in his regard by some hip-roof structures on the Ninth Avenue, which he thought more Dutch-looking. The perspectives of the cross-streets toward the river were very lively, with their turmoil of trucks and cars and carts and hacks and foot passengers, ending in the chimneys and masts of shipping, and final gleams of dancing water. At a very noisy corner, clangorous with some sort of ironworking, he made his wife enjoy with him the quiet sarcasm of an inn that called itself the Home-like Hotel, and he speculated at fantastic length on the gentle associations of one who should have passed his youth under its roof.

III.

First and last, the Marches did a good deal of travel on the Elevated roads, which, he said, gave you such glimpses of material aspects in the city as some violent invasion of others' lives might afford in human nature. Once, when the impulse of adventure was very strong in them, they went quite the length of the West Side lines, and saw the city pushing its way by irregular advances into the country. Some spaces, probably held by the owners for that rise in value which the industry of others providentially gives to the land of the wise and good, it left vacant comparatively far down the road, and built up others at remoter points. It was a world of lofty apartment houses beyond the Park, springing up in isolated blocks, with stretches of invaded rusticity between, and here and there an old country-seat standing dusty in its budding vines with the ground before it in rocky upheaval for city foundations. But wherever it went or wherever it paused, New York gave its peculiar stamp; and the adventurers were amused to find One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street inchoately like Twenty-third Street and Fourteenth Street in its shops and shoppers. The butchers' shops and milliners' shops on the avenue might as well have been at Tenth as at One Hundredth Street.

The adventurers were not often so adventurous. They recognized that in their willingness to let their fancy range for them, and to let speculation do the work of inquiry, they were no longer young. Their point of view was singularly unchanged, and their impressions of New York remained the same that they had been fifteen years before: huge, noisy, ugly, kindly, it seemed to them now as it seemed then. The main difference was that they saw it more now as a life, and then they only regarded it as a spectacle; and March could not release himself from a sense of complicity with it, no matter what whimsical, or alien, or critical attitude he took. A sense of the striving and the suffering deeply possessed him; and this grew the more intense as he gained some knowledge of the forces at work-forces of pity, of destruction, of perdition, of salvation. He wandered about on Sunday not only through the streets, but into this tabernacle and that, as the spirit moved him, and listened to those who dealt with Christianity

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as a system of economics as well as a religion. He could not get his wife to go with him; she listened to his report of what he heard, and trembled; it all seemed fantastic and menacing. She lamented the literary peace, the intellectual refinement of the life they had left behind them; and he owned it was very pretty, but he said it was not life—it was death-in-life. She liked to hear him talk in that strain of virtuous self-denunciation, but she asked him, "Which of your prophets are you going to follow?" and he answered: "All-all! And a fresh one every Sunday." And so they got their laugh out of it at last, but with some sadness at heart, and with a dim consciousness that they had got their laugh out of too many things in life.

What really occupied and compassed his activities, in spite of his strenuous reveries of work beyond it, was his editorship. On its social side it had not fulfilled all the expectations which Fulkerson's radiant sketch of its duties and relations had caused him to form of it. Most of the contributions came from a distance; even the articles written in New York reached him through the post, and so far from having his valuable time, as they called it, consumed in interviews with his collaborators, he rarely saw any of them. The boy on the stairs, who was to fence him from importunate visitors, led a life of luxurious disoccupation, and whistled almost uninterruptedly. When any one came, March found himself embarrassed and a little anxious. The visitors were usually young men, terribly respectful, but cherishing, as he imagined, ideals and opinions chasmally different from his; and he felt in their presence something like an anachronism, something like a fraud. He tried to freshen up his sympathies on them, to get at what they were really thinking and feeling, and it was some time before he could understand that they were not really thinking and feeling anything of their own concerning their art, but were necessarily, in their quality of young, inexperienced men, mere acceptants of older men's thoughts and feelings, whether they were tremendously conservative, as some were, or tremendously progressive, as others were. Certain of them called themselves realists, certain romanticists; but none of them seemed to know what realism was, or what romanticism; they apparently supposed the difference a difference of material. March had imagined himself taking home to lunch or dinner the aspirants for editorial favor whom he liked, whether he liked their work or not; but this was not an easy matter. Those who were at all interesting seemed to have engagements and preoccupations; after two or three experiments with the bashfuller sort—those who had come up to the metropolis with manuscripts in their hands, in the good old literary tradition—he wondered whether he was otherwise like them when he was young like them. He could not flatter himself that he was not; and yet he had a hope that the world had grown worse since his time, which his wife encouraged:

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Mrs. March was not eager to pursue the hospitalities which she had at first imagined essential to the literary prosperity of 'Every Other Week'; her family sufficed her; she would willingly have seen no one out of it but the strangers at the weekly table-d'hote dinner, or the audiences at the theatres. March's devotion to his work made him reluctant to delegate it to any one; and as the summer advanced, and the question of where to go grew more vexed, he showed a man's base willingness to shirk it for himself by not going anywhere. He asked his wife why she did not go somewhere with the children, and he joined her in a search for non-malarial regions on the map when she consented to entertain this notion. But when it came to the point she would not go; he offered to go with her then, and then she would not let him. She said she knew he would be anxious about his work; he protested that he could take it with him to any distance within a few hours, but she would not be persuaded. She would rather he stayed; the effect would be better with Mr. Fulkerson; they could make excursions, and they could all get off a week or two to the seashore near Boston—the only real seashore—in August. The excursions were practically confined to a single day at Coney Island; and once they got as far as Boston on the way to the seashore near Boston; that is, Mrs. March and the children went; an editorial exigency kept March at the last moment. The Boston streets seemed very queer and clean and empty to the children, and the buildings little; in the horse-cars the Boston faces seemed to arraign their mother with a down-drawn severity that made her feel very guilty. She knew that this was merely the Puritan mask, the cast of a dead civilization, which people of very amiable and tolerant minds were doomed to wear, and she sighed to think that less than a year of the heterogeneous gayety of New York should have made her afraid of it. The sky seemed cold and gray; the east wind, which she had always thought so delicious in summer, cut her to the heart. She took her children up to the South End, and in the pretty square where they used to live they stood before their alienated home, and looked up at its close-shuttered windows. The tenants must have been away, but Mrs. March had not the courage to ring and make sure, though she had always promised herself that she would go all over the house when she came back, and see how they had used it; she could pretend a desire for something she wished to take away. She knew she could not bear it now; and the children did not seem eager. She did not push on to the seaside; it would be forlorn there without their father; she was glad to go back to him in the immense, friendly homelessness of New York, and hold him answerable for the change, in her heart or her mind, which made its shapeless tumult a refuge and a consolation.

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She found that he had been giving the cook a holiday, and dining about hither and thither with Fulkerson. Once he had dined with him at the widow's (as they always called Mrs. Leighton), and then had spent the evening there, and smoked with Fulkerson and Colonel Woodburn on the gallery overlooking the back yard. They were all spending the summer in New York. The widow had got so good an offer for her house at St. Barnaby for the summer that she could not refuse it; and the Woodburns found New York a watering-place of exemplary coolness after the burning Augusts and Septembers of Charlottesburg.

"You can stand it well enough in our climate, sir," the colonel explained, "till you come to the September heat, that sometimes runs well into October; and then you begin to lose your temper, sir. It's never quite so hot as it is in New York at times, but it's hot longer, sir." He alleged, as if something of the sort were necessary, the example of a famous Southwestern editor who spent all his summers in a New York hotel as the most luxurious retreat on the continent, consulting the weather forecasts, and running off on torrid days to the mountains or the sea, and then hurrying back at the promise of cooler weather. The colonel had not found it necessary to do this yet; and he had been reluctant to leave town, where he was working up a branch of the inquiry which had so long occupied him, in the libraries, and studying the great problem of labor and poverty as it continually presented itself to him in the streets. He said that he talked with all sorts of people, whom he found monstrously civil, if you took them in the right way; and he went everywhere in the city without fear and apparently without danger. March could not find out that he had ridden his hobby into the homes of want which he visited, or had proposed their enslavement to the inmates as a short and simple solution of the great question of their lives; he appeared to have contented himself with the collection of facts for the persuasion of the cultivated classes. It seemed to March a confirmation of this impression that the colonel should address his deductions from these facts so unsparingly to him; he listened with a respectful patience, for which Fulkerson afterward personally thanked him. Fulkerson said it was not often the colonel found such a good listener; generally nobody listened but Mrs. Leighton, who thought his ideas were shocking, but honored him for holding them so conscientiously. Fulkerson was glad that March, as the literary department, had treated the old gentleman so well, because there was an open feud between him and the art department. Beaton was outrageously rude, Fulkerson must say; though as for that, the old colonel seemed quite able to take care of himself, and gave Beaton an unqualified contempt in return for his unmannerliness. The worst of it was, it distressed the old lady so; she admired Beaton as much as she respected the colonel, and she admired Beaton, Fulkerson thought, rather more than Miss Leighton did; he asked March if he had noticed them together. March had noticed them, but without any very definite impression except that Beaton seemed to give the whole evening to the girl. Afterward he recollected that he had fancied her rather harassed by his devotion, and it was this point that he wished to present for his wife's opinion.

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“Girls often put on that air,” she said. “It’s one of their ways of teasing. But then, if the man was really very much in love, and she was only enough in love to be uncertain of herself, she might very well seem troubled. It would be a very serious question. Girls often don’t know what to do in such a case.”

“Yes,” said March, “I’ve often been glad that I was not a girl, on that account. But I guess that on general principles Beaton is not more in love than she is. I couldn’t imagine that young man being more in love with anybody, unless it was himself. He might be more in love with himself than any one else was.”

“Well, he doesn’t interest me a great deal, and I can’t say Miss Leighton does, either. I think she can take care of herself. She has herself very well in hand.”

“Why so censorious?” pleaded March. “I don’t defend her for having herself in hand; but is it a fault?”

Mrs. March did not say. She asked, “And how does Mr. Fulkerson’s affair get on?”

“His affair? You really think it is one? Well, I’ve fancied so myself, and I’ve had an idea of some time asking him; Fulkerson strikes one as truly domesticable, conjugable at heart; but I’ve waited for him to speak.”

“I should think so.”

“Yes. He’s never opened on the subject yet. Do you know, I think Fulkerson has his moments of delicacy.”

“Moments! He’s all delicacy in regard to women.”

“Well, perhaps so. There is nothing in them to rouse his advertising instincts.”

IV

The Dryfoos family stayed in town till August. Then the father went West again to look after his interests; and Mrs. Mandel took the two girls to one of the great hotels in Saratoga. Fulkerson said that he had never seen anything like Saratoga for fashion, and Mrs. Mandel remembered that in her own young ladyhood this was so for at least some weeks of the year. She had been too far withdrawn from fashion since her marriage to know whether it was still so or not. In this, as in so many other matters, the Dryfoos family helplessly relied upon Fulkerson, in spite of Dryfoos’s angry determination that he should not run the family, and in spite of Christine’s doubt of his omniscience; if he did not know everything, she was aware that he knew more than herself. She thought that they had a right to have him go with them to Saratoga, or at least go up and engage their rooms beforehand; but Fulkerson did not offer to do either,

and she did not quite see her way to commanding his services. The young ladies took what Mela called splendid dresses with them; they sat in the park of tall, slim trees which the hotel's quadrangle enclosed, and listened to the music in the morning, or on the long piazza in the afternoon and looked at the driving in the street, or in the vast parlors by night, where all the other ladies were, and they felt that they were of the best

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there. But they knew nobody, and Mrs. Mandel was so particular that Mela was prevented from continuing the acquaintance even of the few young men who danced with her at the Saturday-night hops. They drove about, but they went to places without knowing why, except that the carriage man took them, and they had all the privileges of a proud exclusivism without desiring them. Once a motherly matron seemed to perceive their isolation, and made overtures to them, but then desisted, as if repelled by Christine's suspicion, or by Mela's too instant and hilarious good-fellowship, which expressed itself in hoarse laughter and in a flow of talk full of topical and syntactical freedom. From time to time she offered to bet Christine that if Mr. Fulkerson was only there they would have a good time; she wondered what they were all doing in New York, where she wished herself; she rallied her sister about Beaton, and asked her why she did not write and tell him to come up there.

Mela knew that Christine had expected Beaton to follow them. Some banter had passed between them to this effect; he said he should take them in on his way home to Syracuse. Christine would not have hesitated to write to him and remind him of his promise; but she had learned to distrust her literature with Beaton since he had laughed at the spelling in a scrap of writing which dropped out of her music-book one night. She believed that he would not have laughed if he had known it was hers; but she felt that she could hide better the deficiencies which were not committed to paper; she could manage with him in talking; she was too ignorant of her ignorance to recognize the mistakes she made then. Through her own passion she perceived that she had some kind of fascination for him; she was graceful, and she thought it must be that; she did not understand that there was a kind of beauty in her small, irregular features that piqued and haunted his artistic sense, and a look in her black eyes beyond her intelligence and intention. Once he sketched her as they sat together, and flattered the portrait without getting what he wanted in it; he said he must try her some time in color; and he said things which, when she made Mela repeat them, could only mean that he admired her more than anybody else. He came fitfully, but he came often, and she rested content in a girl's indefiniteness concerning the affair; if her thought went beyond lovemaking to marriage, she believed that she could have him if she wanted him. Her father's money counted in this; she divined that Beaton was poor; but that made no difference; she would have enough for both; the money would have counted as an irresistible attraction if there had been no other.

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The affair had gone on in spite of the sidelong looks of restless dislike with which Dryfoos regarded it; but now when Beaton did not come to Saratoga it necessarily dropped, and Christine's content with it. She bore the trial as long as she could; she used pride and resentment against it; but at last she could not bear it, and with Mela's help she wrote a letter, bantering Beaton on his stay in New York, and playfully boasting of Saratoga. It seemed to them both that it was a very bright letter, and would be sure to bring him; they would have had no scruple about sending it but for the doubt they had whether they had got some of the words right. Mela offered to bet Christine anything she dared that they were right, and she said, Send it anyway; it was no difference if they were wrong. But Christine could not endure to think of that laugh of Beaton's, and there remained only Mrs. Mandel as authority on the spelling. Christine dreaded her authority on other points, but Mela said she knew she would not interfere, and she undertook to get round her. Mrs. Mandel pronounced the spelling bad, and the taste worse; she forbade them to send the letter; and Mela failed to get round her, though she threatened, if Mrs. Mandel would not tell her how to spell the wrong words, that she would send the letter as it was; then Mrs. Mandel said that if Mr. Beaton appeared in Saratoga she would instantly take them both home. When Mela reported this result, Christine accused her of having mismanaged the whole business; she quarrelled with her, and they called each other names. Christine declared that she would not stay in Saratoga, and that if Mrs. Mandel did not go back to New York with her she should go alone. They returned the first week in September; but by that time Beaton had gone to see his people in Syracuse.

Conrad Dryfoos remained at home with his mother after his father went West. He had already taken such a vacation as he had been willing to allow himself, and had spent it on a charity farm near the city, where the fathers with whom he worked among the poor on the East Side in the winter had sent some of their wards for the summer. It was not possible to keep his recreation a secret at the office, and Fulkerson found a pleasure in figuring the jolly time Brother Conrad must have teaching farm work among those paupers and potential reprobates. He invented details of his experience among them, and March could not always help joining in the laugh at Conrad's humorless helplessness under Fulkerson's burlesque denunciation of a summer outing spent in such dissipation.

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They had time for a great deal of joking at the office during the season of leisure which penetrates in August to the very heart of business, and they all got on terms of greater intimacy if not greater friendliness than before. Fulkerson had not had so long to do with the advertising side of human nature without developing a vein of cynicism, of no great depth, perhaps, but broad, and underlying his whole point of view; he made light of Beaton's solemnity, as he made light of Conrad's humanity. The art editor, with abundant sarcasm, had no more humor than the publisher, and was an easy prey in the manager's hands; but when he had been led on by Fulkerson's flatteries to make some betrayal of egotism, he brooded over it till he had thought how to revenge himself in elaborate insult. For Beaton's talent Fulkerson never lost his admiration; but his joke was to encourage him to give himself airs of being the sole source of the magazine's prosperity. No bait of this sort was too obvious for Beaton to swallow; he could be caught with it as often as Fulkerson chose; though he was ordinarily suspicious as to the motives of people in saying things. With March he got on no better than at first. He seemed to be lying in wait for some encroachment of the literary department on the art department, and he met it now and then with anticipative reprisal. After these rebuffs, the editor delivered him over to the manager, who could turn Beaton's contrary-mindedness to account by asking the reverse of what he really wanted done. This was what Fulkerson said; the fact was that he did get on with Beaton and March contented himself with musing upon the contradictions of a character at once so vain and so offensive, so fickle and so sullen, so conscious and so simple.

After the first jarring contact with Dryfoos, the editor ceased to feel the disagreeable fact of the old man's mastery of the financial situation. None of the chances which might have made it painful occurred; the control of the whole affair remained in Fulkerson's hands; before he went West again, Dryfoos had ceased to come about the office, as if, having once worn off the novelty of the sense of owning a literary periodical, he was no longer interested in it.

Yet it was a relief, somehow, when he left town, which he did not do without coming to take a formal leave of the editor at his office. He seemed willing to leave March with a better impression than he had hitherto troubled himself to make; he even said some civil things about the magazine, as if its success pleased him; and he spoke openly to March of his hope that his son would finally become interested in it to the exclusion of the hopes and purposes which divided them. It seemed to March that in the old man's warped and toughened heart he perceived a disappointed love for his son greater than for his other children; but this might have been fancy. Lindau came in with some copy while Dryfoos was there, and March

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introduced them. When Lindau went out, March explained to Dryfoos that he had lost his hand in the war; and he told him something of Lindau's career as he had known it. Dryfoos appeared greatly pleased that 'Every Other Week' was giving Lindau work. He said that he had helped to enlist a good many fellows for the war, and had paid money to fill up the Moffitt County quota under the later calls for troops. He had never been an Abolitionist, but he had joined the Anti-Nebraska party in '55, and he had voted for Fremont and for every Republican President since then.

At his own house March saw more of Lindau than of any other contributor, but the old man seemed to think that he must transact all his business with March at his place of business. The transaction had some peculiarities which perhaps made this necessary. Lindau always expected to receive his money when he brought his copy, as an acknowledgment of the immediate right of the laborer to his hire; and he would not take it in a check because he did not approve of banks, and regarded the whole system of banking as the capitalistic manipulation of the people's money. He would receive his pay only from March's hand, because he wished to be understood as working for him, and honestly earning money honestly earned; and sometimes March inwardly winced a little at letting the old man share the increase of capital won by such speculation as Dryfoos's, but he shook off the feeling. As the summer advanced, and the artists and classes that employed Lindau as a model left town one after another, he gave largely of his increasing leisure to the people in the office of 'Every Other Week.' It was pleasant for March to see the respect with which Conrad Dryfoos always used him, for the sake of his hurt and his gray beard. There was something delicate and fine in it, and there was nothing unkindly on Fulkerson's part in the hostilities which usually passed between himself and Lindau. Fulkerson bore himself reverently at times, too, but it was not in him to keep that up, especially when Lindau appeared with more beer aboard than, as Fulkerson said, he could manage shipshape. On these occasions Fulkerson always tried to start him on the theme of the unduly rich; he made himself the champion of monopolies, and enjoyed the invectives which Lindau heaped upon him as a slave of capital; he said that it did him good.

One day, with the usual show of writhing under Lindau's scorn, he said, "Well, I understand that although you despise me now, Lindau—"

"I ton't desbise you," the old man broke in, his nostrils swelling and his eyes flaming with excitement, "I bity you."

"Well, it seems to come to the same thing in the end," said Fulkerson. "What I understand is that you pity me now as the slave of capital, but you would pity me a great deal more if I was the master of it."

"How you mean?"

“If I was rich.”

“That would tebendt,” said Lindau, trying to control himself. “If you hat inheritedt your money, you might pe innocent; but if you hat mate it, efery man that resbectedt himself would haf to ask how you mate it, and if you hat mate moch, he would know—”

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“Hold on; hold on, now, Lindau! Ain’t that rather un-American doctrine? We’re all brought up, ain’t we, to honor the man that made his money, and look down—or try to look down; sometimes it’s difficult on the fellow that his father left it to?”

The old man rose and struck his breast. “On Amerigan!” he roared, and, as he went on, his accent grew more and more uncertain. “What iss Amerigan? Dere iss no Ameriga any more! You start here free and brafe, and you glaim for efery man de right to life, liperty, and de bursuit of habbiness. And where haf you entedt? No man that vorks vith his handts among you has the liperty to bursue his habbiness. He iss the slafe of some richer man, some gompany, some gorporation, dat crindt him down to the least he can lif on, and that rops him of the marchin of his earnings that he knight pe habby on. Oh, you Amerigans, you haf cot it down goldt, as you say! You ton’t puy foters; you puy lechislatures and goncressmen; you puy gourts; you puy gombetitors; you pay infentors not to infent; you atfertise, and the gounting-room sees dat de etitorial-room toesn’t tink.”

“Yes, we’ve got a little arrangement of that sort with March here,” said Fulkerson.

“Oh, I am sawry,” said the old man, contritely, “I meant noting bersonal. I ton’t tink we are all cuilty or gorrubt, and efen among the rich there are goodt men. But gabidal”—his passion rose again—“where you find gabidal, millions of money that a man hass cot togeder in fife, ten, twenty years, you findt the smell of tears and ploodt! Dat iss what I say. And you cot to loog oudt for yourself when you meet a rich man whether you meet an honest man.”

“Well,” said Fulkerson, “I wish I was a subject of suspicion with you, Lindau. By-the-way,” he added, “I understand that you think capital was at the bottom of the veto of that pension of yours.”

“What bension? What feto?”—The old man flamed up again. “No bension of mine was efer fetoedt. I renounce my bension, begause I would sgorn to dake money from a gofernment that I ton’t peliefe in any more. Where you hear that story?”

“Well, I don’t know,” said Fulkerson, rather embarrassed. “It’s common talk.”

“It’s a gommon lie, then! When the time gome dat dis iss a free gountry again, then I dake a bension again for my woundts; but I would sdarfe before I dake a bension now from a rebublic dat iss bought oap by monobolies, and ron by drusts and gompines, and railroadts andt oil gompanies.”

“Look out, Lindau,” said Fulkerson. “You bite yourself mit dat dog some day.” But when the old man, with a ferocious gesture of renunciation, whirled out of the place, he added: “I guess I went a little too far that time. I touched him on a sore place; I didn’t mean to; I heard some talk about his pension being vetoed from Miss Leighton.” He

addressed these exculpations to March's grave face, and to the pitying deprecation in the eyes of Conrad Dryfoos, whom Lindau's roaring wrath had summoned to the door. "But I'll make it all right with him the next time he comes. I didn't know he was loaded, or I wouldn't have monkeyed with him."

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“Lindau does himself injustice when he gets to talking in that way,” said March. “I hate to hear him. He’s as good an American as any of us; and it’s only because he has too high an ideal of us—”

“Oh, go on! Rub it in—rub it in!” cried Fulkerson, clutching his hair in suffering, which was not altogether burlesque. “How did I know he had renounced his ‘bension’? Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I didn’t know it myself. I only knew that he had none, and I didn’t ask, for I had a notion that it might be a painful subject.”

Fulkerson tried to turn it off lightly. “Well, he’s a noble old fellow; pity he drinks.” March would not smile, and Fulkerson broke out: “Dog on it! I’ll make it up to the old fool the next time he comes. I don’t like that dynamite talk of his; but any man that’s given his hand to the country has got mine in his grip for good. Why, March! You don’t suppose I wanted to hurt his feelings, do you?”

“Why, of course not, Fulkerson.”

But they could not get away from a certain ruefulness for that time, and in the evening Fulkerson came round to March’s to say that he had got Lindau’s address from Conrad, and had looked him up at his lodgings.

“Well, there isn’t so much bric-a-brac there, quite, as Mrs. Green left you; but I’ve made it all right with Lindau, as far as I’m concerned. I told him I didn’t know when I spoke that way, and I honored him for sticking to his ‘brinciples’; I don’t believe in his ‘brincibles’; and we wept on each other’s necks—at least, he did. Dogged if he didn’t kiss me before I knew what he was up to. He said I was his chenerous gong friendt, and he begged my barton if he had said anything to wound me. I tell you it was an affecting scene, March; and rats enough round in that old barracks where he lives to fit out a first-class case of delirium tremens. What does he stay there for? He’s not obliged to?”

Lindau’s reasons, as March repeated them, affected Fulkerson as deliciously comical; but after that he confined his pleasantries at the office to Beaton and Conrad Dryfoos, or, as he said, he spent the rest of the summer in keeping Lindau smoothed up.

It is doubtful if Lindau altogether liked this as well. Perhaps he missed the occasions Fulkerson used to give him of bursting out against the millionaires; and he could not well go on denouncing as the slafe of gabidal a man who had behaved to him as Fulkerson had done, though Fulkerson’s servile relations to capital had been in nowise changed by his nople gonduct.

Their relations continued to wear this irksome character of mutual forbearance; and when Dryfoos returned in October and Fulkerson revived the question of that dinner in celebration of the success of 'Every Other Week,' he carried his complaisance to an extreme that alarmed March for the consequences.

V.

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“You see,” Fulkerson explained, “I find that the old man has got an idea of his own about that banquet, and I guess there’s some sense in it. He wants to have a preliminary little dinner, where we can talk the thing up first-half a dozen of us; and he wants to give us the dinner at his house. Well, that’s no harm. I don’t believe the old man ever gave a dinner, and he’d like to show off a little; there’s a good deal of human nature in the old man, after all. He thought of you, of course, and Colonel Woodburn, and Beaton, and me at the foot of the table; and Conrad; and I suggested Kendricks: he’s such a nice little chap; and the old man himself brought up the idea of Lindau. He said you told him something about him, and he asked why couldn’t we have him, too; and I jumped at it.”

“Have Lindau to dinner?” asked March.

“Certainly; why not? Father Dryfoos has a notion of paying the old fellow a compliment for what he done for the country. There won’t be any trouble about it. You can sit alongside of him, and cut up his meat for him, and help him to things—”

“Yes, but it won’t do, Fulkerson! I don’t believe Lindau ever had on a dress-coat in his life, and I don’t believe his ‘brincibles’ would let him wear one.”

“Well, neither had Dryfoos, for the matter of that. He’s as high-principled as old Pan-Electric himself, when it comes to a dress-coat,” said Fulkerson. “We’re all going to go in business dress; the old man stipulated for that.

“It isn’t the dress-coat alone,” March resumed. “Lindau and Dryfoos wouldn’t get on. You know they’re opposite poles in everything. You mustn’t do it. Dryfoos will be sure to say something to outrage Lindau’s ‘brincibles,’ and there’ll be an explosion. It’s all well enough for Dryfoos to feel grateful to Lindau, and his wish to honor him does him credit; but to have Lindau to dinner isn’t the way. At the best, the old fellow would be very unhappy in such a house; he would have a bad conscience; and I should be sorry to have him feel that he’d been recreant to his ‘brincibles’; they’re about all he’s got, and whatever we think of them, we’re bound to respect his fidelity to them.” March warmed toward Lindau in taking this view of him. “I should feel ashamed if I didn’t protest against his being put in a false position. After all, he’s my old friend, and I shouldn’t like to have him do himself injustice if he is a crank.”

“Of course,” said Fulkerson, with some trouble in his face. “I appreciate your feeling. But there ain’t any danger,” he added, buoyantly. “Anyhow, you spoke too late, as the Irishman said to the chicken when he swallowed him in a fresh egg. I’ve asked Lindau, and he’s accepted with blayzure; that’s what he says.”

March made no other comment than a shrug.

“You’ll see,” Fulkerson continued, “it ’ll go off all right. I’ll engage to make it, and I won’t hold anybody else responsible.”

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In the course of his married life March had learned not to censure the irretrievable; but this was just what his wife had not learned; and she poured out so much astonishment at what Fulkerson had done, and so much disapproval, that March began to palliate the situation a little.

“After all, it isn’t a question of life and death; and, if it were, I don’t see how it’s to be helped now.”

“Oh, it’s not to be helped now. But I am surprised at Mr. Fulkerson.”

“Well, Fulkerson has his moments of being merely human, too.”

Mrs. March would not deign a direct defence of her favorite. “Well, I’m glad there are not to be ladies.”

“I don’t know. Dryfoos thought of having ladies, but it seems your infallible Fulkerson overruled him. Their presence might have kept Lindau and our host in bounds.”

It had become part of the Marches’ conjugal joke for him to pretend that she could allow nothing wrong in Fulkerson, and he now laughed with a mocking air of having expected it when she said: “Well, then, if Mr. Fulkerson says he will see that it all comes out right, I suppose you must trust his tact. I wouldn’t trust yours, Basil. The first wrong step was taken when Mr. Lindau was asked to help on the magazine.”

“Well, it was your infallible Fulkerson that took the step, or at least suggested it. I’m happy to say I had totally forgotten my early friend.”

Mrs. March was daunted and silenced for a moment. Then she said: “Oh, pshaw! You know well enough he did it to please you.”

“I’m very glad he didn’t do it to please you, Isabel,” said her husband, with affected seriousness. “Though perhaps he did.”

He began to look at the humorous aspect of the affair, which it certainly had, and to comment on the singular incongruities which ’Every Other Week’ was destined to involve at every moment of its career. “I wonder if I’m mistaken in supposing that no other periodical was ever like it. Perhaps all periodicals are like it. But I don’t believe there’s another publication in New York that could bring together, in honor of itself, a fraternity and equality crank like poor old Lindau, and a belated sociological crank like Woodburn, and a truculent speculator like old Dryfoos, and a humanitarian dreamer like young Dryfoos, and a sentimentalist like me, and a nondescript like Beaton, and a pure advertising essence like Fulkerson, and a society spirit like Kendricks. If we could only allow one another to talk uninterruptedly all the time, the dinner would be the greatest success in the world, and we should come home full of the highest mutual respect. But

I suspect we can't manage that—even your infallible Fulkerson couldn't work it—and I'm afraid that there'll be some listening that 'll spoil the pleasure of the time."

March was so well pleased with this view of the case that he suggested the idea involved to Fulkerson. Fulkerson was too good a fellow not to laugh at another man's joke, but he laughed a little ruefully, and he seemed worn with more than one kind of care in the interval that passed between the present time and the night of the dinner.

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Dryfoos necessarily depended upon him for advice concerning the scope and nature of the dinner, but he received the advice suspiciously, and contested points of obvious propriety with pertinacious stupidity. Fulkerson said that when it came to the point he would rather have had the thing, as he called it, at Delmonico's or some other restaurant; but when he found that Dryfoos's pride was bound up in having it at his own house, he gave way to him. Dryfoos also wanted his woman-cook to prepare the dinner, but Fulkerson persuaded him that this would not do; he must have it from a caterer. Then Dryfoos wanted his maids to wait at table, but Fulkerson convinced him that this would be incongruous at a man's dinner. It was decided that the dinner should be sent in from Frescobaldi's, and Dryfoos went with Fulkerson to discuss it with the caterer. He insisted upon having everything explained to him, and the reason for having it, and not something else in its place; and he treated Fulkerson and Frescobaldi as if they were in league to impose upon him. There were moments when Fulkerson saw the varnish of professional politeness cracking on the Neapolitan's volcanic surface, and caught a glimpse of the lava fires of the cook's nature beneath; he trembled for Dryfoos, who was walking rough-shod over him in the security of an American who had known how to make his money, and must know how to spend it; but he got him safely away at last, and gave Frescobaldi a wink of sympathy for his shrug of exhaustion as they turned to leave him.

It was at first a relief and then an anxiety with Fulkerson that Lindau did not come about after accepting the invitation to dinner, until he appeared at Dryfoos's house, prompt to the hour. There was, to be sure, nothing to bring him; but Fulkerson was uneasily aware that Dryfoos expected to meet him at the office, and perhaps receive some verbal acknowledgment of the honor done him. Dryfoos, he could see, thought he was doing all his invited guests a favor; and while he stood in a certain awe of them as people of much greater social experience than himself, regarded them with a kind of contempt, as people who were going to have a better dinner at his house than they could ever afford to have at their own. He had finally not spared expense upon it; after pushing Frescobaldi to the point of eruption with his misgivings and suspicions at the first interview, he had gone to him a second time alone, and told him not to let the money stand between him and anything he would like to do. In the absence of Frescobaldi's fellow-conspirator he restored himself in the caterer's esteem by adding whatever he suggested; and Fulkerson, after trembling for the old man's niggardliness, was now afraid of a fantastic profusion in the feast. Dryfoos had reduced the scale of the banquet as regarded the number of guests, but a confusing remembrance of what Fulkerson had wished to do remained with him in part, and up to the day of the dinner he dropped

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in at Frescobaldi's and ordered more dishes and more of them. He impressed the Italian as an American original of a novel kind; and when he asked Fulkerson how Dryfoos had made his money, and learned that it was primarily in natural gas, he made note of some of his eccentric tastes as peculiarities that were to be caressed in any future natural-gas millionaire who might fall into his hands. He did not begrudge the time he had to give in explaining to Dryfoos the relation of the different wines to the different dishes; Dryfoos was apt to substitute a costlier wine where he could for a cheaper one, and he gave Frescobaldi carte blanche for the decoration of the table with pieces of artistic confectionery. Among these the caterer designed one for a surprise to his patron and a delicate recognition of the source of his wealth, which he found Dryfoos very willing to talk about, when he intimated that he knew what it was.

Dryfoos left it to Fulkerson to invite the guests, and he found ready acceptance of his politeness from Kendricks, who rightly regarded the dinner as a part of the 'Every Other Week' business, and was too sweet and kind-hearted, anyway, not to seem very glad to come. March was a matter of course; but in Colonel Woodburn, Fulkerson encountered a reluctance which embarrassed him the more because he was conscious of having, for motives of his own, rather strained a point in suggesting the colonel to Dryfoos as a fit subject for invitation. There had been only one of the colonel's articles printed as yet, and though it had made a sensation in its way, and started the talk about that number, still it did not fairly constitute him a member of the staff, or even entitle him to recognition as a regular contributor. Fulkerson felt so sure of pleasing him with Dryfoos's message that he delivered it in full family council at the widow's. His daughter received it with all the enthusiasm that Fulkerson had hoped for, but the colonel said, stiffly, "I have not the pleasure of knowing Mr. Dryfoos." Miss Woodburn appeared ready to fall upon him at this, but controlled herself, as if aware that filial authority had its limits, and pressed her lips together without saying anything.

"Yes, I know," Fulkerson admitted. "But it isn't a usual case. Mr. Dryfoos don't go in much for the conventionalities; I reckon he don't know much about 'em, come to boil it down; and he hoped"—here Fulkerson felt the necessity of inventing a little—"that you would excuse any want of ceremony; it's to be such an informal affair, anyway; we're all going in business dress, and there ain't going to be any ladies. He'd have come himself to ask you, but he's a kind of a bashful old fellow. It's all right, Colonel Woodburn."

"I take it that it is, sir," said the colonel, courteously, but with unabated state, "coming from you. But in these matters we have no right to burden our friends with our decisions."

"Of course, of course," said Fulkerson, feeling that he had been delicately told to mind his own business.

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“I understand,” the colonel went on, “the relation that Mr. Dryfoos bears to the periodical in which you have done me the honor to print my papah, but this is a question of passing the bounds of a purely business connection, and of eating the salt of a man whom you do not definitely know to be a gentleman.”

“Mah goodness!” his daughter broke in. “If you bah your own salt with his money—”

“It is supposed that I earn his money before I buy my salt with it,” returned her father, severely. “And in these times, when money is got in heaps, through the natural decay of our nefarious commercialism, it behooves a gentleman to be scrupulous that the hospitality offered him is not the profusion of a thief with his booty. I don’t say that Mr. Dryfoos’s good-fortune is not honest. I simply say that I know nothing about it, and that I should prefer to know something before I sat down at his board.”

“You’re all right, colonel,” said Fulkerson, “and so is Mr. Dryfoos. I give you my word that there are no flies on his personal integrity, if that’s what you mean. He’s hard, and he’d push an advantage, but I don’t believe he would take an unfair one. He’s speculated and made money every time, but I never heard of his wrecking a railroad or belonging to any swindling company or any grinding monopoly. He does chance it in stocks, but he’s always played on the square, if you call stocks gambling.”

“May I, think this over till morning?” asked the colonel.

“Oh, certainly, certainly,” said Fulkerson, eagerly. “I don’t know as there’s any hurry.”

Miss Woodburn found a chance to murmur to him before he went: “He’ll come. And Ah’m so much oblahged, Mr. Fulkerson. Ah jost know it’s all you’ doing, and it will give papa a chance to toak to some new people, and get away from us evahlastin’ women for once.”

“I don’t see why any one should want to do that,” said Fulkerson, with grateful gallantry. “But I’ll be dogged,” he said to March when he told him about this odd experience, “if I ever expected to find Colonel Woodburn on old Lindau’s ground. He did come round handsomely this morning at breakfast and apologized for taking time to think the invitation over before he accepted. ‘You understand,’ he says, ’that if it had been to the table of some friend not so prosperous as Mr. Dryfoos—your friend Mr. March, for instance—it would have been sufficient to know that he was your friend. But in these days it is a duty that a gentleman owes himself to consider whether he wishes to know a rich man or not. The chances of making money disreputably are so great that the chances are against a man who has made money if he’s made a great deal of it.’”

March listened with a face of ironical insinuation. “That was very good; and he seems to have had a good deal of confidence in your patience and in your sense of his importance to the occasion—”

“No, no,” Fulkerson protested, “there’s none of that kind of thing about the colonel. I told him to take time to think it over; he’s the simplest-hearted old fellow in the world.”

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“I should say so. After all, he didn’t give any reason he had for accepting. But perhaps the young lady had the reason.”

“Pshaw, March!” said Fulkerson.

VI.

So far as the Dryfoos family was concerned, the dinner might as well have been given at Frescobaldi’s rooms. None of the ladies appeared. Mrs. Dryfoos was glad to escape to her own chamber, where she sat before an autumnal fire, shaking her head and talking to herself at times, with the foreboding of evil which old women like her make part of their religion. The girls stood just out of sight at the head of the stairs, and disputed which guest it was at each arrival; Mrs. Mandel had gone to her room to write letters, after beseeching them not to stand there. When Kendricks came, Christine gave Mela a little pinch, equivalent to a little mocking shriek; for, on the ground of his long talk with Mela at Mrs. Horn’s, in the absence of any other admirer, they based a superstition of his interest in her; when Beaton came, Mela returned the pinch, but awkwardly, so that it hurt, and then Christine involuntarily struck her.

Frescobaldi’s men were in possession everywhere they had turned the cook out of her kitchen and the waitress out of her pantry; the reluctant Irishman at the door was supplemented by a vivid Italian, who spoke French with the guests, and said, “Bien, Monsieur,” and “toute suite,” and “Merci!” to all, as he took their hats and coats, and effused a hospitality that needed no language but the gleam of his eyes and teeth and the play of his eloquent hands. From his professional dress-coat, lustrous with the grease spotted on it at former dinners and parties, they passed to the frocks of the elder and younger Dryfoos in the drawing-room, which assumed informality for the affair, but did not put their wearers wholly at their ease. The father’s coat was of black broadcloth, and he wore it unbuttoned; the skirts were long, and the sleeves came down to his knuckles; he shook hands with his guests, and the same dryness seemed to be in his palm and throat, as he huskily asked each to take a chair. Conrad’s coat was of modern texture and cut, and was buttoned about him as if it concealed a bad conscience within its lapels; he met March with his entreating smile, and he seemed no more capable of coping with the situation than his father. They both waited for Fulkerson, who went about and did his best to keep life in the party during the half-hour that passed before they sat down at dinner. Beaton stood gloomily aloof, as if waiting to be approached on the right basis before yielding an inch of his ground; Colonel Woodburn, awaiting the moment when he could sally out on his hobby, kept himself intrenched within the dignity of a gentleman, and examined askance the figure of old Lindau as he stared about the room, with his fine head up, and his empty sleeve dangling over his wrist. March felt obliged to him for wearing a new coat in

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the midst of that hostile luxury, and he was glad to see Dryfoos make up to him and begin to talk with him, as if he wished to show him particular respect, though it might have been because he was less afraid of him than of the others. He heard Lindau saying, “Boat, the name is Choarman?” and Dryfoos beginning to explain his Pennsylvania Dutch origin, and he suffered himself, with a sigh of relief, to fall into talk with Kendricks, who was always pleasant; he was willing to talk about something besides himself, and had no opinions that he was not ready to hold in abeyance for the time being out of kindness to others. In that group of impassioned individualities, March felt him a refuge and comfort—with his harmless dilettante intention of some day writing a novel, and his belief that he was meantime collecting material for it.

Fulkerson, while breaking the ice for the whole company, was mainly engaged in keeping Colonel Woodburn thawed out. He took Kendricks away from March and presented him to the colonel as a person who, like himself, was looking into social conditions; he put one hand on Kendricks’s shoulder, and one on the colonel’s, and made some flattering joke, apparently at the expense of the young fellow, and then left them. March heard Kendricks protest in vain, and the colonel say, gravely: “I do not wonder, sir, that these things interest you. They constitute a problem which society must solve or which will dissolve society,” and he knew from that formula, which the colonel had, once used with him, that he was laying out a road for the exhibition of the hobby’s paces later.

Fulkerson came back to March, who had turned toward Conrad Dryfoos, and said, “If we don’t get this thing going pretty soon, it ’ll be the death of me,” and just then Frescobaldi’s butler came in and announced to Dryfoos that dinner was served. The old man looked toward Fulkerson with a troubled glance, as if he did not know what to do; he made a gesture to touch Lindau’s elbow. Fulkerson called out, “Here’s Colonel Woodburn, Mr. Dryfoos,” as if Dryfoos were looking for him; and he set the example of what he was to do by taking Lindau’s arm himself. “Mr. Lindau is going to sit at my end of the table, alongside of March. Stand not upon the order of your going, gentlemen, but fall in at once.” He contrived to get Dryfoos and the colonel before him, and he let March follow with Kendricks. Conrad came last with Beaton, who had been turning over the music at the piano, and chafing inwardly at the whole affair. At the table Colonel Woodburn was placed on Dryfoos’s right, and March on his left. March sat on Fulkerson’s right, with Lindau next him; and the young men occupied the other seats.

“Put you next to March, Mr. Lindau,” said Fulkerson, “so you can begin to put Apollinaris in his champagne-glass at the right moment; you know his little weakness of old; sorry to say it’s grown on him.”

March laughed with kindly acquiescence in Fulkerson's wish to start the gayety, and Lindau patted him on the shoulder. "I know hiss veakness. If he liges a class of vine, it iss begause his loaf ingludes efen hiss enemy, as Shakespeare galled it."

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“Ah, but Shakespeare couldn’t have been thinking of champagne,” said Kendricks.

“I suppose, sir,” Colonel Woodburn interposed, with lofty courtesy, “champagne could hardly have been known in his day.”

“I suppose not, colonel,” returned the younger man, deferentially. “He seemed to think that sack and sugar might be a fault; but he didn’t mention champagne.”

“Perhaps he felt there was no question about that,” suggested Beaton, who then felt that he had not done himself justice in the sally.

“I wonder just when champagne did come in,” said March.

“I know when it ought to come in,” said Fulkerson. “Before the soup!”

They all laughed, and gave themselves the air of drinking champagne out of tumblers every day, as men like to do. Dryfoos listened uneasily; he did not quite understand the allusions, though he knew what Shakespeare was, well enough; Conrad’s face expressed a gentle deprecation of joking on such a subject, but he said nothing.

The talk ran on briskly through the dinner. The young men tossed the ball back and forth; they made some wild shots, but they kept it going, and they laughed when they were hit. The wine loosed Colonel Woodburn’s tongue; he became very companionable with the young fellows; with the feeling that a literary dinner ought to have a didactic scope, he praised Scott and Addison as the only authors fit to form the minds of gentlemen.

Kendricks agreed with him, but wished to add the name of Flaubert as a master of style. “Style, you know,” he added, “is the man.”

“Very true, sir; you are quite right, sir,” the colonel assented; he wondered who Flaubert was.

Beaton praised Baudelaire and Maupassant; he said these were the masters. He recited some lurid verses from Baudelaire; Lindau pronounced them a disgrace to human nature, and gave a passage from Victor Hugo on Louis Napoleon, with his heavy German accent, and then he quoted Schiller. “Ach, boat that is a peaudifool! Not zo?” he demanded of March.

“Yes, beautiful; but, of course, you know I think there’s nobody like Heine!”

Lindau threw back his great old head and laughed, showing a want of teeth under his mustache. He put his hand on March’s back. “This poy—he was a poy den—wars so gracy to pekin reading Heine that he gommence with the tictionary bevore he knows any Grammar, and ve bick it out vort by vort togeder.”

“He was a pretty cay poy in those days, heigh, Lindau?” asked Fulkerson, burlesquing the old man’s accent, with an impudent wink that made Lindau himself laugh. “But in the dark ages, I mean, there in Indianapolis. Just how long ago did you old codgers meet there, anyway?” Fulkerson saw the restiveness in Dryfoos’s eye at the purely literary course the talk had taken; he had intended it to lead up that way to business, to ’Every Other Week;’ but he saw that it was leaving Dryfoos too far out, and he wished to get it on the personal ground, where everybody is at home.

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“Ledt me zee,” mused Lindau. “Wass it in fifty-nine or zixty, Passil? Idt wass a year or dwo pefore the war proke oudt, anyway.”

“Those were exciting times,” said Dryfoos, making his first entry into the general talk. “I went down to Indianapolis with the first company from our place, and I saw the red-shirts pouring in everywhere. They had a song,

“Oh, never mind the weather, but git over double trouble,
For we’re bound for the land of Canaan.”

The fellows locked arms and went singin’ it up and down four or five abreast in the moonlight; crowded everybody’ else off the sidewalk.”

“I remember, I remember,” said Lindau, nodding his head slowly up and down. “A coodt many off them nefer gome pack from that landt of Ganaan, Mr. Dryfoos?”

“You’re right, Mr. Lindau. But I reckon it was worth it—the country we’ve got now. Here, young man!” He caught the arm of the waiter who was going round with the champagne bottle. “Fill up Mr. Lindau’s glass, there. I want to drink the health of those old times with him. Here’s to your empty sleeve, Mr. Lindau. God bless it! No offence to you, Colonel Woodburn,” said Dryfoos, turning to him before he drank.

“Not at all, sir, not at all,” said the colonel. “I will drink with you, if you will permit me.”

“We’ll all drink—standing!” cried Fulkerson. “Help March to get up, somebody! Fill high the bowl with Samian Apollinaris for Coonrod! Now, then, hurrah for Lindau!”

They cheered, and hammered on the table with the butts of their knife-handles. Lindau remained seated. The tears came into his eyes; he said, “I thank you, chendlemen,” and hiccoughed.

“I’d ‘a’ went into the war myself,” said Dryfoos, “but I was raisin’ a family of young children, and I didn’t see how I could leave my farm. But I helped to fill up the quota at every call, and when the volunteering stopped I went round with the subscription paper myself; and we offered as good bounties as any in the State. My substitute was killed in one of the last skirmishes—in fact, after Lee’s surrender—and I’ve took care of his family, more or less, ever since.”

“By-the-way, March,” said Fulkerson, “what sort of an idea would it be to have a good war story—might be a serial—in the magazine? The war has never fully panned out in fiction yet. It was used a good deal just after it was over, and then it was dropped. I think it’s time to take it up again. I believe it would be a card.”

It was running in March’s mind that Dryfoos had an old rankling shame in his heart for not having gone into the war, and that he had often made that explanation of his course

without having ever been satisfied with it. He felt sorry for him; the fact seemed pathetic; it suggested a dormant nobleness in the man.

Beaton was saying to Fulkerson: “You might get a series of sketches by substitutes; the substitutes haven’t been much heard from in the war literature. How would ‘The Autobiography of a Substitute’ do? You might follow him up to the moment he was killed in the other man’s place, and inquire whether he had any right to the feelings of a hero when he was only hired in the place of one. Might call it ’The Career of a Deputy Hero.’”

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“I fancy,” said March, “that there was a great deal of mixed motive in the men who went into the war as well as in those who kept out of it. We canonized all that died or suffered in it, but some of them must have been self-seeking and low-minded, like men in other vocations.” He found himself saying this in Dryfoos’s behalf; the old man looked at him gratefully at first, he thought, and then suspiciously.

Lindau turned his head toward him and said: “You are righdt, Passil; you are righdt. I haf zeen on the fieldt of pattle the voarst eggsipitions of human paseness—chelousy, fanity, ecodistic bridte. I haf zeen men in the face off death itself gofferned by motifes as low as—as pusiness motifes.”

“Well,” said Fulkerson, “it would be a grand thing for ‘Every Other Week’ if we could get some of those ideas worked up into a series. It would make a lot of talk.”

Colonel Woodburn ignored him in saying, “I think, Major Lindau—”

“High brifate; prefet gorporal,” the old man interrupted, in rejection of the title.

Hendricks laughed and said, with a glance of appreciation at Lindau, “Brevet corporal is good.”

Colonel Woodburn frowned a little, and passed over the joke. “I think Mr. Lindau is right. Such exhibitions were common to both sides, though if you gentlemen will pardon me for saying so, I think they were less frequent on ours. We were fighting more immediately for existence. We were fewer than you were, and we knew it; we felt more intensely that if each were not for all, then none was for any.”

The colonel’s words made their impression. Dryfoos said, with authority, “That is so.”

“Colonel Woodburn,” Fulkerson called out, “if you’ll work up those ideas into a short paper—say, three thousand words—I’ll engage to make March take it.”

The colonel went on without replying: “But Mr. Lindau is right in characterizing some of the motives that led men to the cannon’s mouth as no higher than business motives, and his comparison is the most forcible that he could have used. I was very much struck by it.”

The hobby was out, the colonel was in the saddle with so firm a seat that no effort sufficed to dislodge him. The dinner went on from course to course with barbaric profusion, and from time to time Fulkerson tried to bring the talk back to ‘Every Other Week.’ But perhaps because that was only the ostensible and not the real object of the dinner, which was to bring a number of men together under Dryfoos’s roof, and make them the witnesses of his splendor, make them feel the power of his wealth, Fulkerson’s attempts failed. The colonel showed how commercialism was the poison at the heart of our national life; how we began as a simple, agricultural people, who had fled to these

shores with the instinct, divinely implanted, of building a state such as the sun never shone upon before; how we had conquered the wilderness and the savage; how we had flung off,

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in our struggle with the mother-country, the trammels of tradition and precedent, and had settled down, a free nation, to the practice of the arts of peace; how the spirit of commercialism had stolen insidiously upon us, and the infernal impulse of competition had embroiled us in a perpetual warfare of interests, developing the worst passions of our nature, and teaching us to trick and betray and destroy one another in the strife for money, till now that impulse had exhausted itself, and we found competition gone and the whole economic problem in the hands of monopolies—the Standard Oil Company, the Sugar Trust, the Rubber Trust, and what not. And now what was the next thing? Affairs could not remain as they were; it was impossible; and what was the next thing?

The company listened for the main part silently. Dryfoos tried to grasp the idea of commercialism as the colonel seemed to hold it; he conceived of it as something like the dry-goods business on a vast scale, and he knew he had never been in that. He did not like to hear competition called infernal; he had always supposed it was something sacred; but he approved of what Colonel Woodburn said of the Standard Oil Company; it was all true; the Standard Oil has squeezed Dryfoos once, and made him sell it a lot of oil-wells by putting down the price of oil so low in that region that he lost money on every barrel he pumped.

All the rest listened silently, except Lindau; at every point the colonel made against the present condition of things he said more and more fiercely, “You are righdt, you are righdt.” His eyes glowed, his hand played with his knife-hilt. When the colonel demanded, “And what is the next thing?” he threw himself forward, and repeated: “Yes, sir! What is the next thing?”

“Natural gas, by thunder!” shouted Fulkerson.

One of the waiters had profited by Lindau’s posture to lean over him and put down in the middle of the table a structure in white sugar. It expressed Frescobaldi’s conception of a derrick, and a touch of nature had been added in the flame of brandy, which burned luridly up from a small pit in the centre of the base, and represented the gas in combustion as it issued from the ground. Fulkerson burst into a roar of laughter with the words that recognized Frescobaldi’s personal tribute to Dryfoos. Everybody rose and peered over at the thing, while he explained the work of sinking a gas-well, as he had already explained it to Frescobaldi. In the midst of his lecture he caught sight of the caterer himself, where he stood in the pantry doorway, smiling with an artist’s anxiety for the effect of his masterpiece.

“Come in, come in, Frescobaldi! We want to congratulate you,” Fulkerson called to him. “Here, gentlemen! Here’s Frescobaldi’s health.”

They all drank; and Frescobaldi, smiling brilliantly and rubbing his hands as he bowed right and left, permitted himself to say to Dryfoos: “You are please; no? You like?”

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“First-rate, first-rate!” said the old man; but when the Italian had bowed himself out and his guests had sunk into their seats again, he said dryly to Fulkerson, “I reckon they didn’t have to torpedo that well, or the derrick wouldn’t look quite so nice and clean.”

“Yes,” Fulkerson answered, “and that ain’t quite the style—that little wiggly-waggly blue flame—that the gas acts when you touch off a good vein of it. This might do for weak gas”; and he went on to explain:

“They call it weak gas when they tap it two or three hundred feet down; and anybody can sink a well in his back yard and get enough gas to light and heat his house. I remember one fellow that had it blazing up from a pipe through a flower-bed, just like a jet of water from a fountain. My, my, my! You fel—you gentlemen—ought to go out and see that country, all of you. Wish we could torpedo this well, Mr. Dryfoos, and let ’em see how it works! Mind that one you torpedoed for me? You know, when they sink a well,” he went on to the company, “they can’t always most generally sometimes tell whether they’re goin’ to get gas or oil or salt water. Why, when they first began to bore for salt water out on the Kanawha, back about the beginning of the century, they used to get gas now and then, and then they considered it a failure; they called a gas-well a blower, and give it up in disgust; the time wasn’t ripe for gas yet. Now they bore away sometimes till they get half-way to China, and don’t seem to strike anything worth speaking of. Then they put a dynamite torpedo down in the well and explode it. They have a little bar of iron that they call a Go-devil, and they just drop it down on the business end of the torpedo, and then stand from under, if you please! You hear a noise, and in about half a minute you begin to see one, and it begins to rain oil and mud and salt water and rocks and pitchforks and adoptive citizens; and when it clears up the derrick’s painted—got a coat on that ’ll wear in any climate. That’s what our honored host meant. Generally get some visiting lady, when there’s one round, to drop the Go-devil. But that day we had to put up with Conrad here. They offered to let me drop it, but I declined. I told ’em I hadn’t much practice with Go-devils in the newspaper syndicate business, and I wasn’t very well myself, anyway. Astonishing,” Fulkerson continued, with the air of relieving his explanation by an anecdote, “how reckless they get using dynamite when they’re torpedoing wells. We stopped at one place where a fellow was handling the cartridges pretty freely, and Mr. Dryfoos happened to caution him a little, and that ass came up with one of ’em in his hand, and began to pound it on the buggy-wheel to show us how safe it was. I turned green, I was so scared; but Mr. Dryfoos kept his color, and kind of coaxed the fellow till he quit. You could see he was the fool kind, that if you tried to stop him he’d keep on hammering that cartridge, just to show that it wouldn’t explode, till he blew you into Kingdom Come. When we got him to go away, Mr. Dryfoos drove up to his foreman. ’Pay Sheney off, and discharge him on the spot,’ says he. ’He’s too safe a man to have round; he knows too much about dynamite.’ I never saw anybody so cool.”

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Dryfoos modestly dropped his head under Fulkerson's flattery and, without lifting it, turned his eyes toward Colonel Woodburn. "I had all sorts of men to deal with in developing my property out there, but I had very little trouble with them, generally speaking."

"Ah, ah! you foundt the laboring-man reasonable—dractable—tocile?" Lindau put in.

"Yes, generally speaking," Dryfoos answered. "They mostly knew which side of their bread was buttered. I did have one little difficulty at one time. It happened to be when Mr. Fulkerson was out there. Some of the men tried to form a union—"

"No, no!" cried Fulkerson. "Let me tell that! I know you wouldn't do yourself justice, Mr. Dryfoos, and I want 'em to know how a strike can be managed, if you take it in time. You see, some of those fellows got a notion that there ought to be a union among the working-men to keep up wages, and dictate to the employers, and Mr. Dryfoos's foreman was the ringleader in the business. They understood pretty well that as soon as he found it out that foreman would walk the plank, and so they watched out till they thought they had Mr. Dryfoos just where they wanted him—everything on the keen jump, and every man worth his weight in diamonds—and then they came to him, and—-told him to sign a promise to keep that foreman to the end of the season, or till he was through with the work on the Dryfoos and Hendry Addition, under penalty of having them all knock off. Mr. Dryfoos smelled a mouse, but he couldn't tell where the mouse was; he saw that they did have him, and he signed, of course. There wasn't anything really against the fellow, anyway; he was a first-rate man, and he did his duty every time; only he'd got some of those ideas into his head, and they turned it. Mr. Dryfoos signed, and then he laid low."

March saw Lindau listening with a mounting intensity, and heard him murmur in German, "Shameful! shameful!"

Fulkerson went on: "Well, it wasn't long before they began to show their hand, but Mr. Dryfoos kept dark. He agreed to everything; there never was such an obliging capitalist before; there wasn't a thing they asked of him that he didn't do, with the greatest of pleasure, and all went merry as a marriage-bell till one morning a whole gang of fresh men marched into the Dryfoos and Hendry Addition, under the escort of a dozen Pinkertons with repeating rifles at half-cock, and about fifty fellows found themselves out of a job. You never saw such a mad set."

"Pretty neat," said Kendricks, who looked at the affair purely from an aesthetic point of view. "Such a coup as that would tell tremendously in a play."

"That was vile treason," said Lindau in German to March. "He's an infamous traitor! I cannot stay here. I must go."

He struggled to rise, while March held him by the coat, and implored him under his voice: “For Heaven’s sake, don’t, Lindau! You owe it to yourself not to make a scene, if you come here.” Something in it all affected him comically; he could not help laughing.

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The others were discussing the matter, and seemed not to have noticed Lindau, who controlled himself and sighed: "You are right. I must have patience."

Beaton was saying to Dryfoos, "Pity your Pinkertons couldn't have given them a few shots before they left."

"No, that wasn't necessary," said Dryfoos. "I succeeded in breaking up the union. I entered into an agreement with other parties not to employ any man who would not swear that he was non-union. If they had attempted violence, of course they could have been shot. But there was no fear of that. Those fellows can always be depended upon to cut one another's throats in the long run."

"But sometimes," said Colonel Woodburn, who had been watching throughout. for a chance to mount his hobby again, "they make a good deal of trouble first. How was it in the great railroad strike of '77?"

"Well, I guess there was a little trouble that time, colonel," said Fulkerson. "But the men that undertake to override the laws and paralyze the industries of a country like this generally get left in the end."

"Yes, sir, generally; and up to a certain point, always. But it's the exceptional that is apt to happen, as well as the unexpected. And a little reflection will convince any gentleman here that there is always a danger of the exceptional in your system. The fact is, those fellows have the game in their own hands already. A strike of the whole body of the Brotherhood of Engineers alone would starve out the entire Atlantic seaboard in a week; labor insurrection could make head at a dozen given points, and your government couldn't move a man over the roads without the help of the engineers."

"That is so," said Kendrick, struck by the dramatic character of the conjecture. He imagined a fiction dealing with the situation as something already accomplished.

"Why don't some fellow do the Battle of Dorking act with that thing?" said Fulkerson. "It would be a card."

"Exactly what I was thinking, Mr. Fulkerson," said Kendricks.

Fulkerson laughed. "Telepathy—clear case of mind transference. Better see March, here, about it. I'd like to have it in 'Every Other Week.' It would make talk."

"Perhaps it might set your people to thinking as well as talking," said the colonel.

"Well, sir," said Dryfoos, setting his lips so tightly together that his imperial stuck straight outward, "if I had my way, there wouldn't be any Brotherhood of Engineers, nor any other kind of labor union in the whole country."

“What!” shouted Lindau. “You would sobbress the unionss of the voarking-men?”

“Yes, I would.”

“And what would you do with the unionss of the gabidalists—the drosts—and gompines, and boolss? Would you dake the righdt from one and gif it to the odder?”

“Yes, sir, I would,” said Dryfoos, with a wicked look at him.

Lindau was about to roar back at him with some furious protest, but March put his hand on his shoulder imploringly, and Lindau turned to him to say in German: “But it is infamous—infamous! What kind of man is this? Who is he? He has the heart of a tyrant.”

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Colonel Woodburn cut in. “You couldn’t do that, Mr. Dryfoos, under your system. And if you attempted it, with your conspiracy laws, and that kind of thing, it might bring the climax sooner than you expected. Your commercialized society has built its house on the sands. It will have to go. But I should be sorry if it went before its time.”

“You are righdt, sir,” said Lindau. “It would be a bity. I hobe it will last till it feelss its rottenness, like Herodt. Boat, when its hour gomes, when it trope to bieces with the veight off its own gorrubtion—what then?”

“It’s not to be supposed that a system of things like this can drop to pieces of its own accord, like the old Republic of Venice,” said the colonel. “But when the last vestige of commercial society is gone, then we can begin to build anew; and we shall build upon the central idea, not of the false liberty you now worship, but of responsibility —-responsibility. The enlightened, the moneyed, the cultivated class shall be responsible to the central authority—emperor, duke, president; the name does not matter—for the national expense and the national defence, and it shall be responsible to the working-classes of all kinds for homes and lands and implements, and the opportunity to labor at all times.

“The working-classes shall be responsible to the leisure class for the support of its dignity in peace, and shall be subject to its command in war. The rich shall warrant the poor against planless production and the ruin that now follows, against danger from without and famine from within, and the poor—”

“No, no, no!” shouted Lindau. “The State shall do that—the whole beople. The men who voark shall have and shall eat; and the men that will not voark, they shall sdarfe. But no man need sdarfe. He will go to the State, and the State will see that he haf voark, and that he haf foodt. All the roadts and mills and mines and landts shall be the beople’s and be ron by the beople for the beople. There shall be no rich and no boor; and there shall not be war any more, for what bower wouldt dare to addack a beople bound togeder in a broderhood like that?”

“Lion and lamb act,” said Fulkerson, not well knowing, after so much champagne, what words he was using.

No one noticed him, and Colonel Woodburn said coldly to Lindau, “You are talking paternalism, sir.”

“And you are dalking feutalism!” retorted the old man.

The colonel did not reply. A silence ensued, which no one broke till Fulkerson said: “Well, now, look here. If either one of these millenniums was brought about, by force of arms, or otherwise, what would become of ‘Every Other Week’? Who would want March for an editor? How would Beaton sell his pictures? Who would print Mr.

Kendricks's little society verses and short stories? What would become of Conrad and his good works?" Those named grinned in support of Fulkerson's diversion, but Lindau and the colonel did not speak; Dryfoos looked down at his plate, frowning.

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A waiter came round with cigars, and Fulkerson took one. “Ah,” he said, as he bit off the end, and leaned over to the emblematic masterpiece, where the brandy was still feebly flickering, “I wonder if there’s enough natural gas left to light my cigar.” His effort put the flame out and knocked the derrick over; it broke in fragments on the table. Fulkerson cackled over the ruin: “I wonder if all Moffitt will look that way after labor and capital have fought it out together. I hope this ain’t ominous of anything personal, Dryfoos?”

“I’ll take the risk of it,” said the old man, harshly.

He rose mechanically, and Fulkerson said to Frescobaldi’s man, “You can bring us the coffee in the library.”

The talk did not recover itself there. Landau would not sit down; he refused coffee, and dismissed himself with a haughty bow to the company; Colonel Woodburn shook hands elaborately all round, when he had smoked his cigar; the others followed him. It seemed to March that his own good-night from Dryfoos was dry and cold.

VII.

March met Fulkerson on the steps of the office next morning, when he arrived rather later than his wont. Fulkerson did not show any of the signs of suffering from the last night’s pleasure which painted themselves in March’s face. He flirted his hand gayly in the air, and said, “How’s your poor head?” and broke into a knowing laugh. “You don’t seem to have got up with the lark this morning. The old gentleman is in there with Conrad, as bright as a biscuit; he’s beat you down. Well, we did have a good time, didn’t we? And old Lindau and the colonel, didn’t they have a good time? I don’t suppose they ever had a chance before to give their theories quite so much air. Oh, my! how they did ride over us! I’m just going down to see Beaton about the cover of the Christmas number. I think we ought to try it in three or four colors, if we are going to observe the day at all.” He was off before March could pull himself together to ask what Dryfoos wanted at the office at that hour of the morning; he always came in the afternoon on his way up-town.

The fact of his presence renewed the sinister misgivings with which March had parted from him the night before, but Fulkerson’s cheerfulness seemed to gainsay them; afterward March did not know whether to attribute this mood to the slipperiness that he was aware of at times in Fulkerson, or to a cynical amusement he might have felt at leaving him alone to the old man, who mounted to his room shortly after March had reached it.

A sort of dumb anger showed itself in his face; his jaw was set so firmly that he did not seem able at once to open it. He asked, without the ceremonies of greeting, “What does that one-armed Dutchman do on this book?”

“What does he do?” March echoed, as people are apt to do with a question that is mandatory and offensive.

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“Yes, sir, what does he do? Does he write for it?”

“I suppose you mean Lindau,” said March. He saw no reason for refusing to answer Dryfoos’s demand, and he decided to ignore its terms. “No, he doesn’t write for it in the usual way. He translates for it; he examines the foreign magazines, and draws my attention to anything he thinks of interest. But I told you about this before—”

“I know what you told me, well enough. And I know what he is. He is a red-mouthed labor agitator. He’s one of those foreigners that come here from places where they’ve never had a decent meal’s victuals in their lives, and as soon as they get their stomachs full, they begin to make trouble between our people and their hands. There’s where the strikes come from, and the unions and the secret societies. They come here and break our Sabbath, and teach their atheism. They ought to be hung! Let ’em go back if they don’t like it over here. They want to ruin the country.”

March could not help smiling a little at the words, which came fast enough now in the hoarse staccato of Dryfoos’s passion. “I don’t know whom you mean by they, generally speaking; but I had the impression that poor old Lindau had once done his best to save the country. I don’t always like his way of talking, but I know that he is one of the truest and kindest souls in the world; and he is no more an atheist than I am. He is my friend, and I can’t allow him to be misunderstood.”

“I don’t care what he is,” Dryfoos broke out, “I won’t have him round. He can’t have any more work from this office. I want you to stop it. I want you to turn him off.”

March was standing at his desk, as he had risen to receive Dryfoos when he entered. He now sat down, and began to open his letters.

“Do you hear?” the old man roared at him. “I want you to turn him off.”

“Excuse me, Mr. Dryfoos,” said March, succeeding in an effort to speak calmly, “I don’t know you, in such a matter as this. My arrangements as editor of ‘Every Other Week’ were made with Mr. Fulkerson. I have always listened to any suggestion he has had to make.”

“I don’t care for Mr. Fulkerson? He has nothing to do with it,” retorted Dryfoos; but he seemed a little daunted by March’s position.

“He has everything to do with it as far as I am concerned,” March answered, with a steadiness that he did not feel. “I know that you are the owner of the periodical, but I can’t receive any suggestion from you, for the reason that I have given. Nobody but Mr. Fulkerson has any right to talk with me about its management.”

Dryfoos glared at him for a moment, and demanded, threateningly: “Then you say you won’t turn that old loafer off? You say that I have got to keep on paying my money out to buy beer for a man that would cut my throat if he got the chance?”

“I say nothing at all, Mr. Dryfoos,” March answered. The blood came into his face, and he added: “But I will say that if you speak again of Mr. Lindau in those terms, one of us must leave this room. I will not hear you.”

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Dryfoos looked at him with astonishment; then he struck his hat down on his head, and stamped out of the room and down the stairs; and a vague pity came into March's heart that was not altogether for himself. He might be the greater sufferer in the end, but he was sorry to have got the better of that old man for the moment; and he felt ashamed of the anger into which Dryfoos's anger had surprised him. He knew he could not say too much in defence of Lindau's generosity and unselfishness, and he had not attempted to defend him as a political economist. He could not have taken any ground in relation to Dryfoos but that which he held, and he felt satisfied that he was right in refusing to receive instructions or commands from him. Yet somehow he was not satisfied with the whole affair, and not merely because his present triumph threatened his final advantage, but because he felt that in his heat he had hardly done justice to Dryfoos's rights in the matter; it did not quite console him to reflect that Dryfoos had himself made it impossible. He was tempted to go home and tell his wife what had happened, and begin his preparations for the future at once. But he resisted this weakness and kept mechanically about his work, opening the letters and the manuscripts before him with that curious double action of the mind common in men of vivid imaginations. It was a relief when Conrad Dryfoos, having apparently waited to make sure that his father would not return, came up from the counting-room and looked in on March with a troubled face.

"Mr. March," he began, "I hope father hasn't been saying anything to you that you can't overlook. I know he was very much excited, and when he is excited he is apt to say things that he is sorry for."

The apologetic attitude taken for Dryfoos, so different from any attitude the peremptory old man would have conceivably taken for himself, made March smile. "Oh no. I fancy the boot is on the other leg. I suspect I've said some things your father can't overlook, Conrad." He called the young man by his Christian name partly to distinguish him from his father, partly from the infection of Fulkerson's habit, and partly from a kindness for him that seemed naturally to express itself in that way.

"I know he didn't sleep last night, after you all went away," Conrad pursued, "and of course that made him more irritable; and he was tried a good deal by some of the things that Mr. Lindau said."

"I was tried a good deal myself," said March. "Lindau ought never to have been there."

"No." Conrad seemed only partially to assent.

"I told Mr. Fulkerson so. I warned him that Lindau would be apt to break out in some way. It wasn't just to him, and it wasn't just to your father, to ask him."

"Mr. Fulkerson had a good motive," Conrad gently urged. "He did it because he hurt his feelings that day about the pension."

“Yes, but it was a mistake. He knew that Lindau was inflexible about his principles, as he calls them, and that one of his first principles is to denounce the rich in season and out of season. I don’t remember just what he said last night; and I really thought I’d kept him from breaking out in the most offensive way. But your father seems very much incensed.”

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“Yes, I know,” said Conrad.

“Of course, I don’t agree with Lindau. I think there are as many good, kind, just people among the rich as there are among the poor, and that they are as generous and helpful. But Lindau has got hold of one of those partial truths that hurt worse than the whole truth, and—”

“Partial truth!” the young man interrupted. “Didn’t the Saviour himself say, ’How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?’”

“Why, bless my soul!” cried March. “Do you agree with Lindau?”

“I agree with the Lord Jesus Christ,” said the young man, solemnly, and a strange light of fanaticism, of exaltation, came into his wide blue eyes. “And I believe He meant the kingdom of heaven upon this earth, as well as in the skies.”

March threw himself back in his chair and looked at him with a kind of stupefaction, in which his eye wandered to the doorway, where he saw Fulkerson standing, it seemed to him a long time, before he heard him saying: “Hello, hello! What’s the row? Conrad pitching into you on old Lindau’s account, too?”

The young man turned, and, after a glance at Fulkerson’s light, smiling face, went out, as if in his present mood he could not bear the contact of that persiflant spirit.

March felt himself getting provisionally very angry again. “Excuse me, Fulkerson, but did you know when you went out what Mr. Dryfoos wanted to see me for?”

“Well, no, I didn’t exactly,” said Fulkerson, taking his usual seat on a chair and looking over the back of it at March. “I saw he was on his car about something, and I thought I’d better not monkey with him much. I supposed he was going to bring you to book about old Lindau, somehow.” Fulkerson broke into a laugh.

March remained serious. “Mr. Dryfoos,” he said, willing to let the simple statement have its own weight with Fulkerson, and nothing more, “came in here and ordered me to discharge Lindau from his employment on the magazine—to turn him off, as he put it.”

“Did he?” asked Fulkerson, with unbroken cheerfulness. “The old man is business, every time. Well, I suppose you can easily get somebody else to do Lindau’s work for you. This town is just running over with half-starved linguists. What did you say?”

“What did I say?” March echoed. “Look here, Fulkerson; you may regard this as a joke, but I don’t. I’m not used to being spoken to as if I were the foreman of a shop, and told to discharge a sensitive and cultivated man like Lindau, as if he were a drunken mechanic; and if that’s your idea of me—”

“Oh, hello, now, March! You mustn’t mind the old man’s way. He don’t mean anything by it—he don’t know any better, if you come to that.”

“Then I know better,” said March. “I refused to receive any instructions from Mr. Dryfoos, whom I don’t know in my relations with ’Every Other Week,’ and I referred him to you.”

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“You did?” Fulkerson whistled. “He owns the thing!”

“I don’t care who owns the thing,” said March. “My negotiations were with you alone from the beginning, and I leave this matter with you. What do you wish done about Lindau?”

“Oh, better let the old fool drop,” said Fulkerson. “He’ll light on his feet somehow, and it will save a lot of rumpus.”

“And if I decline to let him drop?”

“Oh, come, now, March; don’t do that,” Fulkerson began.

“If I decline to let him drop,” March repeated, “what will you do?”

“I’ll be dogged if I know what I’ll do,” said Fulkerson. “I hope you won’t take that stand. If the old man went so far as to speak to you about it, his mind is made up, and we might as well knock under first as last.”

“And do you mean to say that you would not stand by me in what I considered my duty-in a matter of principle?”

“Why, of course, March,” said Fulkerson, coaxingly, “I mean to do the right thing. But Dryfoos owns the magazine—”

“He doesn’t own me,” said March, rising. “He has made the little mistake of speaking to me as if he did; and when”—March put on his hat and took his overcoat down from its nail—“when you bring me his apologies, or come to say that, having failed to make him understand they were necessary, you are prepared to stand by me, I will come back to this desk. Otherwise my resignation is at your service.”

He started toward the door, and Fulkerson intercepted him. “Ah, now, look here, March! Don’t do that! Hang it all, don’t you see where it leaves me? Now, you just sit down a minute and talk it over. I can make you see—I can show you—Why, confound the old Dutch beer-buzzer! Twenty of him wouldn’t be worth the trouble he’s makin’. Let him go, and the old man ’ll come round in time.”

“I don’t think we’ve understood each other exactly, Mr. Fulkerson,” said March, very haughtily. “Perhaps we never can; but I’ll leave you to think it out.”

He pushed on, and Fulkerson stood aside to let him pass, with a dazed look and a mechanical movement. There was something comic in his rueful bewilderment to March, who was tempted to smile, but he said to himself that he had as much reason to be unhappy as Fulkerson, and he did not smile. His indignation kept him hot in his purpose to suffer any consequence rather than submit to the dictation of a man like

Dryfoos; he felt keenly the degradation of his connection with him, and all his resentment of Fulkerson's original uncandor returned; at the same time his heart ached with foreboding. It was not merely the work in which he had constantly grown happier that he saw taken from him; but he felt the misery of the man who stakes the security and plenty and peace of home upon some cast, and knows that losing will sweep from him most that most men find sweet and pleasant in life. He faced the fact, which no good man can front without terror, that he was risking the support

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of his family, and for a point of pride, of honor, which perhaps he had no right to consider in view of the possible adversity. He realized, as every hireling must, no matter how skillfully or gracefully the tie is contrived for his wearing, that he belongs to another, whose will is his law. His indignation was shot with abject impulses to go back and tell Fulkerson that it was all right, and that he gave up. To end the anguish of his struggle he quickened his steps, so that he found he was reaching home almost at a run.

VIII.

He must have made more clatter than he supposed with his key at the apartment door, for his wife had come to let him in when he flung it open. “Why, Basil,” she said, “what’s brought you back? Are you sick? You’re all pale. Well, no wonder! This is the last of Mr. Fulkerson’s dinners you shall go to. You’re not strong enough for it, and your stomach will be all out of order for a week. How hot you are! and in a drip of perspiration! Now you’ll be sick.” She took his hat away, which hung dangling in his hand, and pushed him into a chair with tender impatience. “What is the matter? Has anything happened?”

“Everything has happened,” he said, getting his voice after one or two husky endeavors for it; and then he poured out a confused and huddled statement of the case, from which she only got at the situation by prolonged cross-questioning.

At the end she said, “I knew Lindau would get you into trouble.”

This cut March to the heart. “Isabel!” he cried, reproachfully.

“Oh, I know,” she retorted, and the tears began to come. “I don’t wonder you didn’t want to say much to me about that dinner at breakfast. I noticed it; but I thought you were just dull, and so I didn’t insist. I wish I had, now. If you had told me what Lindau had said, I should have known what would have come of it, and I could have advised you—”

“Would you have advised me,” March demanded, curiously, “to submit to bullying like that, and meekly consent to commit an act of cruelty against a man who had once been such a friend to me?”

“It was an unlucky day when you met him. I suppose we shall have to go. And just when we bad got used to New York, and begun to like it. I don’t know where we shall go now; Boston isn’t like home any more; and we couldn’t live on two thousand there; I should be ashamed to try. I’m sure I don’t know where we can live on it. I suppose in

some country village, where there are no schools, or anything for the children. I don't know what they'll say when we tell them, poor things."

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Every word was a stab in March's heart, so weakly tender to his own; his wife's tears, after so much experience of the comparative lightness of the griefs that weep themselves out in women, always seemed wrung from his own soul; if his children suffered in the least through him, he felt like a murderer. It was far worse than he could have imagined, the way his wife took the affair, though he had imagined certain words, or perhaps only looks, from her that were bad enough. He had allowed for trouble, but trouble on his account: a svmpathy that might burden and embarrass him; but he had not dreamed of this merely domestic, this petty, this sordid view of their potential calamity, which left him wholly out of the question, and embraced only what was most crushing and desolating in the prospect. He could not bear it. He caught up his hat again, and, with some hope that his wife would try to keep him, rushed out of the house. He wandered aimlessly about, thinking the same exhausting thoughts over and over, till he found himself horribly hungry; then he went into a restaurant for his lunch, and when he paid he tried to imagine how he should feel if that were really his last dollar.

He went home toward the middle of the afternoon, basely hoping that Fulkerson had sent him some conciliatory message, or perhaps was waiting there for him to talk it over; March was quite willing to talk it over now. But it was his wife who again met him at the door, though it seemed another woman than the one he had left weeping in the morning.

"I told the children," she said, in smiling explanation of his absence from lunch, "that perhaps you were detained by business. I didn't know but you had gone back to the office."

"Did you think I would go back there, Isabel?" asked March, with a haggard look. "Well, if you say so, I will go back, and do what Dryfoos ordered me to do. I'm sufficiently cowed between him and you, I can assure you."

"Nonsense," she said. "I approve of everything you did. But sit down, now, and don't keep walking that way, and let me see if I understand it perfectly. Of course, I had to have my say out."

She made him go all over his talk with Dryfoos again, and report his own language precisely. From time to time, as she got his points, she said, "That was splendid," "Good enough for him!" and "Oh, I'm so glad you said that to him!" At the end she said:

"Well, now, let's look at it from his point of view. Let's be perfectly just to him before we take another step forward."

"Or backward," March suggested, ruefully. "The case is simply this: he owns the magazine."

“Of course.”

“And he has a right to expect that I will consider his pecuniary interests—”

“Oh, those detestable pecuniary interests! Don’t you wish there wasn’t any money in the world?”

“Yes; or else that there was a great deal more of it. And I was perfectly willing to do that. I have always kept that in mind as one of my duties to him, ever since I understood what his relation to the magazine was.”

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“Yes, I can bear witness to that in any court of justice. You’ve done it a great deal more than I could, Basil. And it was just the same way with those horrible insurance people.”

“I know,” March went on, trying to be proof against her flatteries, or at least to look as if he did not deserve praise; “I know that what Lindau said was offensive to him, and I can understand how he felt that he had a right to punish it. All I say is that he had no right to punish it through me.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. March, askingly.

“If it had been a question of making ‘Every Other Week’ the vehicle of Lindau’s peculiar opinions—though they’re not so very peculiar; he might have got the most of them out of Ruskin—I shouldn’t have had any ground to stand on, or at least then I should have had to ask myself whether his opinions would be injurious to the magazine or not.”

“I don’t see,” Mrs. March interpolated, “how they could hurt it much worse than Colonel Woodburn’s article crying up slavery.”

“Well,” said March, impartially, “we could print a dozen articles praising the slavery it’s impossible to have back, and it wouldn’t hurt us. But if we printed one paper against the slavery which Lindau claims still exists, some people would call us bad names, and the counting-room would begin to feel it. But that isn’t the point. Lindau’s connection with ‘Every Other Week’ is almost purely mechanical; he’s merely a translator of such stories and sketches as he first submits to me, and it isn’t at all a question of his opinions hurting us, but of my becoming an agent to punish him for his opinions. That is what I wouldn’t do; that’s what I never will do.”

“If you did,” said his wife, “I should perfectly despise you. I didn’t understand how it was before. I thought you were just holding out against Dryfoos because he took a dictatorial tone with you, and because you wouldn’t recognize his authority. But now I’m with you, Basil, every time, as that horrid little Fulkerson says. But who would ever have supposed he would be so base as to side against you?”

“I don’t know,” said March, thoughtfully, “that we had a right to expect anything else. Fulkerson’s standards are low; they’re merely business standards, and the good that’s in him is incidental and something quite apart from his morals and methods. He’s naturally a generous and right-minded creature, but life has taught him to truckle and trick, like the rest of us.”

“It hasn’t taught you that, Basil.”

“Don’t be so sure. Perhaps it’s only that I’m a poor scholar. But I don’t know, really, that I despise Fulkerson so much for his course this morning as for his gross and fulsome flatteries of Dryfoos last night. I could hardly stomach it.”

His wife made him tell her what they were, and then she said, “Yes, that was loathsome; I couldn’t have believed it of Mr. Fulkerson.”

“Perhaps he only did it to keep the talk going, and to give the old man a chance to say something,” March leniently suggested. “It was a worse effect because he didn’t or couldn’t follow up Fulkerson’s lead.”

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“It was loathsome, all the same,” his wife insisted. “It’s the end of Mr. Fulkerson, as far as I’m concerned.”

“I didn’t tell you before,” March resumed, after a moment, “of my little interview with Conrad Dryfoos after his father left,” and now he went on to repeat what had passed between him and the young man.

“I suspect that he and his father had been having some words before the old man came up to talk with me, and that it was that made him so furious.”

“Yes, but what a strange position for the son of such a man to take! Do you suppose he says such things to his father?”

“I don’t know; but I suspect that in his meek way Conrad would say what he believed to anybody. I suppose we must regard him as a kind of crank.”

“Poor young fellow! He always makes me feel sad, somehow. He has such a pathetic face. I don’t believe I ever saw him look quite happy, except that night at Mrs. Horn’s, when he was talking with Miss Vance; and then he made me feel sadder than ever.”

“I don’t envy him the life he leads at home, with those convictions of his. I don’t see why it wouldn’t be as tolerable there for old Lindau himself.”

“Well, now,” said Mrs. March, “let us put them all out of our minds and see what we are going to do ourselves.”

They began to consider their ways and means, and how and where they should live, in view of March’s severance of his relations with ’Every Other Week.’ They had not saved anything from the first year’s salary; they had only prepared to save; and they had nothing solid but their two thousand to count upon. But they built a future in which they easily lived on that and on what March earned with his pen. He became a free lance, and fought in whatever cause he thought just; he had no ties, no chains. They went back to Boston with the heroic will to do what was most distasteful; they would have returned to their own house if they had not rented it again; but, any rate, Mrs. March helped out by taking boarders, or perhaps only letting rooms to lodgers. They had some hard struggles, but they succeeded.

“The great thing,” she said, “is to be right. I’m ten times as happy as if you had come home and told me that you had consented to do what Dryfoos asked and he had doubled your salary.”

“I don’t think that would have happened in any event,” said March, dryly.

“Well, no matter. I just used it for an example.”

They both experienced a buoyant relief, such as seems to come to people who begin life anew on whatever terms. “I hope we are young enough yet, Basil,” she said, and she would not have it when he said they had once been younger.

They heard the children’s knock on the door; they knocked when they came home from school so that their mother might let them in. “Shall we tell them at once?” she asked, and ran to open for them before March could answer.

They were not alone. Fulkerson, smiling from ear to ear, was with them. “Is March in?” he asked.

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“Mr. March is at home, yes,” she said very haughtily. “He’s in his study,” and she led the way there, while the children went to their rooms.

“Well, March,” Fulkerson called out at sight of him, “it’s all right! The old man has come down.”

“I suppose if you gentlemen are going to talk business—” Mrs. March began.

“Oh, we don’t want you to go away,” said Fulkerson. “I reckon March has told you, anyway.”

“Yes, I’ve told her,” said March. “Don’t go, Isabel. What do you mean, Fulkerson?”

“He’s just gone on up home, and he sent me round with his apologies. He sees now that he had no business to speak to you as he did, and he withdraws everything. He’d ‘a’ come round himself if I’d said so, but I told him I could make it all right.”

Fulkerson looked so happy in having the whole affair put right, and the Marches knew him to be so kindly affected toward them, that they could not refuse for the moment to share his mood. They felt themselves slipping down from the moral height which they had gained, and March made a clutch to stay himself with the question, “And Lindau?”

“Well,” said Fulkerson, “he’s going to leave Lindau to me. You won’t have anything to do with it. I’ll let the old fellow down easy.”

“Do you mean,” asked March, “that Mr. Dryfoos insists on his being dismissed?”

“Why, there isn’t any dismissing about it,” Fulkerson argued. “If you don’t send him any more work, he won’t do any more, that’s all. Or if he comes round, you can—He’s to be referred to me.”

March shook his head, and his wife, with a sigh, felt herself plucked up from the soft circumstance of their lives, which she had sunk back into so quickly, and set beside him on that cold peak of principle again. “It won’t do, Fulkerson. It’s very good of you, and all that, but it comes to the same thing in the end. I could have gone on without any apology from Mr. Dryfoos; he transcended his authority, but that’s a minor matter. I could have excused it to his ignorance of life among gentlemen; but I can’t consent to Lindau’s dismissal—it comes to that, whether you do it or I do it, and whether it’s a positive or a negative thing—because he holds this opinion or that.”

“But don’t you see,” said Fulkerson, “that it’s just Lindau’s opinions the old man can’t stand? He hasn’t got anything against him personally. I don’t suppose there’s anybody that appreciates Lindau in some ways more than the old man does.”

“I understand. He wants to punish him for his opinions. Well, I can’t consent to that, directly or indirectly. We don’t print his opinions, and he has a perfect right to hold them, whether Mr. Dryfoos agrees with them or not.”

Mrs. March had judged it decorous for her to say nothing, but she now went and sat down in the chair next her husband.

“Ah, dog on it!” cried Fulkerson, rumpling his hair with both his hands. “What am I to do? The old man says he’s got to go.”

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“And I don’t consent to his going,” said March.

“And you won’t stay if he goes.”

Fulkerson rose. “Well, well! I’ve got to see about it. I’m afraid the old man won’t stand it, March; I am, indeed. I wish you’d reconsider. I—I’d take it as a personal favor if you would. It leaves me in a fix. You see I’ve got to side with one or the other.”

March made no reply to this, except to say, “Yes, you must stand by him, or you must stand by me.”

“Well, well! Hold on awhile! I’ll see you in the morning. Don’t take any steps—”

“Oh, there are no steps to take,” said March, with a melancholy smile. “The steps are stopped; that’s all.” He sank back into his chair when Fulkerson was gone and drew a long breath. “This is pretty rough. I thought we had got through it.”

“No,” said his wife. “It seems as if I had to make the fight all over again.”

“Well, it’s a good thing it’s a holy war.”

“I can’t bear the suspense. Why didn’t you tell him outright you wouldn’t go back on any terms?”

“I might as well, and got the glory. He’ll never move Dryfoos. I suppose we both would like to go back, if we could.”

“Oh, I suppose so.”

They could not regain their lost exaltation, their lost dignity. At dinner Mrs. March asked the children how they would like to go back to Boston to live.

“Why, we’re not going, are we?” asked Tom, without enthusiasm.

“I was just wondering how you felt about it, now,” she said, with an underlook at her husband.

“Well, if we go back,” said Bella, “I want to live on the Back Bay. It’s awfully Micky at the South End.”

“I suppose I should go to Harvard,” said Tom, “and I’d room out at Cambridge. It would be easier to get at you on the Back Bay.”

The parents smiled ruefully at each other, and, in view of these grand expectations of his children, March resolved to go as far as he could in meeting Dryfoos’s wishes. He

proposed the theatre as a distraction from the anxieties that he knew were pressing equally on his wife. “We might go to the ‘Old Homestead,’” he suggested, with a sad irony, which only his wife felt.

“Oh yes, let’s!” cried Bella.

While they were getting ready, some one rang, and Bella went to the door, and then came to tell her father that it was Mr. Lindau. “He says he wants to see you just a moment. He’s in the parlor, and he won’t sit down, or anything.”

“What can he want?” groaned Mrs. March, from their common dismay.

March apprehended a storm in the old man’s face. But he only stood in the middle of the room, looking very sad and grave. “You are Going oudt,” he said. “I won’t geep you long. I haf gome to pring pack dose macassines and dis mawney. I can’t do any more voark for you; and I can’t geep the mawney you haf baid me a’ready. It iss not hawnest mawney—that hass been oarned py voark; it iss mawney that hass peen mate py sbeculation, and the obbression off lapor, and the necessity of the boor, py a man—-Here it is, efery tollar, efery zent. Dake it; I feel as if dere vas ploodt on it.”

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“Why, Lindau,” March began, but the old man interrupted him.

“Ton’t dalk to me, Passil! I could not haf believedt it of you. When you know how I feel about dose tings, why tidn’t you dell me whose mawney you bay oudt to me? Ach, I ton’t plame you—I ton’t rebroach you. You haf nefer thought of it; boat I have thought, and I should be Guilty, I must share that man’s Guilt, if I gept hiss mawney. If you hat toldt me at the peginning—if you hat peen frank with meboat it iss all righdt; you can go on; you ton’t see dese tings as I see them; and you haf cot a family, and I am a free man. I voark to myself, and when I ton’t voark, I sdarfe to myself. But. I geep my handts glean, voark or sdarfe. Gif him hiss mawney pack! I am sawry for him; I would not hoart hiss feelings, boat I could not pear to douch him, and hiss mawney iss like boison!”

March tried to reason with Lindau, to show him the folly, the injustice, the absurdity of his course; it ended in their both getting angry, and in Lindau’s going away in a whirl of German that included Basil in the guilt of the man whom Lindau called his master.

“Well,” said Mrs. March. “He is a crank, and I think you’re well rid of him. Now you have no quarrel with that horrid old Dryfoos, and you can keep right on.”

“Yes,” said March, “I wish it didn’t make me feel so sneaking. What a long day it’s been! It seems like a century since I got up.”

“Yes, a thousand years. Is there anything else left to happen?”

“I hope not. I’d like to go to bed.”

“Why, aren’t you going to the theatre?” wailed Bella, coming in upon her father’s desperate expression.

“The theatre? Oh yes, certainly! I meant after we got home,” and March amused himself at the puzzled countenance of the child. “Come on! Is Tom ready?”

IX.

Fulkerson parted with the Marches in such trouble of mind that he did not feel able to meet that night the people whom he usually kept so gay at Mrs. Leighton’s table. He went to Maroni’s for his dinner, for this reason and for others more obscure. He could not expect to do anything more with Dryfoos at once; he knew that Dryfoos must feel that he had already made an extreme concession to March, and he believed that if he was to get anything more from him it must be after Dryfoos had dined. But he was not without the hope, vague and indefinite as it might be, that he should find Lindau at Maroni’s, and perhaps should get some concession from him, some word of regret or apology which he could report to Dryfoos, and at lest make the means of reopening the

affair with him; perhaps Lindau, when he knew how matters stood, would back down altogether, and for March's sake would withdraw from all connection with 'Every Other Week' himself, and so leave everything serene. Fulkerson felt capable, in his desperation, of delicately suggesting such a course to Lindau, or even of plainly advising it: he did not care for Lindau a great deal, and he did care a great deal for the magazine.

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But he did not find Lindau at Maroni's; he only found Beaton. He sat looking at the doorway as Fulkerson entered, and Fulkerson naturally came and took a place at his table. Something in Beaton's large-eyed solemnity of aspect invited Fulkerson to confidence, and he said, as he pulled his napkin open and strung it, still a little damp (as the scanty, often-washed linen at Maroni's was apt to be), across his knees, "I was looking for you this morning, to talk with you about the Christmas number, and I was a good deal worked up because I couldn't find you; but I guess I might as well have spared myself my emotions."

"Why?" asked Beaton, briefly.

"Well, I don't know as there's going to be any Christmas number."

"Why?" Beaton asked again.

"Row between the financial angel and the literary editor about the chief translator and polyglot smeller."

"Lindau?"

"Lindau is his name."

"What does the literary editor expect after Lindau's expression of his views last night?"

"I don't know what he expected, but the ground he took with the old man was that, as Lindau's opinions didn't characterize his work on the magazine, he would not be made the instrument of punishing him for them the old man wanted him turned off, as he calls it."

"Seems to be pretty good ground," said Beaton, impartially, while he speculated, with a dull trouble at heart, on the effect the row would have on his own fortunes. His late visit home had made him feel that the claim of his family upon him for some repayment of help given could not be much longer delayed; with his mother sick and his father growing old, he must begin to do something for them, but up to this time he had spent his salary even faster than he had earned it. When Fulkerson came in he was wondering whether he could get him to increase it, if he threatened to give up his work, and he wished that he was enough in love with Margaret Vance, or even Christine Dryfoos, to marry her, only to end in the sorrowful conviction that he was really in love with Alma Leighton, who had no money, and who had apparently no wish to be married for love, even. "And what are you going to do about it?" he asked, listlessly.

"Be dogged if I know what I'm going to do about it," said Fulkerson. "I've been round all day, trying to pick up the pieces—row began right after breakfast this morning—and one time I thought I'd got the thing all put together again. I got the old man to say that he had spoken to March a little too authoritatively about Lindau; that, in fact, he ought to

have communicated his wishes through me; and that he was willing to have me get rid of Lindau, and March needn't have anything to do with it. I thought that was pretty white, but March says the apologies and regrets are all well enough in their way, but they leave the main question where they found it."

"What is the main question?" Beaton asked, pouring himself out some Chianti. As he set the flask down he made the reflection that if he would drink water instead of Chianti he could send his father three dollars a week, on his back debts, and he resolved to do it.

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“The main question, as March looks at it, is the question of punishing Lindau for his private opinions; he says that if he consents to my bouncing the old fellow it’s the same as if he bounced him.”

“It might have that complexion in some lights,” said Beaton. He drank off his Chianti, and thought he would have it twice a week, or make Maroni keep the half-bottles over for him, and send his father two dollars. “And what are you going to do now?”

“That’s what I don’t know,” said Fulkerson, ruefully. After a moment he said, desperately, “Beaton, you’ve got a pretty good head; why don’t you suggest something?”

“Why don’t you let March go?” Beaton suggested.

“Ah, I couldn’t,” said Fulkerson. “I got him to break up in Boston and come here; I like him; nobody else could get the hang of the thing like he has; he’s—a friend.” Fulkerson said this with the nearest approach he could make to seriousness, which was a kind of unhappiness.

Beaton shrugged. “Oh, if you can afford to have ideals, I congratulate you. They’re too expensive for me. Then, suppose you get rid of Dryfoos?”

Fulkerson laughed forlornly. “Go on, Bildad. Like to sprinkle a few ashes over my boils? Don’t mind me!”

They both sat silent a little while, and then Beaton said, “I suppose you haven’t seen Dryfoos the second time?”

“No. I came in here to gird up my loins with a little dinner before I tackled him. But something seems to be the matter with Maroni’s cook. I don’t want anything to eat.”

“The cooking’s about as bad as usual,” said Beaton. After a moment he added, ironically, for he found Fulkerson’s misery a kind of relief from his own, and was willing to protract it as long as it was amusing, “Why not try an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary?”

“What do you mean?”

“Get that other old fool to go to Dryfoos for you!”

“Which other old fool? The old fools seem to be as thick as flies.”

“That Southern one.”

“Colonel Woodburn?”

“Mmmmm.”

“He did seem to rather take to the colonel!” Fulkerson mused aloud.

“Of course he did. Woodburn, with his idiotic talk about patriarchal slavery, is the man on horseback to Dryfoos’s muddy imagination. He’d listen to him abjectly, and he’d do whatever Woodburn told him to do.” Beaton smiled cynically.

Fulkerson got up and reached for his coat and hat. “You’ve struck it, old man.” The waiter came up to help him on with his coat; Fulkerson slipped a dollar in his hand. “Never mind the coat; you can give the rest of my dinner to the poor, Paolo. Beaton, shake! You’ve saved my life, little boy, though I don’t think you meant it.” He took Beaton’s hand and solemnly pressed it, and then almost ran out of the door.

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They had just reached coffee at Mrs. Leighton's when he arrived and sat down with them and began to put some of the life of his new hope into them. His appetite revived, and, after protesting that he would not take anything but coffee, he went back and ate some of the earlier courses. But with the pressure of his purpose driving him forward, he did not conceal from Miss Woodburn, at least, that he was eager to get her apart from the rest for some reason. When he accomplished this, it seemed as if he had contrived it all himself, but perhaps he had not wholly contrived it.

"I'm so glad to get a chance to speak to you alone," he said at once; and while she waited for the next word he made a pause, and then said, desperately, "I want you to help me; and if you can't help me, there's no help for me."

"Mah goodness," she said, "is the case so bad as that? What in the woald is the trouble?"

"Yes, it's a bad case," said Fulkerson. "I want your father to help me."

"Oh, I thoat you said me!"

"Yes; I want you to help me with your father. I suppose I ought to go to him at once, but I'm a little afraid of him."

"And you awe not afraid of me? I don't think that's very flattering, Mr. Fulkerson. You ought to think Ah'm twahce as awful as papa."

"Oh, I do! You see, I'm quite paralyzed before you, and so I don't feel anything."

"Well, it's a pretty lahvely kyand of paralysis. But—go on."

"I will—I will. If I can only begin."

"Pohaps Ah maght begin fo' you."

"No, you can't. Lord knows, I'd like to let you. Well, it's like this."

Fulkerson made a clutch at his hair, and then, after another hesitation, he abruptly laid the whole affair before her. He did not think it necessary to state the exact nature of the offence Lindau had given Dryfoos, for he doubted if she could grasp it, and he was profuse of his excuses for troubling her with the matter, and of wonder at himself for having done so. In the rapture of his concern at having perhaps made a fool of himself, he forgot why he had told her; but she seemed to like having been confided in, and she said, "Well, Ah don't see what you can do with you' ahdeals of friendship except stand bah Mr. Mawch."

"My ideals of friendship? What do you mean?"

“Oh, don’t you suppose we know? Mr. Beaton said you we’ a pofect Bahyard in friendship, and you would sacrifice anything to it.”

“Is that so?” said Fulkerson, thinking how easily he could sacrifice Lindau in this case. He had never supposed before that he was chivalrous in such matters, but he now began to see it in that light, and he wondered that he could ever have entertained for a moment the idea of throwing March over.

“But Ah most say,” Miss Woodburn went on, “Ah don’t envy you you’ next interview with Mr. Dryfoos. Ah suppose you’ll have to see him at once aboat it.”

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The conjecture recalled Fulkerson to the object of his confidences. “Ah, there’s where your help comes in. I’ve exhausted all the influence I have with Dryfoos—”

“Good gracious, you don’t expect Ah could have any!”

They both laughed at the comic dismay with which she conveyed the preposterous notion; and Fulkerson said, “If I judged from myself, I should expect you to bring him round instantly.”

“Oh, thank you, Mr. Fulkerson,” she said, with mock meekness.

“Not at all. But it isn’t Dryfoos I want you to help me with; it’s your father. I want your father to interview Dryfoos for me, and I-I’m afraid to ask him.”

“Poo’ Mr. Fulkerson!” she said, and she insinuated something through her burlesque compassion that lifted him to the skies. He swore in his heart that the woman never lived who was so witty, so wise, so beautiful, and so good. “Come raght with me this minute, if the cyoast’s clea’.” She went to the door of the diningroom and looked in across its gloom to the little gallery where her father sat beside a lamp reading his evening paper; Mrs. Leighton could be heard in colloquy with the cook below, and Alma had gone to her room. She beckoned Fulkerson with the hand outstretched behind her, and said, “Go and ask him.”

“Alone!” he palpitated.

“Oh, what a cyowahd!” she cried, and went with him. “Ah suppose you’ll want me to tell him aboat it.”

“Well, I wish you’d begin, Miss Woodburn,” he said. “The fact is, you know, I’ve been over it so much I’m kind of sick of the thing.”

Miss Woodburn advanced and put her hand on her father’s shoulder. “Look heah, papa! Mr. Fulkerson wants to ask you something, and he wants me to do it fo’ him.”

The colonel looked up through his glasses with the sort of ferocity elderly men sometimes have to put on in order to keep their glasses from falling off. His daughter continued: “He’s got into an awful difficulty with his edito’ and his proprieto’, and he wants you to pacify them.”

“I do not know whethah I understand the case exactly,” said the colonel, “but Mr. Fulkerson may command me to the extent of my ability.”

“You don’t understand it aftah what Ah’ve said?” cried the girl. “Then Ah don’t see but what you’ll have to explain it you’self, Mr. Fulkerson.”

“Well, Miss Woodburn has been so luminous about it, colonel,” said Fulkerson, glad of the joking shape she had given the affair, “that I can only throw in a little side-light here and there.”

The colonel listened as Fulkerson went on, with a grave diplomatic satisfaction. He felt gratified, honored, even, he said, by Mr. Fulkerson’s appeal to him; and probably it gave him something of the high joy that an affair of honor would have brought him in the days when he had arranged for meetings between gentlemen. Next to bearing a challenge, this work of composing a difficulty must have been grateful. But he gave no outward sign of his satisfaction in making a resume of the case so as to get the points clearly in his mind.

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“I was afraid, sir,” he said, with the state due to the serious nature of the facts, “that Mr. Lindau had given Mr. Dryfoos offence by some of his questions at the dinner-table last night.”

“Perfect red rag to a bull,” Fulkerson put in; and then he wanted to withdraw his words at the colonel’s look of displeasure.

“I have no reflections to make upon Mr. Landau,” Colonel Woodburn continued, and Fulkerson felt grateful to him for going on; “I do not agree with Mr. Lindau; I totally disagree with him on sociological points; but the course of the conversation had invited him to the expression of his convictions, and he had a right to express them, so far as they had no personal bearing.”

“Of course,” said Fulkerson, while Miss Woodburn perched on the arm of her father’s chair.

“At the same time, sir, I think that if Mr. Dryfoos felt a personal censure in Mr. Lindau’s questions concerning his suppression of the strike among his workmen, he had a right to resent it.”

“Exactly,” Fulkerson assented.

“But it must be evident to you, sir, that a high-spirited gentleman like Mr. March—I confess that my feelings are with him very warmly in the matter—could not submit to dictation of the nature you describe.”

“Yes, I see,” said Fulkerson; and, with that strange duplex action of the human mind, he wished that it was his hair, and not her father’s, that Miss Woodburn was poking apart with the corner of her fan.

“Mr. Lindau,” the colonel concluded, “was right from his point of view, and Mr. Dryfoos was equally right. The position of Mr. March is perfectly correct—”

His daughter dropped to her feet from his chair-arm. “Mah goodness! If nobody’s in the wrong, ho’ awe you evah going to get the mattah straight?”

“Yes, you see,” Fulkerson added, “nobody can give in.”

“Pardon me,” said the colonel, “the case is one in which all can give in.”

“I don’t know which ’ll begin,” said Fulkerson.

The colonel rose. “Mr. Lindau must begin, sir. We must begin by seeing Mr. Lindau, and securing from him the assurance that in the expression of his peculiar views he had

no intention of offering any personal offence to Mr. Dryfoos. If I have formed a correct estimate of Mr. Lindau, this will be perfectly simple."

Fulkerson shook his head. "But it wouldn't help. Dryfoos don't care a rap whether Lindau meant any personal offence or not. As far as that is concerned, he's got a hide like a hippopotamus. But what he hates is Lindau's opinions, and what he says is that no man who holds such opinions shall have any work from him. And what March says is that no man shall be punished through him for his opinions, he don't care what they are."

The colonel stood a moment in silence. "And what do you expect me to do under the circumstances?"

"I came to you for advice—I thought you might suggest——?"

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“Do you wish me to see Mr. Dryfoos?”

“Well, that’s about the size of it,” Fulkerson admitted. “You see, colonel,” he hastened on, “I know that you have a great deal of influence with him; that article of yours is about the only thing he’s ever read in ‘Every Other Week,’ and he’s proud of your acquaintance. Well, you know”—and here Fulkerson brought in the figure that struck him so much in Beaton’s phrase and had been on his tongue ever since—“you’re the man on horseback to him; and he’d be more apt to do what you say than if anybody else said it.”

“You are very good, sir,” said the colonel, trying to be proof against the flattery, “but I am afraid you overrate my influence.” Fulkerson let him ponder it silently, and his daughter governed her impatience by holding her fan against her lips. Whatever the process was in the colonel’s mind, he said at last: “I see no good reason for declining to act for you, Mr. Fulkerson, and I shall be very happy if I can be of service to you. But”—he stopped Fulkerson from cutting in with precipitate thanks—“I think I have a right, sir, to ask what your course will be in the event of failure?”

“Failure?” Fulkerson repeated, in dismay.

“Yes, sir. I will not conceal from you that this mission is one not wholly agreeable to my feelings.”

“Oh, I understand that, colonel, and I assure you that I appreciate, I—”

“There is no use trying to blink the fact, sir, that there are certain aspects of Mr. Dryfoos’s character in which he is not a gentleman. We have alluded to this fact before, and I need not dwell upon it now: I may say, however, that my misgivings were not wholly removed last night.”

“No,” Fulkerson assented; though in his heart he thought the old man had behaved very well.

“What I wish to say now is that I cannot consent to act for you, in this matter, merely as an intermediary whose failure would leave the affair in state quo.”

“I see,” said Fulkerson.

“And I should like some intimation, some assurance, as to which party your own feelings are with in the difference.”

The colonel bent his eyes sharply on Fulkerson; Miss Woodburn let hers fall; Fulkerson felt that he was being tested, and he said, to gain time, “As between Lindau and Dryfoos?” though he knew this was not the point.

“As between Mr. Dryfoos and Mr. March,” said the colonel.

Fulkerson drew a long breath and took his courage in both hands. “There can’t be any choice for me in such a case. I’m for March, every time.”

The colonel seized his hand, and Miss Woodburn said, “If there had been any choice fo’ you in such a case, I should never have let papa stir a step with you.”

“Why, in regard to that,” said the colonel, with a, literal application of the idea, “was it your intention that we should both go?”

“Well, I don’t know; I suppose it was.”

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“I think it will be better for me to go alone,” said the colonel; and, with a color from his experience in affairs of honor, he added: “In these matters a principal cannot appear without compromising his dignity. I believe I have all the points clearly in mind, and I think I should act more freely in meeting Mr. Dryfoos alone.”

Fulkerson tried to hide the eagerness with which he met these agreeable views. He felt himself exalted in some sort to the level of the colonel’s sentiments, though it would not be easy to say whether this was through the desperation bred of having committed himself to March’s side, or through the buoyant hope he had that the colonel would succeed in his mission.

“I’m not afraid to talk with Dryfoos about it,” he said.

“There is no question of courage,” said the colonel. “It is a question of dignity—of personal dignity.”

“Well, don’t let that delay you, papa,” said his daughter, following him to the door, where she found him his hat, and Fulkerson helped him on with his overcoat. “Ah shall be jost wald to know ho’ it’s toned oat.”

“Won’t you let me go up to the house with you?” Fulkerson began. “I needn’t go in—”

“I prefer to go alone,” said the colonel. “I wish to turn the points over in my mind, and I am afraid you would find me rather dull company.”

He went out, and Fulkerson returned with Miss Woodburn to the drawing-room, where she said the Leightons were. They, were not there, but she did not seem disappointed.

“Well, Mr. Fulkerson,” she said, “you have got an ahdeal of friendship, sure enough.”

“Me?” said Fulkerson. “Oh, my Lord! Don’t you see I couldn’t do anything else? And I’m scared half to death, anyway. If the colonel don’t bring the old man round, I reckon it’s all up with me. But he’ll fetch him. And I’m just prostrated with gratitude to you, Miss Woodburn.”

She waved his thanks aside with her fan. “What do you mean by its being all up with you?”

“Why, if the old man sticks to his position, and I stick to March, we’ve both got to go overboard together. Dryfoos owns the magazine; he can stop it, or he can stop us, which amounts to the same thing, as far as we’re concerned.”

“And then what?” the girl pursued.

“And then, nothing—till we pick ourselves up.”

“Do you mean that Mr. Dryfoos will put you both oat of your places?”

“He may.”

“And Mr. Mawch takes the risk of that jost fo’ a principle?”

“I reckon.”

“And you do it jost fo’ an ahdeal?”

“It won’t do to own it. I must have my little axe to grind, somewhere.”

“Well, men awe splendid,” sighed the girl. “Ah will say it.”

“Oh, they’re not so much better than women,” said Fulkerson, with a nervous jocosity. “I guess March would have backed down if it hadn’t been for his wife. She was as hot as pepper about it, and you could see that she would have sacrificed all her husband’s relations sooner than let him back down an inch from the stand he had taken. It’s pretty easy for a man to stick to a principle if he has a woman to stand by him. But when you come to play it alone—”

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“Mr. Fulkerson,” said the girl, solemnly, “Ah will stand bah you in this, if all the woald tones against you.” The tears came into her eyes, and she put out her hand to him.

“You will?” he shouted, in a rapture. “In every way—and always—as long as you live? Do you mean it?” He had caught her hand to his breast and was grappling it tight there and drawing her to him.

The changing emotions chased one another through her heart and over her face: dismay, shame, pride, tenderness. “You don’t believe,” she said, hoarsely, “that Ah meant that?”

“No, but I hope you do mean it; for if you don’t, nothing else means anything.”

There was no space, there was only a point of wavering. “Ah do mean it.”

When they lifted their eyes from each other again it was half-past ten. “No’ you most go,” she said.

“But the colonel—our fate?”

“The co’nel is often oat late, and Ah’m not afraid of ouah fate, no’ that we’ve taken it into ouah own hands.” She looked at him with dewy eyes of trust, of inspiration.

“Oh, it’s going to come out all right,” he said. “It can’t come out wrong now, no matter what happens. But who’d have thought it, when I came into this house, in such a state of sin and misery, half an hour ago—”

“Three houahs and a half ago!” she said. “No! you most jost go. Ah’m tahed to death. Good-night. You can come in the mawning to see-papa.” She opened the door and pushed him out with enrapturing violence, and he ran laughing down the steps into her father’s arms.

“Why, colonel! I was just going up to meet you.” He had really thought he would walk off his exultation in that direction.

“I am very sorry to say, Mr. Fulkerson,” the colonel began, gravely, “that Mr. Dryfoos adheres to his position.”

“Oh, all right,” said Fulkerson, with unabated joy. “It’s what I expected. Well, my course is clear; I shall stand by March, and I guess the world won’t come to an end if he bounces us both. But I’m everlastingly obliged to you, Colonel Woodburn, and I don’t know what to say to you. I—I won’t detain you now; it’s so late. I’ll see you in the morning. Good-ni—”

Fulkerson did not realize that it takes two to part. The colonel laid hold of his arm and turned away with him. “I will walk toward your place with you. I can understand why you should be anxious to know the particulars of my interview with Mr. Dryfoos”; and in the statement which followed he did not spare him the smallest. It outlasted their walk and detained them long on the steps of the ‘Every Other Week’ building. But at the end Fulkerson let himself in with his key as light of heart as if he had been listening to the gayest promises that fortune could make.

By the tune he met March at the office next morning, a little, but only a very little, misgiving saddened his golden heaven. He took March’s hand with high courage, and said, “Well, the old man sticks to his point, March.” He added, with the sense of saying it before Miss Woodburn: “And I stick by you. I’ve thought it all over, and I’d rather be right with you than wrong with him.”

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“Well, I appreciate your motive, Fulkerson,” said March. “But perhaps—perhaps we can save over our heroics for another occasion. Lindau seems to have got in with his, for the present.”

He told him of Lindau’s last visit, and they stood a moment looking at each other rather queerly. Fulkerson was the first to recover his spirits. “Well,” he said, cheerily, “that let’s us out.”

“Does it? I’m not sure it lets me out,” said March; but he said this in tribute to his crippled self-respect rather than as a forecast of any action in the matter.

“Why, what are you going to do?” Fulkerson asked. “If Lindau won’t work for Dryfoos, you can’t make him.”

March sighed. “What are you going to do with this money?” He glanced at the heap of bills he had flung on the table between them.

Fulkerson scratched his head. “Ah, dogged if I know: Can’t we give it to the deserving poor, somehow, if we can find ’em?”

“I suppose we’ve no right to use it in any way. You must give it to Dryfoos.”

“To the deserving rich? Well, you can always find them. I reckon you don’t want to appear in the transaction! I don’t, either; but I guess I must.” Fulkerson gathered up the money and carried it to Conrad. He directed him to account for it in his books as conscience-money, and he enjoyed the joke more than Conrad seemed to do when he was told where it came from.

Fulkerson was able to wear off the disagreeable impression the affair left during the course of the fore-noon, and he met Miss Woodburn with all a lover’s buoyancy when he went to lunch. She was as happy as he when he told her how fortunately the whole thing had ended, and he took her view that it was a reward of his courage in having dared the worst. They both felt, as the newly plighted always do, that they were in the best relations with the beneficent powers, and that their felicity had been especially looked to in the disposition of events. They were in a glow of rapturous content with themselves and radiant worship of each other; she was sure that he merited the bright future opening to them both, as much as if he owed it directly to some noble action of his own; he felt that he was indebted for the favor of Heaven entirely to the still incredible accident of her preference of him over other men.

Colonel Woodburn, who was not yet in the secret of their love, perhaps failed for this reason to share their satisfaction with a result so unexpectedly brought about. The blessing on their hopes seemed to his ignorance to involve certain sacrifices of personal feeling at which he hinted in suggesting that Dryfoos should now be asked to make

some abstract concessions and acknowledgments; his daughter hastened to deny that these were at all necessary; and Fulkerson easily explained why. The thing was over; what was the use of opening it up again?

“Perhaps none,” the colonel admitted. But he added, “I should like the opportunity of taking Mr. Lindau’s hand in the presence of Mr. Dryfoos and assuring him that I considered him a man of principle and a man of honor—a gentleman, sir, whom I was proud and happy to have known.”

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“Well, Ah’ve no doabt,” said his daughter, demurely, “that you’ll have the chance some day; and we would all lahke to join you. But at the same tahme, Ah think Mr. Fulkerson is well oat of it fo’ the present.”

PG EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS:

Anticipative reprisal
Buttoned about him as if it concealed a bad conscience
Courtship
Got their laugh out of too many things in life
Had learned not to censure the irretrievable
Had no opinions that he was not ready to hold in abeyance
Ignorant of her ignorance
It don’t do any good to look at its drawbacks all the time
Justice must be paid for at every step in fees and costs
Life has taught him to truckle and trick
Man’s willingness to abide in the present
No longer the gross appetite for novelty
No right to burden our friends with our decisions
Travel, with all its annoyances and fatigues
Typical anything else, is pretty difficult to find

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

By William Dean Howells

PART FIFTH

I.

Superficially, the affairs of ‘Every Other Week’ settled into their wonted form again, and for Fulkerson they seemed thoroughly reinstated. But March had a feeling of impermanency from what had happened, mixed with a fantastic sense of shame toward Lindau. He did not sympathize with Lindau’s opinions; he thought his remedy for existing evils as wildly impracticable as Colonel Woodburn’s. But while he thought this, and while he could justly blame Fulkerson for Lindau’s presence at Dryfoos’s dinner, which his zeal had brought about in spite of March’s protests, still he could not rid himself of the reproach of uncandor with Lindau. He ought to have told him frankly about the ownership of the magazine, and what manner of man the man was whose money he was taking. But he said that he never could have imagined that he was serious in his preposterous attitude in regard to a class of men who embody half the prosperity of the country; and he had moments of revolt against his own humiliation

before Lindau, in which he found it monstrous that he should return Dryfoos's money as if it had been the spoil of a robber. His wife agreed with him in these moments, and said it was a great relief not to have that tiresome old German coming about. They had to account for his absence evasively to the children, whom they could not very well tell that their father was living on money that Lindau disdained to take, even though Lindau was wrong and their father was right. This heightened Mrs. March's resentment toward both Lindau and Dryfoos, who between them had placed her husband in a false position. If anything, she resented Dryfoos's conduct more than Lindau's. He had never spoken to March about the affair since Lindau had

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renounced his work, or added to the apologetic messages he had sent by Fulkerson. So far as March knew, Dryfoos had been left to suppose that Lindau had simply stopped for some reason that did not personally affect him. They never spoke of him, and March was too proud to ask either Fulkerson or Conrad whether the old man knew that Lindau had returned his money. He avoided talking to Conrad, from a feeling that if he did he should involuntarily lead him on to speak of his differences with his father. Between himself and Fulkerson, even, he was uneasily aware of a want of their old perfect friendliness. Fulkerson had finally behaved with honor and courage; but his provisional reluctance had given March the measure of Fulkerson's character in one direction, and he could not ignore the fact that it was smaller than he could have wished.

He could not make out whether Fulkerson shared his discomfort or not. It certainly wore away, even with March, as time passed, and with Fulkerson, in the bliss of his fortunate love, it was probably far more transient, if it existed at all. He advanced into the winter as radiantly as if to meet the spring, and he said that if there were any pleasanter month of the year than November, it was December, especially when the weather was good and wet and muddy most of the time, so that you had to keep indoors a long while after you called anywhere.

Colonel Woodburn had the anxiety, in view of his daughter's engagement, when she asked his consent to it, that such a dreamer must have in regard to any reality that threatens to affect the course of his reveries. He had not perhaps taken her marriage into account, except as a remote contingency; and certainly Fulkerson was not the kind of son-in-law that he had imagined in dealing with that abstraction. But because he had nothing of the sort definitely in mind, he could not oppose the selection of Fulkerson with success; he really knew nothing against him, and he knew, many things in his favor; Fulkerson inspired him with the liking that every one felt for him in a measure; he amused him, he cheered him; and the colonel had been so much used to leaving action of all kinds to his daughter that when he came to close quarters with the question of a son-in-law he felt helpless to decide it, and he let her decide it, as if it were still to be decided when it was submitted to him. She was competent to treat it in all its phases: not merely those of personal interest, but those of duty to the broken Southern past, sentimentally dear to him, and practically absurd to her. No such South as he remembered had ever existed to her knowledge, and no such civilization as he imagined would ever exist, to her belief, anywhere. She took the world as she found it, and made the best of it. She trusted in Fulkerson; she had proved his magnanimity in a serious emergency; and in small things she was willing fearlessly to chance it with him. She was not a sentimentalist, and there was nothing fantastic in her expectations; she was a girl of good sense and right mind, and she liked the immediate practicality as well as the final honor of Fulkerson. She did not idealize him, but in the highest effect she realized him; she did him justice, and she would not have believed that she did him more than justice if she had sometimes known him to do himself less.

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Their engagement was a fact to which the Leighton household adjusted itself almost as simply as the lovers themselves; Miss Woodburn told the ladies at once, and it was not a thing that Fulkerson could keep from March very long. He sent word of it to Mrs. March by her husband; and his engagement perhaps did more than anything else to confirm the confidence in him which had been shaken by his early behavior in the Lindau episode, and not wholly restored by his tardy fidelity to March. But now she felt that a man who wished to get married so obviously and entirely for love was full of all kinds of the best instincts, and only needed the guidance of a wife, to become very noble. She interested herself intensely in balancing the respective merits of the engaged couple, and after her call upon Miss Woodburn in her new character she prided herself upon recognizing the worth of some strictly Southern qualities in her, while maintaining the general average of New England superiority. She could not reconcile herself to the Virginian custom illustrated in her having been christened with the surname of Madison; and she said that its pet form of Mad, which Fulkerson promptly invented, only made it more ridiculous.

Fulkerson was slower in telling Beaton. He was afraid, somehow, of Beaton's taking the matter in the cynical way; Miss Woodburn said she would break off the engagement if Beaton was left to guess it or find it out by accident, and then Fulkerson plucked up his courage. Beaton received the news with gravity, and with a sort of melancholy meekness that strongly moved Fulkerson's sympathy, and made him wish that Beaton was engaged, too.

It made Beaton feel very old; it somehow left him behind and forgotten; in a manner, it made him feel trifled with. Something of the unfriendliness of fate seemed to overcast his resentment, and he allowed the sadness of his conviction that he had not the means to marry on to tinge his recognition of the fact that Alma Leighton would not have wanted him to marry her if he had. He was now often in that martyr mood in which he wished to help his father; not only to deny himself Chianti, but to forego a fur-lined overcoat which he intended to get for the winter, He postponed the moment of actual sacrifice as regarded the Chianti, and he bought the overcoat in an anguish of self-reproach. He wore it the first evening after he got it in going to call upon the Leightons, and it seemed to him a piece of ghastly irony when Alma complimented his picturesqueness in it and asked him to let her sketch him.

"Oh, you can sketch me," he said, with so much gloom that it made her laugh.

"If you think it's so serious, I'd rather not."

"No, no! Go ahead! How do you want me?"

Oh, fling yourself down on a chair in one of your attitudes of studied negligence; and twist one corner of your mustache with affected absence of mind."

“And you think I’m always studied, always affected?”

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“I didn’t say so.”

“I didn’t ask you what you said.”

“And I won’t tell you what I think.”

“Ah, I know what you think.”

“What made you ask, then?” The girl laughed again with the satisfaction of her sex in cornering a man.

Beaton made a show of not deigning to reply, and put himself in the pose she suggested, frowning.

“Ah, that’s it. But a little more animation—

“’As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.’”

She put her forehead down on the back of her hand and laughed again. “You ought to be photographed. You look as if you were sitting for it.”

Beaton said: “That’s because I know I am being photographed, in one way. I don’t think you ought to call me affected. I never am so with you; I know it wouldn’t be of any use.”

“Oh, Mr. Beaton, you flatter.”

“No, I never flatter you.”

“I meant you flattered yourself.”

“How?”

“Oh, I don’t know. Imagine.”

“I know what you mean. You think I can’t be sincere with anybody.”

“Oh no, I don’t.”

“What do you think?”

“That you can’t—try.” Alma gave another victorious laugh.

Miss Woodburn and Fulkerson would once have both feigned a great interest in Alma’s sketching Beaton, and made it the subject of talk, in which they approached as nearly as possible the real interest of their lives. Now they frankly remained away in the

dining-room, which was very cozy after the dinner had disappeared; the colonel sat with his lamp and paper in the gallery beyond; Mrs. Leighton was about her housekeeping affairs, in the content she always felt when Alma was with Beaton.

“They seem to be having a pretty good time in there,” said Fulkerson, detaching himself from his own absolute good time as well as he could.

“At least Alma does,” said Miss Woodburn.

“Do you think she cares for him?”

“Quahte as moch as he desoves.”

“What makes you all down on Beaton around here? He’s not such a bad fellow.”

“We awe not all doan on him. Mrs. Leighton isn’t doan on him.”

“Oh, I guess if it was the old lady, there wouldn’t be much question about it.”

They both laughed, and Alma said, “They seem to be greatly amused with something in there.”

“Me, probably,” said Beaton. “I seem to amuse everybody to-night.”

“Don’t you always?”

“I always amuse you, I’m afraid, Alma.”

She looked at him as if she were going to snub him openly for using her name; but apparently she decided to do it covertly. “You didn’t at first. I really used to believe you could be serious, once.”

“Couldn’t you believe it again? Now?”

“Not when you put on that wind-harp stop.”

“Wetmore has been talking to you about me. He would sacrifice his best friend to a phrase. He spends his time making them.”

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“He’s made some very pretty ones about you.”

“Like the one you just quoted?”

“No, not exactly. He admires you ever so much. He says” She stopped, teasingly.

“What?”

“He says you could be almost anything you wished, if you didn’t wish to be everything.”

“That sounds more like the school of Wetmore. That’s what you say, Alma. Well, if there were something you wished me to be, I could be it.”

“We might adapt Kingsley: ’Be good, sweet man, and let who will be clever.’” He could not help laughing. She went on: “I always thought that was the most patronizing and exasperating thing ever addressed to a human girl; and we’ve had to stand a good deal in our time. I should like to have it applied to the other ‘sect’ a while. As if any girl that was a girl would be good if she had the remotest chance of being clever.”

“Then you wouldn’t wish me to be good?” Beaton asked.

“Not if you were a girl.”

“You want to shock me. Well, I suppose I deserve it. But if I were one-tenth part as good as you are, Alma, I should have a lighter heart than I have now. I know that I’m fickle, but I’m not false, as you think I am.”

“Who said I thought you were false?”

“No one,” said Beaton. “It isn’t necessary, when you look it—live it.”

“Oh, dear! I didn’t know I devoted my whole time to the subject.”

“I know I’m despicable. I could tell you something—the history of this day, even—that would make you despise me.” Beaton had in mind his purchase of the overcoat, which Alma was getting in so effectively, with the money he ought to have sent his father. “But,” he went on, darkly, with a sense that what he was that moment suffering for his selfishness must somehow be a kind of atonement, which would finally leave him to the guiltless enjoyment of the overcoat, “you wouldn’t believe the depths of baseness I could descend to.”

“I would try,” said Alma, rapidly shading the collar, “if you’d give me some hint.”

Beaton had a sudden wish to pour out his remorse to her, but he was afraid of her laughing at him. He said to himself that this was a very wholesome fear, and that if he

could always have her at hand he should not make a fool of himself so often. A man conceives of such an office as the very noblest for a woman; he worships her for it if he is magnanimous. But Beaton was silent, and Alma put back her head for the right distance on her sketch. “Mr. Fulkerson thinks you are the sublimest of human beings for advising him to get Colonel Woodburn to interview Mr. Dryfoos about Lindau. What have you ever done with your Judas?”

“I haven’t done anything with it. Nadel thought he would take hold of it at one time, but he dropped it again. After all, I don’t suppose it could be popularized. Fulkerson wanted to offer it as a premium to subscribers for ‘Every Other Week,’ but I sat down on that.”

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Alma could not feel the absurdity of this, and she merely said, "'Every Other Week' seems to be going on just the same as ever."

"Yes, the trouble has all blown over, I believe. Fulkerson," said Beaton, with a return to what they were saying, "has managed the whole business very well. But he exaggerates the value of my advice."

"Very likely," Alma suggested, vaguely. "Or, no! Excuse me! He couldn't, he couldn't!" She laughed delightedly at Beaton's foolish look of embarrassment.

He tried to recover his dignity in saying, "He's 'a very good fellow, and he deserves his happiness."

"Oh, indeed!" said Alma, perversely. "Does any one deserve happiness?"

"I know I don't," sighed Beaton.

"You mean you don't get it."

"I certainly don't get it."

"Ah, but that isn't the reason."

"What is?"

"That's the secret of the universe," She bit in her lower lip, and looked at him with eyes, of gleaming fun.

"Are you never serious?" he asked.

"With serious people always."

"I am serious; and you have the secret of my happiness—" He threw himself impulsively forward in his chair.

"Oh, pose, pose!" she cried.

"I won't pose," he answered, "and you have got to listen to me. You know I'm in love with you; and I know that once you cared for me. Can't that time—won't it—come back again? Try to think so, Alma!"

"No," she said, briefly and seriously enough.

"But that seems impossible. What is it I've done what have you against me?"

“Nothing. But that time is past. I couldn’t recall it if I wished. Why did you bring it up? You’ve broken your word. You know I wouldn’t have let you keep coming here if you hadn’t promised never to refer to it.”

“How could I help it? With that happiness near us—Fulkerson—”

“Oh, it’s that? I might have known it!”

“No, it isn’t that—it’s something far deeper. But if it’s nothing you have against me, what is it, Alma, that keeps you from caring for me now as you did then? I haven’t changed.”

“But I have. I shall never care for you again, Mr. Beaton; you might as well understand it once for all. Don’t think it’s anything in yourself, or that I think you unworthy of me. I’m not so self-satisfied as that; I know very well that I’m not a perfect character, and that I’ve no claim on perfection in anybody else. I think women who want that are fools; they won’t get it, and they don’t deserve it. But I’ve learned a good. deal more about myself than I knew in St. Barnaby, and a life of work, of art, and of art alone that’s what I’ve made up my mind to.”

“A woman that’s made up her mind to that has no heart to hinder her!”

“Would a man have that had done so?”

“But I don’t believe you, Alma. You’re merely laughing at me. And, besides, with me you needn’t give up art. We could work together. You know how much I admire your talent. I believe I could help it—serve it; I would be its willing slave, and yours, Heaven knows!”

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“I don’t want any slave—nor any slavery. I want to be free always. Now do you see? I don’t care for you, and I never could in the old way; but I should have to care for some one more than I believe I ever shall to give up my work. Shall we go on?” She looked at her sketch.

“No, we shall not go on,” he said, gloomily, as he rose.

“I suppose you blame me,” she said, rising too.

“Oh no! I blame no one—or only myself. I threw my chance away.”

“I’m glad you see that; and I’m glad you did it. You don’t believe me, of course. Why do men think life can be only the one thing to women? And if you come to the selfish view, who are the happy women? I’m sure that if work doesn’t fail me, health won’t, and happiness won’t.”

“But you could work on with me—”

“Second fiddle. Do you suppose I shouldn’t be woman enough to wish my work always less and lower than yours? At least I’ve heart enough for that!”

“You’ve heart enough for anything, Alma. I was a fool to say you hadn’t.”

“I think the women who keep their hearts have an even chance, at least, of having heart—”

“Ah, there’s where you’re wrong!”

“But mine isn’t mine to give you, anyhow. And now I don’t want you ever to speak to me about this again.”

“Oh, there’s no danger!” he cried, bitterly. “I shall never willingly see you again.”

“That’s as you like, Mr. Beaton. We’ve had to be very frank, but I don’t see why we shouldn’t be friends. Still, we needn’t, if you don’t like.”

“And I may come—I may come here—as—as usual?”

“Why, if you can consistently,” she said, with a smile, and she held out her hand to him.

He went home dazed, and feeling as if it were a bad joke that had been put upon him. At least the affair went so deep that it estranged the aspect of his familiar studio. Some of the things in it were not very familiar; he had spent lately a great deal on rugs, on stuffs, on Japanese bric-a-brac. When he saw these things in the shops he had felt that he must have them; that they were necessary to him; and he was partly in debt for

them, still without having sent any of his earnings to pay his father. As he looked at them now he liked to fancy something weird and conscious in them as the silent witnesses of a broken life. He felt about among some of the smaller objects on the mantel for his pipe. Before he slept he was aware, in the luxury of his despair, of a remote relief, an escape; and, after all, the understanding he had come to with Alma was only the explicit formulation of terms long tacit between them. Beaton would have been puzzled more than he knew if she had taken him seriously. It was inevitable that he should declare himself in love with her; but he was not disappointed at her rejection of his love; perhaps not so much as he would have been at its acceptance, though he tried to think otherwise, and to give himself airs of tragedy. He did not really feel that the result was worse than what had gone before, and it left him free.

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But he did not go to the Leightons again for so long a time that Mrs. Leighton asked Alma what had happened. Alma told her.

“And he won’t come any more?” her mother sighed, with reserved censure.

“Oh, I think he will. He couldn’t very well come the next night. But he has the habit of coming, and with Mr. Beaton habit is everything—even the habit of thinking he’s in love with some one.”

“Alma,” said her mother, “I don’t think it’s very nice for a girl to let a young man keep coming to see her after she’s refused him.”

“Why not, if it amuses him and doesn’t hurt the girl?”

“But it does hurt her, Alma. It—it’s indelicate. It isn’t fair to him; it gives him hopes.”

“Well, mamma, it hasn’t happened in the given case yet. If Mr. Beaton comes again, I won’t see him, and you can forbid him the house.”

“If I could only feel sure, Alma,” said her mother, taking up another branch of the inquiry, “that you really knew your own mind, I should be easier about it.”

“Then you can rest perfectly quiet, mamma. I do know my own mind; and, what’s worse, I know Mr. Beaton’s mind.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that he spoke to me the other night simply because Mr. Fulkerson’s engagement had broken him all up.”

“What expressions!” Mrs. Leighton lamented.

“He let it out himself,” Alma went on. “And you wouldn’t have thought it was very flattering yourself. When I’m made love to, after this, I prefer to be made love to in an off-year, when there isn’t another engaged couple anywhere about.”

“Did you tell him that, Alma?”

“Tell him that! What do you mean, mamma? I may be indelicate, but I’m not quite so indelicate as that.”

“I didn’t mean you were indelicate, really, Alma, but I wanted to warn you. I think Mr. Beaton was very much in earnest.”

“Oh, so did he!”

“And you didn’t?”

“Oh yes, for the time being. I suppose he’s very much in earnest with Miss Vance at times, and with Miss Dryfoos at others. Sometimes he’s a painter, and sometimes he’s an architect, and sometimes he’s a sculptor. He has too many gifts—too many tastes.”

“And if Miss Vance and Miss Dryfoos—”

“Oh, do say Sculpture and Architecture, mamma! It’s getting so dreadfully personal!”

“Alma, you know that I only wish to get at your real feeling in the matter.”

“And you know that I don’t want to let you—especially when I haven’t got any real feeling in the matter. But I should think—speaking in the abstract entirely—that if either of those arts was ever going to be in earnest about him, it would want his exclusive devotion for a week at least.”

“I didn’t know,” said Mrs. Leighton, “that he was doing anything now at the others. I thought he was entirely taken up with his work on ’Every Other Week.’”

“Oh, he is! he is!”

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“And you certainly can’t say, my dear, that he hasn’t been very kind—very useful to you, in that matter.”

“And so I ought to have said yes out of gratitude? Thank you, mamma! I didn’t know you held me so cheap.”

“You know whether I hold you cheap or not, Alma. I don’t want you to cheapen yourself. I don’t want you to trifle with any one. I want you to be honest with yourself.”

“Well, come now, mamma! Suppose you begin. I’ve been perfectly honest with myself, and I’ve been honest with Mr. Beaton. I don’t care for him, and I’ve told him I didn’t; so he may be supposed to know it. If he comes here after this, he’ll come as a plain, unostentatious friend of the family, and it’s for you to say whether he shall come in that capacity or not. I hope you won’t trifle with him, and let him get the notion that he’s coming on any other basis.”

Mrs. Leighton felt the comfort of the critical attitude far too keenly to abandon it for anything constructive. She only said, “You know very well, Alma, that’s a matter I can have nothing to do with.”

“Then you leave him entirely to me?”

“I hope you will regard his right to candid and open treatment.”

“He’s had nothing but the most open and candid treatment from me, mamma. It’s you that wants to play fast and loose with him. And, to tell you the truth, I believe he would like that a good deal better; I believe that, if there’s anything he hates, it’s openness and candor.” Alma laughed, and put her arms round her mother, who could not help laughing a little, too.

II.

The winter did not renew for Christine and Mela the social opportunity which the spring had offered. After the musicale at Mrs. Horn’s, they both made their party-call, as Mela said, in due season; but they did not find Mrs. Horn at home, and neither she nor Miss Vance came to see them after people returned to town in the fall. They tried to believe for a time that Mrs. Horn had not got their cards; this pretence failed them, and they fell back upon their pride, or rather Christine’s pride. Mela had little but her good-nature to avail her in any exigency, and if Mrs. Horn or Miss Vance had come to call after a year of neglect, she would have received them as amiably as if they had not lost a day in coming. But Christine had drawn a line beyond which they would not have been forgiven; and she had planned the words and the behavior with which she would have punished them if they had appeared then. Neither sister imagined herself in anywise inferior to them; but Christine was suspicious, at least, and it was Mela who invented the

hypothesis of the lost cards. As nothing happened to prove or to disprove the fact, she said, “I move we put Coonrod up to gittun’ it out of Miss Vance, at some of their meetun’s.”

“If you do,” said Christine, “I’ll kill you.”

Christine, however, had the visits of Beaton to console her, and, if these seemed to have no definite aim, she was willing to rest in the pleasure they gave her vanity; but Mela had nothing. Sometimes she even wished they were all back on the farm.

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“It would be the best thing for both of you,” said Mrs. Dryfoos, in answer to such a burst of desperation. “I don’t think New York is any place for girls.”

“Well, what I hate, mother,” said Mela, “is, it don’t seem to be any place for young men, either.” She found this so good when she had said it that she laughed over it till Christine was angry.

“A body would think there had never been any joke before.”

“I don’t see as it’s a joke,” said Mrs. Dryfoos. “It’s the plain truth.”

“Oh, don’t mind her, mother,” said Mela. “She’s put out because her old Mr. Beaton ha’r’t been round for a couple o’ weeks. If you don’t watch out, that fellow ’ll give you the slip yit, Christine, after all your pains.”

“Well, there ain’t anybody to give you the slip, Mela,” Christine clawed back.

“No; I ha’n’t ever set my traps for anybody.” This was what Mela said for want of a better retort; but it was not quite true. When Kendricks came with Beaton to call after her father’s dinner, she used all her cunning to ensnare him, and she had him to herself as long as Beaton stayed; Dryfoos sent down word that he was not very well and had gone to bed. The novelty of Mela had worn off for Kendricks, and she found him, as she frankly told him, not half as entertaining as he was at Mrs. Horn’s; but she did her best with him as the only flirtable material which had yet come to her hand. It would have been her ideal to have the young men stay till past midnight, and her father come down-stairs in his stocking-feet and tell them it was time to go. But they made a visit of decorous brevity, and Kendricks did not come again. She met him afterward, once, as she was crossing the pavement in Union Square to get into her coupe, and made the most of him; but it was necessarily very little, and so he passed out of her life without having left any trace in her heart, though Mela had a heart that she would have put at the disposition of almost any young man that wanted it. Kendricks himself, Manhattan cockney as he was, with scarcely more out look into the average American nature than if he had been kept a prisoner in New York society all his days, perceived a property in her which forbade him as a man of conscience to trifle with her; something earthly good and kind, if it was simple and vulgar. In revising his impressions of her, it seemed to him that she would come even to better literary effect if this were recognized in her; and it made her sacred, in spite of her willingness to fool and to be fooled, in her merely human quality. After all, he saw that she wished honestly to love and to be loved, and the lures she threw out to that end seemed to him pathetic rather than ridiculous; he could not join Beaton in laughing at her; and he did not like Beaton’s laughing at the other girl, either. It seemed to Kendricks, with the code of honor which he mostly kept to himself because he was a little ashamed to find there were so few others

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like it, that if Beaton cared nothing for the other girl—and Christine appeared simply detestable to Kendricks—he had better keep away from her, and not give her the impression he was in love with her. He rather fancied that this was the part of a gentleman, and he could not have penetrated to that aesthetic and moral complexity which formed the consciousness of a nature like Beaton's and was chiefly a torment to itself; he could not have conceived of the wayward impulses indulged at every moment in little things till the straight highway was traversed and well-nigh lost under their tangle. To do whatever one likes is finally to do nothing that one likes, even though one continues to do what one will; but Kendricks, though a sage of twenty-seven, was still too young to understand this.

Beaton scarcely understood it himself, perhaps because he was not yet twenty-seven. He only knew that his will was somehow sick; that it spent itself in caprices, and brought him no happiness from the fulfilment of the most vehement wish. But he was aware that his wishes grew less and less vehement; he began to have a fear that some time he might have none at all. It seemed to him that if he could once do something that was thoroughly distasteful to himself, he might make a beginning in the right direction; but when he tried this on a small scale, it failed, and it seemed stupid. Some sort of expiation was the thing he needed, he was sure; but he could not think of anything in particular to expiate; a man could not expiate his temperament, and his temperament was what Beaton decided to be at fault. He perceived that it went deeper than even fate would have gone; he could have fulfilled an evil destiny and had done with it, however terrible. His trouble was that he could not escape from himself; and, for the most part, he justified himself in refusing to try. After he had come to that distinct understanding with Alma Leighton, and experienced the relief it really gave him, he thought for a while that if it had fallen out otherwise, and she had put him in charge of her destiny, he might have been better able to manage his own. But as it was, he could only drift, and let all other things take their course. It was necessary that he should go to see her afterward, to show her that he was equal to the event; but he did not go so often, and he went rather oftener to the Dryfooses; it was not easy to see Margaret Vance, except on the society terms. With much sneering and scorning, he fulfilled the duties to Mrs. Horn without which he knew he should be dropped from her list; but one might go to many of her Thursdays without getting many words with her niece. Beaton hardly knew whether he wanted many; the girl kept the charm of her innocent stylishness; but latterly she wanted to talk more about social questions than about the psychical problems that young people usually debate so personally. Son of the working-people as he was, Beaton had never cared anything about such matters; he did not know

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about them or wish to know; he was perhaps too near them. Besides, there was an embarrassment, at least on her part, concerning the Dryfooses. She was too high-minded to blame him for having tempted her to her failure with them by his talk about them; but she was conscious of avoiding them in her talk. She had decided not to renew the effort she had made in the spring; because she could not do them good as fellow-creatures needing food and warmth and work, and she would not try to befriend them socially; she had a horror of any such futile sentimentality. She would have liked to account to Beaton in this way for a course which she suspected he must have heard their comments upon, but she did not quite know how to do it; she could not be sure how much or how little he cared for them. Some tentative approaches which she made toward explanation were met with such eager disclaim of personal interest that she knew less than before what to think; and she turned the talk from the sisters to the brother, whom it seemed she still continued to meet in their common work among the poor.

“He seems very different,” she ventured.

“Oh, quite,” said Beaton. “He’s the kind of person that you might suppose gave the Catholics a hint for the cloistral life; he’s a cloistered nature—the nature that atones and suffers for. But he’s awfully dull company, don’t you think? I never can get anything out of him.”

“He’s very much in earnest.”

“Remorselessly. We’ve got a profane and mundane creature there at the office who runs us all, and it’s shocking merely to see the contact of the tyro natures. When Fulkerson gets to joking Dryfoos—he likes to put his joke in the form of a pretence that Dryfoos is actuated by a selfish motive, that he has an eye to office, and is working up a political interest for himself on the East Side—it’s something inexpressible.”

“I should think so,” said Miss Vance, with such lofty disapproval that Beaton felt himself included in it for having merely told what caused it. He could not help saying, in natural rebellion, “Well, the man of one idea is always a little ridiculous.”

“When his idea is right?” she demanded. “A right idea can’t be ridiculous.”

“Oh, I only said the man that held it was. He’s flat; he has no relief, no projection.”

She seemed unable to answer, and he perceived that he had silenced her to his own, disadvantage. It appeared to Beaton that she was becoming a little too exacting for comfort in her idealism. He put down the cup of tea he had been tasting, and said, in

his solemn staccato: “I must go. Good-bye!” and got instantly away from her, with an effect he had of having suddenly thought of something imperative.

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He went up to Mrs. Horn for a moment's hail and farewell, and felt himself subtly detained by her through fugitive passages of conversation with half a dozen other people. He fancied that at crises of this strange interview Mrs. Horn was about to become confidential with him, and confidential, of all things, about her niece. She ended by not having palpably been so. In fact, the concern in her mind would have been difficult to impart to a young man, and after several experiments Mrs. Horn found it impossible to say that she wished Margaret could somehow be interested in lower things than those which occupied her. She had watched with growing anxiety the girl's tendency to various kinds of self-devotion. She had dark hours in which she even feared her entire withdrawal from the world in a life of good works. Before now, girls had entered the Protestant sisterhoods, which appeal so potently to the young and generous imagination, and Margaret was of just the temperament to be influenced by them. During the past summer she had been unhappy at her separation from the cares that had engrossed her more and more as their stay in the city drew to an end in the spring, and she had hurried her aunt back to town earlier in the fall than she would have chosen to come. Margaret had her correspondents among the working-women whom she befriended. Mrs. Horn was at one time alarmed to find that Margaret was actually promoting a strike of the button-hole workers. This, of course, had its ludicrous side, in connection with a young lady in good society, and a person of even so little humor as Mrs. Horn could not help seeing it. At the same time, she could not help foreboding the worst from it; she was afraid that Margaret's health would give way under the strain, and that if she did not go into a sisterhood she would at least go into a decline. She began the winter with all such counteractive measures as she could employ. At an age when such things weary, she threw herself into the pleasures of society with the hope of dragging Margaret after her; and a sympathetic witness must have followed with compassion her course from ball to ball, from reception to reception, from parlor-reading to parlor-reading, from musicale to musicale, from play to play, from opera to opera. She tasted, after she had practically renounced them, the bitter and the insipid flavors of fashionable amusement, in the hope that Margaret might find them sweet, and now at the end she had to own to herself that she had failed. It was coming Lent again, and the girl had only grown thinner and more serious with the diversions that did not divert her from the baleful works of beneficence on which Mrs. Horn felt that she was throwing her youth away. Margaret could have borne either alone, but together they were wearing her out. She felt it a duty to undergo the pleasures her aunt appointed for her, but she could not forego the other duties in which she found her only pleasure.

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She kept up her music still because she could employ it at the meetings for the entertainment, and, as she hoped, the elevation of her working-women; but she neglected the other aesthetic interests which once occupied her; and, at sight of Beaton talking with her, Mrs. Horn caught at the hope that he might somehow be turned to account in reviving Margaret's former interest in art. She asked him if Mr. Wetmore had his classes that winter as usual; and she said she wished Margaret could be induced to go again: Mr. Wetmore always said that she did not draw very well, but that she had a great deal of feeling for it, and her work was interesting. She asked, were the Leightons in town again; and she murmured a regret that she had not been able to see anything of them, without explaining why; she said she had a fancy that if Margaret knew Miss Leighton, and what she was doing, it might stimulate her, perhaps. She supposed Miss Leighton was still going on with her art? Beaton said, Oh yes, he believed so.

But his manner did not encourage Mrs. Horn to pursue her aims in that direction, and she said, with a sigh, she wished he still had a class; she always fancied that Margaret got more good from his instruction than from any one else's.

He said that she was very good; but there was really nobody who knew half as much as Wetmore, or could make any one understand half as much. Mrs. Horn was afraid, she said, that Mr. Wetmore's terrible sincerity discouraged Margaret; he would not let her have any illusions about the outcome of what she was doing; and did not Mr. Beaton think that some illusion was necessary with young people? Of course, it was very nice of Mr. Wetmore to be so honest, but it did not always seem to be the wisest thing. She begged Mr. Beaton to try to think of some one who would be a little less severe. Her tone assumed a deeper interest in the people who were coming up and going away, and Beaton perceived that he was dismissed.

He went away with vanity flattered by the sense of having been appealed to concerning Margaret, and then he began to chafe at what she had said of Wetmore's honesty, apropos of her wish that he still had a class himself. Did she mean, confound her? that he was insincere, and would let Miss Vance suppose she had more talent than she really had? The more Beaton thought of this, the more furious he became, and the more he was convinced that something like it had been unconsciously if not consciously in her mind. He framed some keen retorts, to the general effect that with the atmosphere of illusion preserved so completely at home, Miss Vance hardly needed it in her art studies. Having just determined never to go near Mrs. Horn's Thursdays again, he decided to go once more, in order to plant this sting in her capacious but somewhat callous bosom; and he planned how he would lead the talk up to the point from which he should launch it.

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In the mean time he felt the need of some present solace, such as only unqualified worship could give him; a cruel wish to feel his power in some direction where, even if it were resisted, it could not be overcome, drove him on. That a woman who was to Beaton the embodiment of artificiality should intimate, however innocently—the innocence made it all the worse—that he was less honest than Wetmore, whom he knew to be so much more honest, was something that must be retaliated somewhere before his self-respect could be restored. It was only five o'clock, and he went on up-town to the Dryfooses', though he had been there only the night before last. He asked for the ladies, and Mrs. Mandel received him.

"The young ladies are down-town shopping," she said, "but I am very glad of the opportunity of seeing you alone, Mr. Beaton. You know I lived several years in Europe."

"Yes," said Beaton, wondering what that could have to do with her pleasure in seeing him alone. "I believe so?" He involuntarily gave his words the questioning inflection.

"You have lived abroad, too, and so you won't find what I am going to ask so strange. Mr. Beaton, why do you come so much to this house?" Mrs. Mandel bent forward with an aspect of ladylike interest and smiled.

Beaton frowned. "Why do I come so much?"

"Yes."

"Why do I—Excuse me, Mrs. Mandel, but will you allow me to ask why you ask?"

"Oh, certainly. There's no reason why I shouldn't say, for I wish you to be very frank with me. I ask because there are two young ladies in this house; and, in a certain way, I have to take the place of a mother to them. I needn't explain why; you know all the people here, and you understand. I have nothing to say about them, but I should not be speaking to you now if they were not all rather helpless people. They do not know the world they have come to live in here, and they cannot help themselves or one another. But you do know it, Mr. Beaton, and I am sure you know just how much or how little you mean by coming here. You are either interested in one of these young girls or you are not. If you are, I have nothing more to say. If you are not—" Mrs. Mandel continued to smile, but the smile had grown more perfunctory, and it had an icy gleam.

Beaton looked at her with surprise that he gravely kept to himself. He had always regarded her as a social nullity, with a kind of pity, to be sure, as a civilized person living among such people as the Dryfooses, but not without a humorous contempt; he had thought of her as Mandel, and sometimes as Old Mandel, though she was not half a score of years his senior, and was still well on the sunny side of forty. He reddened, and then turned an angry pallor. "Excuse me again, Mrs. Mandel. Do you ask this from the young ladies?"

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“Certainly not,” she said, with the best temper, and with something in her tone that convicted Beaton of vulgarity, in putting his question of her authority in the form of a sneer. “As I have suggested, they would hardly know how to help themselves at all in such a matter. I have no objection to saying that I ask it from the father of the young ladies. Of course, in and for myself I should have no right to know anything about your affairs. I assure you the duty of knowing isn’t very pleasant.” The little tremor in her clear voice struck Beaton as something rather nice.

“I can very well believe that, Mrs. Mandel,” he said, with a dreamy sadness in his own. He lifted his eyes and looked into hers. “If I told you that I cared nothing about them in the way you intimate?”

“Then I should prefer to let you characterize your own conduct in continuing to come here for the year past, as you have done, and tacitly leading them on to infer differently.” They both mechanically kept up the fiction of plurality in speaking of Christine, but there was no doubt in the mind of either which of the young ladies the other meant. A good many thoughts went through Beaton’s mind, and none of them were flattering. He had not been unconscious that the part he had played toward this girl was ignoble, and that it had grown meaner as the fancy which her beauty had at first kindled in him had grown cooler. He was aware that of late he had been amusing himself with her passion in a way that was not less than cruel, not because he wished to do so, but because he was listless and wished nothing. He rose in saying: “I might be a little more lenient than you think, Mrs. Mandel; but I won’t trouble you with any palliating theory. I will not come any more.”

He bowed, and Mrs. Mandel said, “Of course, it’s only your action that I am concerned with.”

She seemed to him merely triumphant, and he could not conceive what it had cost her to nerve herself up to her too easy victory. He left Mrs. Mandel to a far harder lot than had fallen to him, and he went away hating her as an enemy who had humiliated him at a moment when he particularly needed exalting. It was really very simple for him to stop going to see Christine Dryfoos, but it was not at all simple for Mrs. Mandel to deal with the consequences of his not coming. He only thought how lightly she had stopped him, and the poor woman whom he had left trembling for what she had been obliged to do embodied for him the conscience that accused him of unpleasant things.

“By heavens! this is piling it up,” he said to himself through his set teeth, realizing how it had happened right on top of that stupid insult from Mrs. Horn. Now he should have to give up his place on ’Every Other Week; he could not keep that, under the circumstances, even if some pretence were not made to get rid of him; he must hurry and anticipate any such pretence; he must see Fulkerson at once; he wondered where he should find him at that hour. He thought, with bitterness so real that it gave him a

kind of tragical satisfaction, how certainly he could find him a little later at Mrs. Leighton's; and Fulkerson's happiness became an added injury.

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The thing had, of course, come about just at the wrong time. There never had been a time when Beaton needed money more, when he had spent what he had and what he expected to have so recklessly. He was in debt to Fulkerson personally and officially for advance payments of salary. The thought of sending money home made him break into a scoffing laugh, which he turned into a cough in order to deceive the passers. What sort of face should he go with to Fulkerson and tell him that he renounced his employment on 'Every Other Week;' and what should he do when he had renounced it? Take pupils, perhaps; open a class? A lurid conception of a class conducted on those principles of shameless flattery at which Mrs. Horn had hinted—he believed now she had meant to insult him—presented itself. Why should not he act upon the suggestion? He thought with loathing for the whole race of women—dabblers in art. How easy the thing would be: as easy as to turn back now and tell that old fool's girl that he loved her, and rake in half his millions. Why should not he do that? No one else cared for him; and at a year's end, probably, one woman would be like another as far as the love was concerned, and probably he should not be more tired if the woman were Christine Dryfoos than if she were Margaret Vance. He kept Alma Leighton out of the question, because at the bottom of his heart he believed that she must be forever unlike every other woman to him.

The tide of his confused and aimless reverie had carried him far down-town, he thought; but when he looked up from it to see where he was he found himself on Sixth Avenue, only a little below Thirty-ninth Street, very hot and blown; that idiotic fur overcoat was stifling. He could not possibly walk down to Eleventh; he did not want to walk even to the Elevated station at Thirty-fourth; he stopped at the corner to wait for a surface-car, and fell again into his bitter fancies. After a while he roused himself and looked up the track, but there was no car coming. He found himself beside a policeman, who was lazily swinging his club by its thong from his wrist.

"When do you suppose a car will be along?" he asked, rather in a general sarcasm of the absence of the cars than in any special belief that the policeman could tell him.

The policeman waited to discharge his tobacco-juice into the gutter. "In about a week," he said, nonchalantly.

"What's the matter?" asked Beaton, wondering what the joke could be.

"Strike," said the policeman. His interest in Beaton's ignorance seemed to overcome his contempt of it. "Knocked off everywhere this morning except Third Avenue and one or two cross-town lines." He spat again and kept his bulk at its incline over the gutter to glance at a group of men on the corner below: They were neatly dressed, and looked like something better than workingmen, and they had a holiday air of being in their best clothes.

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“Some of the strikers?” asked Beaton.

The policeman nodded.

“Any trouble yet?”

“There won’t be any trouble till we begin to move the cars,” said the policeman.

Beaton felt a sudden turn of his rage toward the men whose action would now force him to walk five blocks and mount the stairs of the Elevated station. “If you’d take out eight or ten of those fellows,” he said, ferociously, “and set them up against a wall and shoot them, you’d save a great deal of bother.”

“I guess we sha’n’t have to shoot much,” said the policeman, still swinging his locust. “Anyway, we shant begin it. If it comes to a fight, though,” he said, with a look at the men under the scooping rim of his helmet, “we can drive the whole six thousand of ’em into the East River without pullin’ a trigger.”

“Are there six thousand in it?”

“About.”

“What do the infernal fools expect to live on?”

“The interest of their money, I suppose,” said the officer, with a grin of satisfaction in his irony. “It’s got to run its course. Then they’ll come back with their heads tied up and their tails between their legs, and plead to be taken on again.”

“If I was a manager of the roads,” said Beaton, thinking of how much he was already inconvenienced by the strike, and obscurely connecting it as one of the series with the wrongs he had suffered at the hands of Mrs. Horn and Mrs. Mandel, “I would see them starve before I’d take them back—every one of them.”

“Well,” said the policeman, impartially, as a man might whom the companies allowed to ride free, but who had made friends with a good many drivers and conductors in the course of his free riding, “I guess that’s what the roads would like to do if they could; but the men are too many for them, and there ain’t enough other men to take their places.”

“No matter,” said Beaton, severely. “They can bring in men from other places.”

“Oh, they’ll do that fast enough,” said the policeman.

A man came out of the saloon on the corner where the strikers were standing, noisy drunk, and they began, as they would have said, to have some fun with him. The policeman left Beaton, and sauntered slowly down toward the group as if in the natural

course of an afternoon ramble. On the other side of the street Beaton could see another officer sauntering up from the block below. Looking up and down the avenue, so silent of its horse-car bells, he saw a policeman at every corner. It was rather impressive.

III.

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The strike made a good deal of talk in it he office of ‘Every Other Week’ that is, it made Fulkerson talk a good deal. He congratulated himself that he was not personally incommoded by it, like some of the fellows who lived uptown, and had not everything under one roof, as it were. He enjoyed the excitement of it, and he kept the office boy running out to buy the extras which the newsmen came crying through the street almost every hour with a lamentable, unintelligible noise. He read not only the latest intelligence of the strike, but the editorial comments on it, which praised the firm attitude of both parties, and the admirable measures taken by the police to preserve order. Fulkerson enjoyed the interviews with the police captains and the leaders of the strike; he equally enjoyed the attempts of the reporters to interview the road managers, which were so graphically detailed, and with such a fine feeling for the right use of scare-heads as to have almost the value of direct expression from them, though it seemed that they had resolutely refused to speak. He said, at second-hand from the papers, that if the men behaved themselves and respected the rights of property, they would have public sympathy with them every time; but just as soon as they began to interfere with the roads’ right to manage their own affairs in their own way, they must be put down with an iron hand; the phrase “iron hand” did Fulkerson almost as much good as if it had never been used before. News began to come of fighting between the police and the strikers when the roads tried to move their cars with men imported from Philadelphia, and then Fulkerson rejoiced at the splendid courage of the police. At the same time, he believed what the strikers said, and that the trouble was not made by them, but by gangs of roughs acting without their approval. In this juncture he was relieved by the arrival of the State Board of Arbitration, which took up its quarters, with a great many scare-heads, at one of the principal hotels, and invited the roads and the strikers to lay the matter in dispute before them; he said that now we should see the working of the greatest piece of social machinery in modern times. But it appeared to work only in the alacrity of the strikers to submit their grievance. The road; were as one road in declaring that there was nothing to arbitrate, and that they were merely asserting their right to manage their own affairs in their own way. One of the presidents was reported to have told a member of the Board, who personally summoned him, to get out and to go about his business. Then, to Fulkerson’s extreme disappointment, the august tribunal, acting on behalf of the sovereign people in the interest of peace, declared itself powerless, and got out, and would, no doubt, have gone about its business if it had had any. Fulkerson did not know what to say, perhaps because the extras did not; but March laughed at this result.

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“It’s a good deal like the military manoeuvre of the King of France and his forty thousand men. I suppose somebody told him at the top of the hill that there was nothing to arbitrate, and to get out and go about his business, and that was the reason he marched down after he had marched up with all that ceremony. What amuses me is to find that in an affair of this kind the roads have rights and the strikers have rights, but the public has no rights at all. The roads and the strikers are allowed to fight out a private war in our midst as thoroughly and precisely a private war as any we despise the Middle Ages for having tolerated—as any street war in Florence or Verona—and to fight it out at our pains and expense, and we stand by like sheep and wait till they get tired. It’s a funny attitude for a city of fifteen hundred thousand inhabitants.”

“What would you do?” asked Fulkerson, a good deal daunted by this view of the case.

“Do? Nothing. Hasn’t the State Board of Arbitration declared itself powerless? We have no hold upon the strikers; and we’re so used to being snubbed and disobliged by common carriers that we have forgotten our hold on the roads and always allow them to manage their own affairs in their own way, quite as if we had nothing to do with them and they owed us no services in return for their privileges.”

“That’s a good deal so,” said Fulkerson, disordering his hair. “Well, it’s nuts for the colonel nowadays. He says if he was boss of this town he would seize the roads on behalf of the people, and man ’em with policemen, and run ’em till the managers had come to terms with the strikers; and he’d do that every time there was a strike.”

“Doesn’t that rather savor of the paternalism he condemned in Lindau?” asked March.

“I don’t know. It savors of horse sense.”

“You are pretty far gone, Fulkerson. I thought you were the most engaged man I ever saw; but I guess you’re more father-in-lawed. And before you’re married, too.”

“Well, the colonel’s a glorious old fellow, March. I wish he had the power to do that thing, just for the fun of looking on while he waltzed in. He’s on the keen jump from morning till night, and he’s up late and early to see the row. I’m afraid he’ll get shot at some of the fights; he sees them all; I can’t get any show at them: haven’t seen a brickbat shied or a club swung yet. Have you?”

“No, I find I can philosophize the situation about as well from the papers, and that’s what I really want to do, I suppose. Besides, I’m solemnly pledged by Mrs. March not to go near any sort of crowd, under penalty of having her bring the children and go with me. Her theory is that we must all die together; the children haven’t been at school since the strike began. There’s no precaution that Mrs. March hasn’t used. She watches me whenever I go out, and sees that I start straight for this office.”

Fulkerson laughed and said: “Well, it’s probably the only thing that’s saved your life. Have you seen anything of Beaton lately?”

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“No. You don’t mean to say he’s killed!”

“Not if he knows it. But I don’t know—What do you say, March? What’s the reason you couldn’t get us up a paper on the strike?”

“I knew it would fetch round to ‘Every Other Week,’ somehow.”

“No, but seriously. There ’ll be plenty of news paper accounts. But you could treat it in the historical spirit—like something that happened several centuries ago; De Foe’s Plague of London style. Heigh? What made me think of it was Beaton. If I could get hold of him, you two could go round together and take down its aesthetic aspects. It’s a big thing, March, this strike is. I tell you it’s imposing to have a private war, as you say, fought out this way, in the heart of New York, and New York not minding, it a bit. See? Might take that view of it. With your descriptions and Beaton’s sketches—well, it would just be the greatest card! Come! What do you say?”

“Will you undertake to make it right with Mrs. March if I’m killed and she and the children are not killed with me?”

“Well, it would be difficult. I wonder how it would do to get Kendricks to do the literary part?”

“I’ve no doubt he’d jump at the chance. I’ve yet to see the form of literature that Kendricks wouldn’t lay down his life for.”

“Say!” March perceived that Fulkerson was about to vent another inspiration, and smiled patiently. “Look here! What’s the reason we couldn’t get one of the strikers to write it up for us?”

“Might have a symposium of strikers and presidents,” March suggested.

“No; I’m in earnest. They say some of those fellows-especially the foreigners—are educated men. I know one fellow—a Bohemian—that used to edit a Bohemian newspaper here. He could write it out in his kind of Dutch, and we could get Lindau to translate it.”

“I guess not,” said March, dryly.

“Why not? He’d do it for the cause, wouldn’t he? Suppose you put it up on him the next time you see him.”

“I don’t see Lindau any more,” said March. He added, “I guess he’s renounced me along with Mr. Dryfoos’s money.”

“Pshaw! You don’t mean he hasn’t been round since?”

“He came for a while, but he’s left off coming now. I don’t feel particularly gay about it,” March said, with some resentment of Fulkerson’s grin. “He’s left me in debt to him for lessons to the children.”

Fulkerson laughed out. “Well, he is the greatest old fool! Who’d ‘a’ thought he’d ‘a’ been in earnest with those ‘brincibles’ of his? But I suppose there have to be just such cranks; it takes all kinds to make a world.”

“There has to be one such crank, it seems,” March partially assented. “One’s enough for me.”

“I reckon this thing is nuts for Lindau, too,” said Fulkerson. “Why, it must act like a schooner of beer on him all the while, to see ‘gabidal’ embarrassed like it is by this strike. It must make old Lindau feel like he was back behind those barricades at Berlin. Well, he’s a splendid old fellow; pity he drinks, as I remarked once before.”

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When March left the office he did not go home so directly as he came, perhaps because Mrs. March's eye was not on him. He was very curious about some aspects of the strike, whose importance, as a great social convulsion, he felt people did not recognize; and, with his temperance in everything, he found its negative expressions as significant as its more violent phases. He had promised his wife solemnly that he would keep away from these, and he had a natural inclination to keep his promise; he had no wish to be that peaceful spectator who always gets shot when there is any firing on a mob. He interested himself in the apparent indifference of the mighty city, which kept on about its business as tranquilly as if the private war being fought out in its midst were a vague rumor of Indian troubles on the frontier; and he realized how there might once have been a street feud of forty years in Florence without interfering materially with the industry and prosperity of the city. On Broadway there was a silence where a jangle and clatter of horse-car bells and hoofs had been, but it was not very noticeable; and on the avenues, roofed by the elevated roads, this silence of the surface tracks was not noticeable at all in the roar of the trains overhead. Some of the cross-town cars were beginning to run again, with a policeman on the rear of each; on the Third Avenge line, operated by non-union men, who had not struck, there were two policemen beside the driver of every car, and two beside the conductor, to protect them from the strikers. But there were no strikers in sight, and on Second Avenue they stood quietly about in groups on the corners. While March watched them at a safe distance, a car laden with policemen came down the track, but none of the strikers offered to molest it. In their simple Sunday best, March thought them very quiet, decent-looking people, and he could well believe that they had nothing to do with the riotous outbreaks in other parts of the city. He could hardly believe that there were any such outbreaks; he began more and more to think them mere newspaper exaggerations in the absence of any disturbance, or the disposition to it, that he could see. He walked on to the East River.

Avenues A, B, and C presented the same quiet aspect as Second Avenue; groups of men stood on the corners, and now and then a police-laden car was brought unmolested down the tracks before them; they looked at it and talked together, and some laughed, but there was no trouble.

March got a cross-town car, and came back to the West Side. A policeman, looking very sleepy and tired, lounged on the platform.

"I suppose you'll be glad when this cruel war is over," March suggested, as he got in.

The officer gave him a surly glance and made him no answer.

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His behavior, from a man born to the joking give and take of our life, impressed March. It gave him a fine sense of the ferocity which he had read of the French troops putting on toward the populace just before the coup d'etat; he began to feel like the populace; but he struggled with himself and regained his character of philosophical observer. In this character he remained in the car and let it carry him by the corner where he ought to have got out and gone home, and let it keep on with him to one of the farthermost tracks westward, where so much of the fighting was reported to have taken place. But everything on the way was as quiet as on the East Side.

Suddenly the car stopped with so quick a turn of the brake that he was half thrown from his seat, and the policeman jumped down from the platform and ran forward.

IV

Dryfoos sat at breakfast that morning with Mrs. Mandel as usual to pour out his coffee. Conrad had gone down-town; the two girls lay abed much later than their father breakfasted, and their mother had gradually grown too feeble to come down till lunch. Suddenly Christine appeared at the door. Her face was white to the edges of her lips, and her eyes were blazing.

"Look here, father! Have you been saying anything to Mr. Beaton?"

The old man looked up at her across his coffee-cup through his frowning brows. "No."

Mrs. Mandel dropped her eyes, and the spoon shook in her hand.

"Then what's the reason he don't come here any more?" demanded the girl; and her glance darted from her father to Mrs. Mandel. "Oh, it's you, is it? I'd like to know who told you to meddle in other people's business?"

"I did," said Dryfoos, savagely. "I told her to ask him what he wanted here, and he said he didn't want anything, and he stopped coming. That's all. I did it myself."

"Oh, you did, did you?" said the girl, scarcely less insolently than she had spoken to Mrs. Mandel. "I should like to know what you did it for? I'd like to know what made you think I wasn't able to take care of myself. I just knew somebody had been meddling, but I didn't suppose it was you. I can manage my own affairs in my own way, if you please, and I'll thank you after this to leave me to myself in what don't concern you."

"Don't concern me? You impudent jade!" her father began.

Christine advanced from the doorway toward the table; she had her hands closed upon what seemed trinkets, some of which glittered and dangled from them. She said, "Will

you go to him and tell him that this meddlesome minx, here, had no business to say anything about me to him, and you take it all back?"

"No!" shouted the old man. "And if—"

"That's all I want of you!" the girl shouted in her turn. "Here are your presents." With both hands she flung the jewels-pins and rings and earrings and bracelets—among the breakfast-dishes, from which some of them sprang to the floor. She stood a moment to pull the intaglio ring from the finger where Beaton put it a year ago, and dashed that at her father's plate. Then she whirled out of the room, and they heard her running up-stairs.

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The old man made a start toward her, but he fell back in his chair before she was gone, and, with a fierce, grinding movement of his jaws, controlled himself. “Take-take those things up,” he gasped to Mrs. Mandel. He seemed unable to rise again from his chair; but when she asked him if he were unwell, he said no, with an air of offence, and got quickly to his feet. He mechanically picked up the intaglio ring from the table while he stood there, and put it on his little finger; his hand was not much bigger than Christine’s. “How do you suppose she found it out?” he asked, after a moment.

“She seems to have merely suspected it,” said Mrs. Mandel, in a tremor, and with the fright in her eyes which Christine’s violence had brought there.

“Well, it don’t make any difference. She had to know, somehow, and now she knows.” He started toward the door of the library, as if to go into the hall, where his hat and coat hung.

“Mr. Dryfoos,” palpitated Mrs. Mandel, “I can’t remain here, after the language your daughter has used to me—I can’t let you leave me—I—I’m afraid of her—”

“Lock yourself up, then,” said the old man, rudely. He added, from the hall before he went out, “I reckon she’ll quiet down now.”

He took the Elevated road. The strike seemed a vary far-off thing, though the paper he bought to look up the stockmarket was full of noisy typography about yesterday’s troubles on the surface lines. Among the millions in Wall Street there was some joking and some swearing, but not much thinking, about the six thousand men who had taken such chances in their attempt to better their condition. Dryfoos heard nothing of the strike in the lobby of the Stock Exchange, where he spent two or three hours watching a favorite stock of his go up and go down under the betting. By the time the Exchange closed it had risen eight points, and on this and some other investments he was five thousand dollars richer than he had been in the morning. But he had expected to be richer still, and he was by no means satisfied with his luck. All through the excitement of his winning and losing had played the dull, murderous rage he felt toward they child who had defied him, and when the game was over and he started home his rage mounted into a sort of frenzy; he would teach her, he would break her. He walked a long way without thinking, and then waited for a car. None came, and he hailed a passing coupe.

“What has got all the cars?” he demanded of the driver, who jumped down from his box to open the door for him and get his direction.

“Been away?” asked the driver. “Hasn’t been any car along for a week. Strike.”

“Oh yes,” said Dryfoos. He felt suddenly giddy, and he remained staring at the driver after he had taken his seat.

The man asked, “Where to?”

Dryfoos could not think of his street or number, and he said, with uncontrollable fury: “I told you once! Go up to West Eleventh, and drive along slow on the south side; I’ll show you the place.”

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He could not remember the number of 'Every Other Week' office, where he suddenly decided to stop before he went home. He wished to see Fulkerson, and ask him something about Beaton: whether he had been about lately, and whether he had dropped any hint of what had happened concerning Christine; Dryfoos believed that Fulkerson was in the fellow's confidence.

There was nobody but Conrad in the counting-room, whither Dryfoos returned after glancing into Fulkerson's empty office. "Where's Fulkerson?" he asked, sitting down with his hat on.

"He went out a few moments ago," said Conrad, glancing at the clock. "I'm afraid he isn't coming back again today, if you wanted to see him."

Dryfoos twisted his head sidewise and upward to indicate March's room. "That other fellow out, too?"

"He went just before Mr. Fulkerson," answered Conrad.

"Do you generally knock off here in the middle of the afternoon?" asked the old man.

"No," said Conrad, as patiently as if his father had not been there a score of times and found the whole staff of "Every Other Week" at work between four and five. "Mr. March, you know, always takes a good deal of his work home with him, and I suppose Mr. Fulkerson went out so early because there isn't much doing to-day. Perhaps it's the strike that makes it dull."

"The strike-yes! It's a pretty piece of business to have everything thrown out because a parcel of lazy hounds want a chance to lay off and get drunk." Dryfoos seemed to think Conrad would make some answer to this, but the young man's mild face merely saddened, and he said nothing. "I've got a coupe out there now that I had to take because I couldn't get a car. If I had my way I'd have a lot of those vagabonds hung. They're waiting to get the city into a snarl, and then rob the houses—pack of dirty, worthless whelps. They ought to call out the militia, and fire into 'em. Clubbing is too good for them." Conrad was still silent, and his father sneered, "But I reckon you don't think so."

"I think the strike is useless," said Conrad.

"Oh, you do, do you? Comin' to your senses a little. Gettin' tired walkin' so much. I should like to know what your gentlemen over there on the East Side think about the strike, anyway."

The young fellow dropped his eyes. "I am not authorized to speak for them."

"Oh, indeed! And perhaps you're not authorized to speak for yourself?"

“Father, you know we don’t agree about these things. I’d rather not talk—”

“But I’m goin’ to make you talk this time!” cried Dryfoos, striking the arm of the chair he sat in with the side of his fist. A maddening thought of Christine came over him. “As long as you eat my bread, you have got to do as I say. I won’t have my children telling me what I shall do and sha’n’t do, or take on airs of being holier than me. Now, you just speak up! Do you think those loafers are right, or don’t you? Come!”

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Conrad apparently judged it best to speak. "I think they were very foolish to strike—at this time, when the Elevated roads can do the work."

"Oh, at this time, heigh! And I suppose they think over there on the East Side that it 'd been wise to strike before we got the Elevated." Conrad again refused to answer, and his father roared, "What do you think?"

"I think a strike is always bad business. It's war; but sometimes there don't seem any other way for the workingmen to get justice. They say that sometimes strikes do raise the wages, after a while."

"Those lazy devils were paid enough already," shrieked the old man.

"They got two dollars a day. How much do you think they ought to 'a' got? Twenty?"

Conrad hesitated, with a beseeching look at his father. But he decided to answer. "The men say that with partial work, and fines, and other things, they get sometimes a dollar, and sometimes ninety cents a day."

"They lie, and you know they lie," said his father, rising and coming toward him. "And what do you think the upshot of it all will be, after they've ruined business for another week, and made people hire hacks, and stolen the money of honest men? How is it going to end?"

"They will have to give in."

"Oh, give in, heigh! And what will you say then, I should like to know? How will you feel about it then? Speak!"

"I shall feel as I do now. I know you don't think that way, and I don't blame you—or anybody. But if I have got to say how I shall feel, why, I shall feel sorry they didn't succeed, for I believe they have a righteous cause, though they go the wrong way to help themselves."

His father came close to him, his eyes blazing, his teeth set. "Do you dare so say that to me?"

"Yes. I can't help it. I pity them; my whole heart is with those poor men."

"You impudent puppy!" shouted the old man. He lifted his hand and struck his son in the face. Conrad caught his hand with his own left, and, while the blood began to trickle from a wound that Christine's intaglio ring had made in his temple, he looked at him with a kind of grieving wonder, and said, "Father!"

The old man wrenched his fist away and ran out of the house. He remembered his address now, and he gave it as he plunged into the coupe. He trembled with his evil passion, and glared out of the windows at the passers as he drove home; he only saw Conrad's mild, grieving, wondering eyes, and the blood slowly trickling from the wound in his temple.

Conrad went to the neat-set bowl in Fulkerson's comfortable room and washed the blood away, and kept bathing the wound with the cold water till it stopped bleeding. The cut was not deep, and he thought he would not put anything on it. After a while he locked up the office and started out, he hardly knew where. But he walked on, in the direction he had taken, till he found himself in Union Square, on the pavement in front of Brentano's. It seemed to him that he heard some one calling gently to him, "Mr. Dryfoos!"

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V.

Conrad looked confusedly around, and the same voice said again, “Mr. Dryfoos!” and he saw that it was a lady speaking to him from a coupe beside the curbing, and then he saw that it was Miss Vance.

She smiled when, he gave signs of having discovered her, and came up to the door of her carriage. “I am so glad to meet you. I have been longing to talk to somebody; nobody seems to feel about it as I do. Oh, isn’t it horrible? Must they fail? I saw cars running on all the lines as I came across; it made me sick at heart. Must those brave fellows give in? And everybody seems to hate them so—I can’t bear it.” Her face was estranged with excitement, and there were traces of tears on it. “You must think me almost crazy to stop you in the street this way; but when I caught sight of you I had to speak. I knew you would sympathize—I knew you would feel as I do. Oh, how can anybody help honoring those poor men for standing by one another as they do? They are risking all they have in the world for the sake of justice! Oh, they are true heroes! They are staking the bread of their wives and children on the dreadful chance they’ve taken! But no one seems to understand it. No one seems to see that they are willing to suffer more now that other poor men may suffer less hereafter. And those wretched creatures that are coming in to take their places—those traitors—”

“We can’t blame them for wanting to earn a living, Miss Vance,” said Conrad.

“No, no! I don’t blame them. Who am I, to do such a thing? It’s we—people like me, of my class—who make the poor betray one another. But this dreadful fighting—this hideous paper is full of it!” She held up an extra, crumpled with her nervous reading. “Can’t something be done to stop it? Don’t you think that if some one went among them, and tried to make them see how perfectly hopeless it was to resist the companies and drive off the new men, he might do some good? I have wanted to go and try; but I am a woman, and I mustn’t! I shouldn’t be afraid of the strikers, but I’m afraid of what people would say!” Conrad kept pressing his handkerchief to the cut in his temple, which he thought might be bleeding, and now she noticed this. “Are you hurt, Mr. Dryfoos? You look so pale.”

“No, it’s nothing—a little scratch I’ve got.”

“Indeed, you look pale. Have you a carriage? How will you get home? Will you get in here with me and let me drive you?”

“No, no,” said Conrad, smiling at her excitement. “I’m perfectly well—”

“And you don’t think I’m foolish and wicked for stopping you here and talking in this way? But I know you feel as I do!”

“Yes, I feel as you do. You are right—right in every way—I mustn’t keep you—Good-bye.” He stepped back to bow, but she put her beautiful hand out of the window, and when he took it she wrung his hand hard.

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“Thank you, thank you! You are good and you are just! But no one can do anything. It’s useless!”

The type of irreproachable coachman on the box whose respectability had suffered through the strange behavior of his mistress in this interview drove quickly off at her signal, and Conrad stood a moment looking after the carriage. His heart was full of joy; it leaped; he thought it would burst. As he turned to walk away it seemed to him as if he mounted upon the air. The trust she had shown him, the praise she had given him, that crush of the hand: he hoped nothing, he formed no idea from it, but it all filled him with love that cast out the pain and shame he had been suffering. He believed that he could never be unhappy any more; the hardness that was in his mind toward his father went out of it; he saw how sorely he had tried him; he grieved that he had done it, but the means, the difference of his feeling about the cause of their quarrel, he was solemnly glad of that since she shared it. He was only sorry for his father. “Poor father!” he said under his breath as he went along. He explained to her about his father in his reverie, and she pitied his father, too.

He was walking over toward the West Side, aimlessly at first, and then at times with the longing to do something to save those mistaken men from themselves forming itself into a purpose. Was not that what she meant when she bewailed her woman’s helplessness? She must have wished him to try if he, being a man, could not do something; or if she did not, still he would try, and if she heard of it she would recall what she had said and would be glad he had understood her so. Thinking of her pleasure in what he was going to do, he forgot almost what it was; but when he came to a street-car track he remembered it, and looked up and down to see if there were any turbulent gathering of men whom he might mingle with and help to keep from violence. He saw none anywhere; and then suddenly, as if at the same moment, for in his exalted mood all events had a dream-like simultaneity, he stood at the corner of an avenue, and in the middle of it, a little way off, was a street-car, and around the car a tumult of shouting, cursing, struggling men. The driver was lashing his horses forward, and a policeman was at their heads, with the conductor, pulling them; stones, clubs, brickbats hailed upon the car, the horses, the men trying to move them. The mob closed upon them in a body, and then a patrol-wagon whirled up from the other side, and a squad of policemen leaped out and began to club the rioters. Conrad could see how they struck them under the rims of their hats; the blows on their skulls sounded as if they had fallen on stone; the rioters ran in all directions.

One of the officers rushed up toward the corner where Conrad stood, and then he saw at his side a tall, old man, with a long, white beard, who was calling out at the policemen: “Ah, yes! Glup the strikerss—gif it to them! Why don’t you co and glup the bresidents that insoalt your lawss, and gick your Boart of Arpidration out-of-toors? Glup the strikerss—they cot no friendts! They cot no money to pribe you, to dreat you!”

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The officer lifted his club, and the old man threw his left arm up to shield his head. Conrad recognized Zindau, and now he saw the empty sleeve dangle in the air over the stump of his wrist. He heard a shot in that turmoil beside the car, and something seemed to strike him in the breast. He was going to say to the policeman: "Don't strike him! He's an old soldier! You see he has no hand!" but he could not speak, he could not move his tongue. The policeman stood there; he saw his face: it was not bad, not cruel; it was like the face of a statue, fixed, perdurable—a mere image of irresponsible and involuntary authority. Then Conrad fell forward, pierced through the heart by that shot fired from the car.

March heard the shot as he scrambled out of his car, and at the same moment he saw Lindau drop under the club of the policeman, who left him where he fell and joined the rest of the squad in pursuing the rioters. The fighting round the car in the avenue ceased; the driver whipped his horses into a gallop, and the place was left empty.

March would have liked to run; he thought how his wife had implored him to keep away from the rioting; but he could not have left Lindau lying there if he would. Something stronger than his will drew him to the spot, and there he saw Conrad, dead beside the old man.

VI.

In the cares which Mrs. March shared with her husband that night she was supported partly by principle, but mainly by the, potent excitement which bewildered Conrad's family and took all reality from what had happened. It was nearly midnight when the Marches left them and walked away toward the Elevated station with Fulkerson. Everything had been done, by that time, that could be done; and Fulkerson was not without that satisfaction in the business-like despatch of all the details which attends each step in such an affair and helps to make death tolerable even to the most sorely stricken. We are creatures of the moment; we live from one little space to another; and only one interest at a time fills these. Fulkerson was cheerful when they got into the street, almost gay; and Mrs. March experienced a rebound from her depression which she felt that she ought not to have experienced. But she condoned the offence a little in herself, because her husband remained so constant in his gravity; and, pending the final accounting he must make her for having been where he could be of so much use from the first instant of the calamity, she was tenderly, gratefully proud of all the use he had been to Conrad's family, and especially his miserable old father. To her mind, March was the principal actor in the whole affair, and much more important in having seen it than those who had suffered in it. In fact, he had suffered incomparably.

"Well, well," said Fulkerson. "They'll get along now. We've done all we could, and there's nothing left but for them to bear it. Of course it's awful, but I guess it 'll come out all right. I mean," he added, "they'll pull through now."

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“I suppose,” said March, “that nothing is put on us that we can’t bear. But I should think,” he went on, musingly, “that when God sees what we poor finite creatures can bear, hemmed round with this eternal darkness of death, He must respect us.”

“Basil!” said his wife. But in her heart she drew nearer to him for the words she thought she ought to rebuke him for.

“Oh, I know,” he said, “we school ourselves to despise human nature. But God did not make us despicable, and I say, whatever end He meant us for, He must have some such thrill of joy in our adequacy to fate as a father feels when his son shows himself a man. When I think what we can be if we must, I can’t believe the least of us shall finally perish.”

“Oh, I reckon the Almighty won’t scoop any of us,” said Fulkerson, with a piety of his own.

“That poor boy’s father!” sighed Mrs. March. “I can’t get his face out of my sight. He looked so much worse than death.”

“Oh, death doesn’t look bad,” said March. “It’s life that looks so in its presence. Death is peace and pardon. I only wish poor old Lindau was as well out of it as Conrad there.”

“Ah, Lindau! He has done harm enough,” said Mrs. March. “I hope he will be careful after this.”

March did not try to defend Lindau against her theory of the case, which inexorably held him responsible for Conrad’s death.

“Lindau’s going to come out all right, I guess,” said Fulkerson. “He was first-rate when I saw him at the hospital to-night.” He whispered in March’s ear, at a chance he got in mounting the station stairs: “I didn’t like to tell you there at the house, but I guess you’d better know. They had to take Lindau’s arm off near the shoulder. Smashed all to pieces by the clubbing.”

In the house, vainly rich and foolishly unfit for them, the bereaved family whom the Marches had just left lingered together, and tried to get strength to part for the night. They were all spent with the fatigue that comes from heaven to such misery as theirs, and they sat in a torpor in which each waited for the other to move, to speak.

Christine moved, and Mela spoke. Christine rose and went out of the room without saying a word, and they heard her going up-stairs. Then Mela said:

“I reckon the rest of us better be goun’ too, father. Here, let’s git mother started.”

She put her arm round her mother, to lift her from her chair, but the old man did not stir, and Mela called Mrs. Mandel from the next room. Between them they raised her to her feet.

“Ain’t there anybody agoin’ to set up with it?” she asked, in her hoarse pipe. “It appears like folks hain’t got any feelin’s in New York. Woon’t some o’ the neighbors come and offer to set up, without waitin’ to be asked?”

“Oh, that’s all right, mother. The men ’ll attend to that. Don’t you bother any,” Mela coaxed, and she kept her arm round her mother, with tender patience.

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“Why, Mely, child! I can’t feel right to have it left to hirelin’s so. But there ain’t anybody any more to see things done as they ought. If Coonrod was on’y here—”

“Well, mother, you are pretty mixed!” said Mela, with a strong tendency to break into her large guffaw. But she checked herself and said: “I know just how you feel, though. It keeps acomun’ and agoun’; and it’s so and it ain’t so, all at once; that’s the plague of it. Well, father! Ain’t you goun’ to come?”

“I’m goin’ to stay, Mela,” said the old man, gently, without moving. “Get your mother to bed, that’s a good girl.”

“You goin’ to set up with him, Jacob?” asked the old woman.

“Yes, ’Liz’beth, I’ll set up. You go to bed.”

“Well, I will, Jacob. And I believe it ’ll do you good to set up. I wished I could set up with you; but I don’t seem to have the stren’th I did when the twins died. I must git my sleep, so’s to—I don’t like very well to have you broke of your rest, Jacob, but there don’t appear to be anybody else. You wouldn’t have to do it if Coonrod was here. There I go ag’in! Mercy! mercy!”

“Well, do come along, then, mother,” said Mela; and she got her out of the room, with Mrs. Mandel’s help, and up the stairs.

From the top the old woman called down, “You tell Coonrod—” She stopped, and he heard her groan out, “My Lord! my Lord!”

He sat, one silence in the dining-room, where they had all lingered together, and in the library beyond the hireling watcher sat, another silence. The time passed, but neither moved, and the last noise in the house ceased, so that they heard each other breathe, and the vague, remote rumor of the city invaded the inner stillness. It grew louder toward morning, and then Dryfoos knew from the watcher’s deeper breathing that he had fallen into a doze.

He crept by him to the drawing-room, where his son was; the place was full of the awful sweetness of the flowers that Fulkerson had brought, and that lay above the pulseless breast. The old man turned up a burner in the chandelier, and stood looking on the majestic serenity of the dead face.

He could not move when he saw his wife coming down the stairway in the hall. She was in her long, white flannel bed gown, and the candle she carried shook with her nervous tremor. He thought she might be walking in her sleep, but she said, quite simply, “I woke up, and I couldn’t git to sleep ag’in without comin’ to have a look.” She stood beside their dead son with him, “well, he’s beautiful, Jacob. He was the prettiest baby! And he was always good, Coonrod was; I’ll say that for him. I don’t believe he

ever give me a minute's care in his whole life. I reckon I liked him about the best of all the children; but I don't know as I ever done much to show it. But you was always good to him, Jacob; you always done the best for him, ever since he was a little feller. I used to be afraid you'd spoil him sometimes

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in them days; but I guess you're glad now for every time you didn't cross him. I don't suppose since the twins died you ever hit him a lick." She stooped and peered closer at the face. "Why, Jacob, what's that there by his pore eye?" Dryfoos saw it, too, the wound that he had feared to look for, and that now seemed to redden on his sight. He broke into a low, wavering cry, like a child's in despair, like an animal's in terror, like a soul's in the anguish of remorse.

VII.

The evening after the funeral, while the Marches sat together talking it over, and making approaches, through its shadow, to the question of their own future, which it involved, they were startled by the twitter of the electric bell at their apartment door. It was really not so late as the children's having gone to bed made it seem; but at nine o'clock it was too late for any probable visitor except Fulkerson. It might be he, and March was glad to postpone the impending question to his curiosity concerning the immediate business Fulkerson might have with him. He went himself to the door, and confronted there a lady deeply veiled in black and attended by a very decorous serving-woman.

"Are you alone, Mr. March—you and Mrs. March?" asked the lady, behind her veil; and, as he hesitated, she said: "You don't know me! Miss Vance"; and she threw back her veil, showing her face wan and agitated in the dark folds. "I am very anxious to see you—to speak with you both. May I come in?"

"Why, certainly, Miss Vance," he answered, still too much stupefied by her presence to realize it.

She promptly entered, and saying, with a glance at the hall chair by the door, "My maid can sit here?" followed him to the room where he had left his wife.

Mrs. March showed herself more capable of coping with the fact. She welcomed Miss Vance with the liking they both felt for the girl, and with the sympathy which her troubled face inspired.

"I won't tire you with excuses for coming, Mrs. March," she said, "for it was the only thing left for me to do; and I come at my aunt's suggestion." She added this as if it would help to account for her more on the conventional plane, and she had the instinctive good taste to address herself throughout to Mrs. March as much as possible, though what she had to say was mainly for March. "I don't know how to begin—I don't know how to speak of this terrible affair. But you know what I mean. I feel as if I had lived a whole lifetime since it happened. I don't want you to pity me for it," she said, forestalling a politeness from Mrs. March. "I'm the last one to be thought of, and you

mustn't mind me if I try to make you. I came to find out all of the truth that I can, and when I know just what that is I shall know what to do. I have read the inquest; it's all burned into my brain. But I don't care for that—for myself: you must let me say such things without minding me. I know that your husband—that Mr. March was there; I read his testimony; and I wished to ask him—to ask him—" She stopped and looked distractedly about. "But what folly! He must have said everything he knew—he had to." Her eyes wandered to him from his wife, on whom she had kept them with instinctive tact.

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“I said everything—yes,” he replied. “But if you would like to know—”

“Perhaps I had better tell you something first. I had just parted with him—it couldn’t have been more than half an hour—in front of Brentano’s; he must have gone straight to his death. We were talking, and I—I said, Why didn’t some one go among the strikers and plead with them to be peaceable, and keep them from attacking the new men. I knew that he felt as I did about the strikers: that he was their friend. Did you see—do you know anything that makes you think he had been trying to do that?”

“I am sorry,” March began, “I didn’t see him at all till—till I saw him lying dead.”

“My husband was there purely by accident,” Mrs. March put in. “I had begged and entreated him not to go near the striking anywhere. And he had just got out of the car, and saw the policeman strike that wretched Lindau—he’s been such an anxiety to me ever since we have had anything to do with him here; my husband knew him when he was a boy in the West. Mr. March came home from it all perfectly prostrated; it made us all sick! Nothing so horrible ever came into our lives before. I assure you it was the most shocking experience.”

Miss Vance listened to her with that look of patience which those who have seen much of the real suffering of the world—the daily portion of the poor—have for the nervous woes of comfortable people. March hung his head; he knew it would be useless to protest that his share of the calamity was, by comparison, infinitesimally small.

After she had heard Mrs. March to the end even of her repetitions, Miss Vance said, as if it were a mere matter of course that she should have looked the affair up, “Yes, I have seen Mr. Lindau at the hospital—”

“My husband goes every day to see him,” Mrs. March interrupted, to give. a final touch to the conception of March’s magnanimity throughout.

“The poor man seems to have been in the wrong at the time,” said Miss Vance.

“I could almost say he had earned the right to be wrong. He’s a man of the most generous instincts, and a high ideal of justice, of equity—too high to be considered by a policeman with a club in his hand,” said March, with a bold defiance of his wife’s different opinion of Lindau. “It’s the policeman’s business, I suppose, to club the ideal when he finds it inciting a riot.”

“Oh, I don’t blame Mr. Lindau; I don’t blame the policeman; he was as much a mere instrument as his club was. I am only trying to find out how much I am to blame myself. I had no thought of Mr. Dryfoos’s going there—of his attempting to talk with the strikers and keep them quiet; I was only thinking, as women do, of what I should try to do if I were a man.

“But perhaps he understood me to ask him to go—perhaps my words sent him to his death.”

She had a sort of calm in her courage to know the worst truth as to her responsibility that forbade any wish to flatter her out of it. “I’m afraid,” said March, “that is what can never be known now.” After a moment he added: “But why should you wish to know? If he went there as a peacemaker, he died in a good cause, in such a way as he would wish to die, I believe.”

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“Yes,” said the girl; “I have thought of that. But death is awful; we must not think patiently, forgivingly of sending any one to their death in the best cause.”—“I fancy life was an awful thing to Conrad Dryfoos,” March replied. “He was thwarted and disappointed, without even pleasing the ambition that thwarted and disappointed him. That poor old man, his father, warped him from his simple, lifelong wish to be a minister, and was trying to make a business man of him. If it will be any consolation to you to know it, Miss Vance, I can assure you that he was very unhappy, and I don’t see how he could ever have been happy here.”

“It won’t,” said the girl, steadily. “If people are born into this world, it’s because they were meant to live in it. It isn’t a question of being happy here; no one is happy, in that old, selfish way, or can be; but he could have been of great use.”

“Perhaps he was of use in dying. Who knows? He may have been trying to silence Lindau.”

“Oh, Lindau wasn’t worth it!” cried Mrs. March.

Miss Vance looked at her as if she did not quite understand. Then she turned to March. “He might have been unhappy, as we all are; but I know that his life here would have had a higher happiness than we wish for or aim for.” The tears began to run silently down her cheeks.

“He looked strangely happy that day when he left me. He had hurt himself somehow, and his face was bleeding from a scratch; he kept his handkerchief up; he was pale, but such a light came into his face when he shook hands—ah, I know he went to try and do what I said!” They were all silent, while she dried her eyes and then put her handkerchief back into the pocket from which she had suddenly pulled it, with a series of vivid, young-ladyish gestures, which struck March by their incongruity with the occasion of their talk, and yet by their harmony with the rest of her elegance. “I am sorry, Miss Vance,” he began, “that I can’t really tell you anything more—”

“You are very kind,” she said, controlling herself and rising quickly. “I thank you—thank you both very much.” She turned to Mrs. March and shook hands with her and then with him. “I might have known—I did know that there wasn’t anything more for you to tell. But at least I’ve found out from you that there was nothing, and now I can begin to bear what I must. How are those poor creatures—his mother and father, his sisters? Some day, I hope, I shall be ashamed to have postponed them to the thought of myself; but I can’t pretend to be yet. I could not come to the funeral; I wanted to.”

She addressed her question to Mrs. March, who answered: “I can understand. But they were pleased with the flowers you sent; people are, at such times, and they haven’t many friends.”

“Would you go to see them?” asked the girl. “Would you tell them what I’ve told you?”

Mrs. March looked at her husband.

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“I don’t see what good it would do. They wouldn’t understand. But if it would relieve you—”

“I’ll wait till it isn’t a question of self-relief,” said the girl. “Good-bye!”

She left them to long debate of the event. At the end Mrs. March said, “She is a strange being; such a mixture of the society girl and the saint.”

Her husband answered: “She’s the potentiality of several kinds of fanatic. She’s very unhappy, and I don’t see how she’s to be happier about that poor fellow. I shouldn’t be surprised if she did inspire him to attempt something of that kind.”

“Well, you got out of it very well, Basil. I admired the way you managed. I was afraid you’d say something awkward.”

“Oh, with a plain line of truth before me, as the only possible thing, I can get on pretty well. When it comes to anything decorative, I’d rather leave it to you, Isabel.”

She seemed insensible of his jest. “Of course, he was in love with her. That was the light that came into his face when he was going to do what he thought she wanted him to do.”

“And she—do you think that she was—”

“What an idea! It would have been perfectly grotesque!”

VIII.

Their affliction brought the Dryfooses into humaner relations with the Marches, who had hitherto regarded them as a necessary evil, as the odious means of their own prosperity. Mrs. March found that the women of the family seemed glad of her coming, and in the sense of her usefulness to them all she began to feel a kindness even for Christine. But she could not help seeing that between the girl and her father there was an unsettled account, somehow, and that it was Christine and not the old man who was holding out. She thought that their sorrow had tended to refine the others. Mela was much more subdued, and, except when she abandoned herself to a childish interest in her mourning, she did nothing to shock Mrs. March’s taste or to seem unworthy of her grief. She was very good to her mother, whom the blow had left unchanged, and to her father, whom it had apparently fallen upon with crushing weight. Once, after visiting their house, Mrs. March described to March a little scene between Dryfoos and Mela, when he came home from Wall Street, and the girl met him at the door with a kind of country simpleness, and took his hat and stick, and brought him into the room where Mrs. March sat, looking tired and broken. She found this look of Dryfoos’s pathetic, and dwelt on the sort of stupefaction there was in it; he must have loved his son more than

they ever realized. "Yes," said March, "I suspect he did. He's never been about the place since that day; he was always dropping in before, on his way up-town. He seems to go down to Wall Street every day, just as before, but I suppose that's mechanical; he wouldn't know what else to do; I dare say it's best for him. The sanguine Fulkerson is getting a little anxious about the future of 'Every Other Week.' Now Conrad's gone, he isn't sure the old man will want to keep on with it, or whether he'll have to look up another Angel. He wants to get married, I imagine, and he can't venture till this point is settled."

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“It’s a very material point to us too, Basil,” said Mrs. March.

“Well, of course. I hadn’t overlooked that, you may be sure. One of the things that Fulkerson and I have discussed is a scheme for buying the magazine. Its success is pretty well assured now, and I shouldn’t be afraid to put money into it—if I had the money.”

“I couldn’t let you sell the house in Boston, Basil!”

“And I don’t want to. I wish we could go back and live in it and get the rent, too! It would be quite a support. But I suppose if Dryfoos won’t keep on, it must come to another Angel. I hope it won’t be a literary one, with a fancy for running my department.”

“Oh, I guess whoever takes the magazine will be glad enough to keep you!”

“Do you think so? Well, perhaps. But I don’t believe Fulkerson would let me stand long between him and an Angel of the right description.”

“Well, then, I believe he would. And you’ve never seen anything, Basil, to make you really think that Mr. Fulkerson didn’t appreciate you to the utmost.”

“I think I came pretty near an undervaluation in that Lindau trouble. I shall always wonder what put a backbone into Fulkerson just at that crisis. Fulkerson doesn’t strike me as the stuff of a moral hero.”

“At any rate, he was one,” said Mrs. March, “and that’s quite enough for me.”

March did not answer. “What a noble thing life is, anyway! Here I am, well on the way to fifty, after twenty-five years of hard work, looking forward to the potential poor-house as confidently as I did in youth. We might have saved a little more than we have saved; but the little more wouldn’t avail if I were turned out of my place now; and we should have lived sordidly to no purpose. Some one always has you by the throat, unless you have some one else in your grip. I wonder if that’s the attitude the Almighty intended His respectable creatures to take toward one another! I wonder if He meant our civilization, the battle we fight in, the game we trick in! I wonder if He considers it final, and if the kingdom of heaven on earth, which we pray for—”

“Have you seen Lindau to-day?” Mrs. March asked.

“You inferred it from the quality of my piety?” March laughed, and then suddenly sobered. “Yes, I saw him. It’s going rather hard with him, I’m afraid. The amputation doesn’t heal very well; the shock was very great, and he’s old. It ’ll take time. There’s so much pain that they have to keep him under opiates, and I don’t think he fully knew me. At any rate, I didn’t get my piety from him to-day.”

“It’s horrible! Horrible!” said Mrs. March. “I can’t get over it! After losing his hand in the war, to lose his whole arm now in this way! It does seem too cruel! Of course he oughtn’t to have been there; we can say that. But you oughtn’t to have been there, either, Basil.”

“Well, I wasn’t exactly advising the police to go and club the railroad presidents.”

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“Neither was poor Conrad Dryfoos.”

“I don’t deny it. All that was distinctly the chance of life and death. That belonged to God; and no doubt it was law, though it seems chance. But what I object to is this economic chance-world in which we live, and which we men seem to have created. It ought to be law as inflexible in human affairs as the order of day and night in the physical world that if a man will work he shall both rest and eat, and shall not be harassed with any question as to how his repose and his provision shall come. Nothing less ideal than this satisfies the reason. But in our state of things no one is secure of this. No one is sure of finding work; no one is sure of not losing it. I may have my work taken away from me at any moment by the caprice, the mood, the indigestion of a man who has not the qualification for knowing whether I do it well, or ill. At my time of life—at every time of life—a man ought to feel that if he will keep on doing his duty he shall not suffer in himself or in those who are dear to him, except through natural causes. But no man can feel this as things are now; and so we go on, pushing and pulling, climbing and crawling, thrusting aside and trampling underfoot; lying, cheating, stealing; and then we get to the end, covered with blood and dirt and sin and shame, and look back over the way we’ve come to a palace of our own, or the poor-house, which is about the only possession we can claim in common with our brother-men, I don’t think the retrospect can be pleasing.”

“I know, I know!” said his wife. “I think of those things, too, Basil. Life isn’t what it seems when you look forward to it. But I think people would suffer less, and wouldn’t have to work so hard, and could make all reasonable provision for the future, if they were not so greedy and so foolish.”

“Oh, without doubt! We can’t put it all on the conditions; we must put some of the blame on character. But conditions make character; and people are greedy and foolish, and wish to have and to shine, because having and shining are held up to them by civilization as the chief good of life. We all know they are not the chief good, perhaps not good at all; but if some one ventures to say so, all the rest of us call him a fraud and a crank, and go moiling and toiling on to the palace or the poor-house. We can’t help it. If one were less greedy or less foolish, some one else would have and would shine at his expense. We don’t moil and toil to ourselves alone; the palace or the poor-house is not merely for ourselves, but for our children, whom we’ve brought up in the superstition that having and shining is the chief good. We dare not teach them otherwise, for fear they may falter in the fight when it comes their turn, and the children of others will crowd them out of the palace into the poor-house. If we felt sure that honest work shared by all would bring them honest food shared by all, some heroic few of us, who did not wish our children to rise above their fellows—though we could not bear to have them fall below—might trust them with the truth. But we have no such assurance, and so we go on trembling before Dryfooses and living in gimcrackeries.”

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“Basil, Basil! I was always willing to live more simply than you. You know I was!”

“I know you always said so, my dear. But how many bell-ratchets and speaking-tubes would you be willing to have at the street door below? I remember that when we were looking for a flat you rejected every building that had a bell-ratchet or a speaking-tube, and would have nothing to do with any that had more than an electric button; you wanted a hall-boy, with electric buttons all over him. I don’t blame you. I find such things quite as necessary as you do.”

“And do you mean to say, Basil,” she asked, abandoning this unprofitable branch of the inquiry, “that you are really uneasy about your place? that you are afraid Mr. Dryfoos may give up being an Angel, and Mr. Fulkerson may play you false?”

“Play me false? Oh, it wouldn’t be playing me false. It would be merely looking out for himself, if the new Angel had editorial tastes and wanted my place. It’s what any one would do.”

“You wouldn’t do it, Basil!”

“Wouldn’t I? Well, if any one offered me more salary than ’Every Other Week’ pays—-say, twice as much—what do you think my duty to my suffering family would be? It’s give and take in the business world, Isabel; especially take. But as to being uneasy, I’m not, in the least. I’ve the spirit of a lion, when it comes to such a chance as that. When I see how readily the sensibilities of the passing stranger can be worked in New York, I think of taking up the role of that desperate man on Third Avenue who went along looking for garbage in the gutter to eat. I think I could pick up at least twenty or thirty cents a day by that little game, and maintain my family in the affluence it’s been accustomed to.”

“Basil!” cried his wife. “You don’t mean to say that man was an impostor! And I’ve gone about, ever since, feeling that one such case in a million, the bare possibility of it, was enough to justify all that Lindau said about the rich and the poor!”

March laughed teasingly. “Oh, I don’t say he was an impostor. Perhaps he really was hungry; but, if he wasn’t, what do you think of a civilization that makes the opportunity of such a fraud? that gives us all such a bad conscience for the need which is that we weaken to the need that isn’t? Suppose that poor fellow wasn’t personally founded on fact: nevertheless, he represented the truth; he was the ideal of the suffering which would be less effective if realistically treated. That man is a great comfort to me. He probably rioted for days on that quarter I gave him; made a dinner very likely, or a champagne supper; and if ‘Every Other Week’ wants to get rid of me, I intend to work that racket. You can hang round the corner with Bella, and Tom can come up to me in tears, at stated intervals, and ask me if I’ve found anything yet. To be sure, we might be arrested and sent up somewhere. But even in that extreme case we should be provided

for. Oh no, I'm not afraid of losing my place! I've merely a sort of psychological curiosity to know how men like Dryfoos and Fulkerson will work out the problem before them."

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IX.

It was a curiosity which Fulkerson himself shared, at least concerning Dryfoos. “I don’t know what the old man’s going to do,” he said to March the day after the Marches had talked their future over. “Said anything to you yet?”

“No, not a word.”

“You’re anxious, I suppose, same as I am. Fact is,” said Fulkerson, blushing a little, “I can’t ask to have a day named till I know where I am in connection with the old man. I can’t tell whether I’ve got to look out for something else or somebody else. Of course, it’s full soon yet.”

“Yes,” March said, “much sooner than it seems to us. We’re so anxious about the future that we don’t remember how very recent the past is.”

“That’s something so. The old man’s hardly had time yet to pull himself together. Well, I’m glad you feel that way about it, March. I guess it’s more of a blow to him than we realize. He was a good deal bound up in Coonrod, though he didn’t always use him very well. Well, I reckon it’s apt to happen so oftentimes; curious how cruel love can be. Heigh? We’re an awful mixture, March!”

“Yes, that’s the marvel and the curse, as Browning says.”

“Why, that poor boy himself,” pursued Fulkerson, had streaks of the mule in him that could give odds to Beaton, and he must have tried the old man by the way he would give in to his will and hold out against his judgment. I don’t believe he ever budged a hairs-breadth from his original position about wanting to be a preacher and not wanting to be a business man. Well, of course! I don’t think business is all in all; but it must have made the old man mad to find that without saying anything, or doing anything to show it, and after seeming to come over to his ground, and really coming, practically, Coonrod was just exactly where he first planted himself, every time.”

“Yes, people that have convictions are difficult. Fortunately, they’re rare.”

“Do you think so? It seems to me that everybody’s got convictions. Beaton himself, who hasn’t a principle to throw at a dog, has got convictions the size of a barn. They ain’t always the same ones, I know, but they’re always to the same effect, as far as Beaton’s being Number One is concerned. The old man’s got convictions or did have, unless this thing lately has shaken him all up—and he believes that money will do everything. Colonel Woodburn’s got convictions that he wouldn’t part with for untold millions. Why, March, you got convictions yourself!”

“Have I?” said March. “I don’t know what they are.”

“Well, neither do I; but I know you were ready to kick the trough over for them when the old man wanted us to bounce Lindau that time.”

“Oh yes,” said March; he remembered the fact; but he was still uncertain just what the convictions were that he had been so stanch for.

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“I suppose we could have got along without you,” Fulkerson mused aloud. “It’s astonishing how you always can get along in this world without the man that is simply indispensable. Makes a fellow realize that he could take a day off now and then without deranging the solar system a great deal. Now here’s Coonrod—or, rather, he isn’t. But that boy managed his part of the schooner so well that I used to tremble when I thought of his getting the better of the old man and going into a convent or something of that kind; and now here he is, snuffed out in half a second, and I don’t believe but what we shall be sailing along just as chipper as usual inside of thirty days. I reckon it will bring the old man to the point when I come to talk with him about who’s to be put in Coonrod’s place. I don’t like very well to start the subject with him; but it’s got to be done some time.”

“Yes,” March admitted. “It’s terrible to think how unnecessary even the best and wisest of us is to the purposes of Providence. When I looked at that poor young fellow’s face sometimes—so gentle and true and pure—I used to think the world was appreciably richer for his being in it. But are we appreciably poorer for his being out of it now?”

“No, I don’t reckon we are,” said Fulkerson. “And what a lot of the raw material of all kinds the Almighty must have, to waste us the way He seems to do. Think of throwing away a precious creature like Coonrod Dryfoos on one chance in a thousand of getting that old fool of a Lindau out of the way of being clubbed! For I suppose that was what Coonrod was up to. Say! Have you been round to see Lindau to-day?”

Something in the tone or the manner of Fulkerson startled March. “No! I haven’t seen him since yesterday.”

“Well, I don’t know,” said Fulkerson. “I guess I saw him a little while after you did, and that young doctor there seemed to feel kind of worried about him.

“Or not worried, exactly; they can’t afford to let such things worry them, I suppose; but —”

“He’s worse?” asked March.

“Oh, he didn’t say so. But I just wondered if you’d seen him to-day.”

“I think I’ll go now,” said March, with a pang at heart. He had gone every day to see Lindau, but this day he had thought he would not go, and that was why his heart smote him. He knew that if he were in Lindau’s place Lindau would never have left his side if he could have helped it. March tried to believe that the case was the same, as it stood now; it seemed to him that he was always going to or from the hospital; he said to himself that it must do Lindau harm to be visited so much. But he knew that this was not true when he was met at the door of the ward where Lindau lay by the young doctor, who had come to feel a personal interest in March’s interest in Lindau.

He smiled without gayety, and said, “He’s just going.”

“What! Discharged?”

“Oh no. He has been failing very fast since you saw him yesterday, and now—” They had been walking softly and talking softly down the aisle between the long rows of beds. “Would you care to see him?”

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The doctor made a slight gesture toward the white canvas screen which in such places forms the death-chamber of the poor and friendless. “Come round this way—he won’t know you! I’ve got rather fond of the poor old fellow. He wouldn’t have a clergyman—-sort of agnostic, isn’t he? A good many of these Germans are—but the young lady who’s been coming to see him—”

They both stopped. Lindau’s grand, patriarchal head, foreshortened to their view, lay white upon the pillow, and his broad, white beard flowed upon the sheet, which heaved with those long last breaths. Beside his bed Margaret Vance was kneeling; her veil was thrown back, and her face was lifted; she held clasped between her hands the hand of the dying man; she moved her lips inaudibly.

X.

In spite of the experience of the whole race from time immemorial, when death comes to any one we know we helplessly regard it as an incident of life, which will presently go on as before. Perhaps this is an instinctive perception of the truth that it does go on somewhere; but we have a sense of death as absolutely the end even for earth only if it relates to some one remote or indifferent to us. March tried to project Lindau to the necessary distance from himself in order to realize the fact in his case, but he could not, though the man with whom his youth had been associated in a poetic friendship had not actually reentered the region of his affection to the same degree, or in any like degree. The changed conditions forbade that. He had a soreness of heart concerning him; but he could not make sure whether this soreness was grief for his death, or remorse for his own uncandor with him about Dryfoos, or a foreboding of that accounting with his conscience which he knew his wife would now exact of him down to the last minutest particular of their joint and several behavior toward Lindau ever since they had met him in New York.

He felt something knock against his shoulder, and he looked up to have his hat struck from his head by a horse’s nose. He saw the horse put his foot on the hat, and he reflected, “Now it will always look like an accordion,” and he heard the horse’s driver address him some sarcasms before he could fully awaken to the situation. He was standing bareheaded in the middle of Fifth Avenue and blocking the tide of carriages flowing in either direction. Among the faces put out of the carriage windows he saw that of Dryfoos looking from a coupe. The old man knew him, and said, “Jump in here, Mr. March”; and March, who had mechanically picked up his hat, and was thinking, “Now I shall have to tell Isabel about this at once, and she will never trust me on the street again without her,” mechanically obeyed. Her confidence in him had been undermined by his being so near Conrad when he was shot; and it went through his mind that he would get Dryfoos to drive him to a hatter’s, where he could buy a new hat, and

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not be obliged to confess his narrow escape to his wife till the incident was some days old and she could bear it better. It quite drove Lindau's death out of his mind for the moment; and when Dryfoos said if he was going home he would drive up to the first cross-street and turn back with him, March said he would be glad if he would take him to a hat-store. The old man put his head out again and told the driver to take them to the Fifth Avenue Hotel. "There's a hat-store around there somewhere, seems to me," he said; and they talked of March's accident as well as they could in the rattle and clatter of the street till they reached the place. March got his hat, passing a joke with the hatter about the impossibility of pressing his old hat over again, and came out to thank Dryfoos and take leave of him.

"If you ain't in any great hurry," the old man said, "I wish you'd get in here a minute. I'd like to have a little talk with you."

"Oh, certainly," said March, and he thought: "It's coming now about what he intends to do with 'Every Other Week.' Well, I might as well have all the misery at once and have it over."

Dryfoos called up to his driver, who bent his head down sidewise to listen: "Go over there on Madison Avenue, onto that asphalt, and keep drivin' up and down till I stop you. I can't hear myself think on these pavements," he said to March. But after they got upon the asphalt, and began smoothly rolling over it, he seemed in no haste to begin. At last he said, "I wanted to talk with you about that—that Dutchman that was at my dinner—Lindau," and March's heart gave a jump with wonder whether he could already have heard of Lindau's death; but in an instant he perceived that this was impossible. "I been talkin' with Fulkerson about him, and he says they had to take the balance of his arm off."

March nodded; it seemed to him he could not speak. He could not make out from the close face of the old man anything of his motive. It was set, but set as a piece of broken mechanism is when it has lost the power to relax itself. There was no other history in it of what the man had passed through in his son's death.

"I don't know," Dryfoos resumed, looking aside at the cloth window-strap, which he kept fingering, "as you quite understood what made me the maddest. I didn't tell him I could talk Dutch, because I can't keep it up with a regular German; but my father was Pennsylvany Dutch, and I could understand what he was saying to you about me. I know I had no business to understood it, after I let him think I couldn't but I did, and I didn't like very well to have a man callin' me a traitor and a tyrant at my own table. Well, I look at it differently now, and I reckon I had better have tried to put up with it; and I would, if I could have known—" He stopped with a quivering lip, and then went on:

“Then, again, I didn’t like his talkin’ that paternalism of his. I always heard it was the worst kind

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of thing for the country; I was brought up to think the best government was the one that governs the least; and I didn't want to hear that kind of talk from a man that was livin' on my money. I couldn't bear it from him. Or I thought I couldn't before—before—" He stopped again, and gulped. "I reckon now there ain't anything I couldn't bear." March was moved by the blunt words and the mute stare forward with which they ended. "Mr. Dryfoos, I didn't know that you understood Lindau's German, or I shouldn't have allowed him he wouldn't have allowed himself—to go on. He wouldn't have knowingly abused his position of guest to censure you, no matter how much he condemned you." "I don't care for it now," said Dryfoos. "It's all past and gone, as far as I'm concerned; but I wanted you to see that I wasn't tryin' to punish him for his opinions, as you said."

"No; I see now," March assented, though he thought, his position still justified. "I wish—"

"I don't know as I understand much about his opinions, anyway; but I ain't ready to say I want the men dependent on me to manage my business for me. I always tried to do the square thing by my hands; and in that particular case out there I took on all the old hands just as fast as they left their Union. As for the game I came on them, it was dog eat dog, anyway."

March could have laughed to think how far this old man was from even conceiving of Lindau's point'of view, and how he was saying the worst of himself that Lindau could have said of him. No one could have characterized the kind of thing he had done more severely than he when he called it dog eat dog.

"There's a great deal to be said on both sides," March began, hoping to lead up through this generality to the fact of Lindau's death; but the old man went on:

"Well, all I wanted him to know is that I wasn't trying to punish him for what he said about things in general. You naturally got that idea, I reckon; but I always went in for lettin' people say what they please and think what they please; it's the only way in a free country."

"I'm afraid, Mr. Dryfoos, that it would make little difference to Lindau now—"

"I don't suppose he bears malice for it," said Dryfoos, "but what I want to do is to have him told so. He could understand just why I didn't want to be called hard names, and yet I didn't object to his thinkin' whatever he pleased. I'd like him to know—"

"No one can speak to him, no one can tell him," March began again, but again Dryfoos prevented him from going on.

“I understand it’s a delicate thing; and I’m not askin’ you to do it. What I would really like to do—if you think he could be prepared for it, some way, and could stand it—would be to go to him myself, and tell him just what the trouble was. I’m in hopes, if I done that, he could see how I felt about it.”

A picture of Dryfoos going to the dead Lindau with his vain regrets presented itself to March, and he tried once more to make the old man understand. “Mr. Dryfoos,” he said, “Lindau is past all that forever,” and he felt the ghastly comedy of it when Dryfoos continued, without heeding him.

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“I got a particular reason why I want him to believe it wasn’t his ideas I objected to—-them ideas of his about the government carryin’ everything on and givin’ work. I don’t understand ’em exactly, but I found a writin’—among—my son’s-things” (he seemed to force the words through his teeth), “and I reckon he—thought—that way. Kind of a diary—where he—put down—his thoughts. My son and me—we differed about a good-many things.” His chin shook, and from time to time he stopped. “I wasn’t very good to him, I reckon; I crossed him where I guess I got no business to cross him; but I thought everything of—Coonrod. He was the best boy, from a baby, that ever was; just so patient and mild, and done whatever he was told. I ought to ‘a’ let him been a preacher! Oh, my son! my son!” The sobs could not be kept back any longer; they shook the old man with a violence that made March afraid for him; but he controlled himself at last with a series of hoarse sounds like barks. “Well, it’s all past and gone! But as I understand you from what you saw, when Coonrod was—killed, he was tryin’ to save that old man from trouble?”

Yes, yes! It seemed so to me.”

“That ’ll do, then! I want you to have him come back and write for the book when he gets well. I want you to find out and let me know if there’s anything I can do for him. I’ll feel as if I done it—for my—son. I’ll take him into my own house, and do for him there, if you say so, when he gets so he can be moved. I’ll wait on him myself. It’s what Coonrod ’d do, if he was here. I don’t feel any hardness to him because it was him that got Coonrod killed, as you might say, in one sense of the term; but I’ve tried to think it out, and I feel like I was all the more beholden to him because my son died tryin’ to save him. Whatever I do, I’ll be doin’ it for Coonrod, and that’s enough for me.” He seemed to have finished, and he turned to March as if to hear what he had to say.

March hesitated. “I’m afraid, Mr. Dryfoos—Didn’t Fulkerson tell you that Lindau was very sick?”

“Yes, of course. But he’s all right, he said.”

Now it had to come, though the fact had been latterly playing fast and loose with March’s consciousness. Something almost made him smile; the willingness he had once felt to give this old man pain; then he consoled himself by thinking that at least he was not obliged to meet Dryfoos’s wish to make atonement with the fact that Lindau had renounced him, and would on no terms work for such a man as he, or suffer any kindness from him. In this light Lindau seemed the harder of the two, and March had the momentary force to say—

“Mr. Dryfoos—it can’t be. Lindau—I have just come from him—is dead.”

XI.

“How did he take it? How could he bear it? Oh, Basil! I wonder you could have the heart to say it to him. It was cruel!”

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“Yes, cruel enough, my dear,” March owned to his wife, when they talked the matter over on his return home. He could not wait till the children were out of the way, and afterward neither he nor his wife was sorry that he had spoken of it before them. The girl cried plentifully for her old friend who was dead, and said she hated Mr. Dryfoos, and then was sorry for him, too; and the boy listened to all, and spoke with a serious sense that pleased his father. “But as to how he took it,” March went on to answer his wife’s question about Dryfoos—“how do any of us take a thing that hurts? Some of us cry out, and some of us don’t. Dryfoos drew a kind of long, quivering breath, as a child does when it grieves—there’s something curiously simple and primitive about him—and didn’t say anything. After a while he asked me how he could see the people at the hospital about the remains; I gave him my card to the young doctor there that had charge of Lindau. I suppose he was still carrying forward his plan of reparation in his mind—to the dead for the dead. But how useless! If he could have taken the living Lindau home with him, and cared for him all his days, what would it have profited the gentle creature whose life his worldly ambition vexed and thwarted here? He might as well offer a sacrifice at Conrad’s grave. Children,” said March, turning to them, “death is an exile that no remorse and no love can reach. Remember that, and be good to every one here on earth, for your longing to retrieve any harshness or unkindness to the dead will be the very ecstasy of anguish to you. I wonder,” he mused, “if one of the reasons why we’re shut up to our ignorance of what is to be hereafter isn’t because if we were sure of another world we might be still more brutal to one another here, in the hope of making reparation somewhere else. Perhaps, if we ever come to obey the law of love on earth, the mystery of death will be taken away.”

“Well”—the ancestral Puritanism spoke in Mrs. March—“these two old men have been terribly punished. They have both been violent and wilful, and they have both been punished. No one need ever tell me there is not a moral government of the universe!”

March always disliked to hear her talk in this way, which did both her head and heart injustice. “And Conrad,” he said, “what was he punished for?”

“He?”—she answered, in an exaltation—“he suffered for the sins of others.”

“Ah, well, if you put it in that way, yes. That goes on continually. That’s another mystery.”

He fell to brooding on it, and presently he heard his son saying, “I suppose, papa, that Mr. Lindau died in a bad cause?”

March was startled. He had always been so sorry for Lindau, and admired his courage and generosity so much, that he had never fairly considered this question. “Why, yes,” he answered; “he died in the cause of disorder; he was trying to obstruct the law. No doubt there was a wrong there, an inconsistency and an injustice that he felt keenly; but it could not be reached in his way without greater wrong.”

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“Yes; that’s what I thought,” said the boy. “And what’s the use of our ever fighting about anything in America? I always thought we could vote anything we wanted.”

“We can, if we’re honest, and don’t buy and sell one another’s votes,” said his father. “And men like Lindau, who renounce the American means as hopeless, and let their love of justice hurry them into sympathy with violence—yes, they are wrong; and poor Lindau did die in a bad cause, as you say, Tom.”

“I think Conrad had no business there, or you, either, Basil,” said his wife.

“Oh, I don’t defend myself,” said March. “I was there in the cause of literary curiosity and of conjugal disobedience. But Conrad—yes, he had some business there: it was his business to suffer there for the sins of others. Isabel, we can’t throw aside that old doctrine of the Atonement yet. The life of Christ, it wasn’t only in healing the sick and going about to do good; it was suffering for the sins of others. That’s as great a mystery as the mystery of death. Why should there be such a principle in the world? But it’s been felt, and more or less dumbly, blindly recognized ever since Calvary. If we love mankind, pity them, we even wish to suffer for them. That’s what has created the religious orders in all times—the brotherhoods and sisterhoods that belong to our day as much as to the mediaeval past. That’s what is driving a girl like Margaret Vance, who has everything that the world can offer her young beauty, on to the work of a Sister of Charity among the poor and the dying.”

“Yes, yes!” cried Mrs. March. “How—how did she look there, Basil?” She had her feminine misgivings; she was not sure but the girl was something of a poseuse, and enjoyed the picturesqueness, as well as the pain; and she wished to be convinced that it was not so.

“Well,” she said, when March had told again the little there was to tell, “I suppose it must be a great trial to a woman like Mrs. Horn to have her niece going that way.”

“The way of Christ?” asked March, with a smile.

“Oh, Christ came into the world to teach us how to live rightly in it, too. If we were all to spend our time in hospitals, it would be rather dismal for the homes. But perhaps you don’t think the homes are worth minding?” she suggested, with a certain note in her voice that he knew.

He got up and kissed her. “I think the gimcrackeries are.” He took the hat he had set down on the parlor table on coming in, and started to put it in the hall, and that made her notice it.

“You’ve been getting a new hat!”

“Yes,” he hesitated; “the old one had got—was decidedly shabby.”

“Well, that’s right. I don’t like you to wear them too long. Did you leave the old one to be pressed?”

“Well, the hatter seemed to think it was hardly worth pressing,” said March. He decided that for the present his wife’s nerves had quite all they could bear.

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XII.

It was in a manner grotesque, but to March it was all the more natural for that reason, that Dryfoos should have Lindau's funeral from his house. He knew the old man to be darkly groping, through the payment of these vain honors to the dead, for some atonement to his son, and he imagined him finding in them such comfort as comes from doing all one can, even when all is useless.

No one knew what Lindau's religion was, and in default they had had the Anglican burial service read over him; it seems so often the refuge of the homeless dead. Mrs. Dryfoos came down for the ceremony. She understood that it was for Coonrod's sake that his father wished the funeral to be there; and she confided to Mrs. March that she believed Coonrod would have been pleased. "Coonrod was a member of the 'Piscopal Church; and fawther's doin' the whole thing for Coonrod as much as for anybody. He thought the world of Coonrod, fawther did. Mela, she kind of thought it would look queer to have two funerals from the same house, hand-runnin', as you might call it, and one of 'em no relation, either; but when she saw how fawther was bent on it, she give in. Seems as if she was tryin' to make up to fawther for Coonrod as much as she could. Mela always was a good child, but nobody can ever come up to Coonrod."

March felt all the grotesqueness, the hopeless absurdity of Dryfoos's endeavor at atonement in these vain obsequies to the man for whom he believed his son to have died; but the effort had its magnanimity, its pathos, and there was a poetry that appealed to him in the reconciliation through death of men, of ideas, of conditions, that could only have gone warring on in life. He thought, as the priest went on with the solemn liturgy, how all the world must come together in that peace which, struggle and strive as we may, shall claim us at last. He looked at Dryfoos, and wondered whether he would consider these rites a sufficient tribute, or whether there was enough in him to make him realize their futility, except as a mere sign of his wish to retrieve the past. He thought how we never can atone for the wrong we do; the heart we have grieved and wounded cannot kindle with pity for us when once it is stilled; and yet we can put our evil from us with penitence, and somehow, somewhere, the order of loving kindness, which our passion or our wilfulness has disturbed, will be restored.

Dryfoos, through Fulkerson, had asked all the more intimate contributors of 'Every Other Week' to come. Beaton was absent, but Fulkerson had brought Miss Woodburn, with her father, and Mrs. Leighton and Alma, to fill up, as he said. Mela was much present, and was official with the arrangement of the flowers and the welcome of the guests. She imparted this impersonality to her reception of Kendricks, whom Fulkerson met in the outer hall with his party, and whom he presented in whisper to them all. Kendricks smiled under his breath, as it were, and was then mutely and seriously polite to the Leightons. Alma brought a little bunch of flowers, which were lost in those which Dryfoos had ordered to be unsparingly provided.

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It was a kind of satisfaction to Mela to have Miss Vance come, and reassuring as to how it would look to have the funeral there; Miss Vance would certainly not have come unless it had been all right; she had come, and had sent some Easter lilies.

“Ain’t Christine coming down?” Fulkerson asked Mela.

“No, she ain’t a bit well, and she ain’t been, ever since Coonrod died. I don’t know, what’s got over her,” said Mela. She added, “Well, I should ‘a’ thought Mr. Beaton would ‘a’ made out to ‘a’ come!”

“Beaton’s peculiar,” said Fulkerson. “If he thinks you want him he takes a pleasure in not letting you have him.”

“Well, goodness knows, I don’t want him,” said the girl.

Christine kept her room, and for the most part kept her bed; but there seemed nothing definitely the matter with her, and she would not let them call a doctor. Her mother said she reckoned she was beginning to feel the spring weather, that always perfectly pulled a body down in New York; and Mela said if being as cross as two sticks was any sign of spring-fever, Christine had it bad. She was faithfully kind to her, and submitted to all her humors, but she recompensed herself by the freest criticism of Christine when not in actual attendance on her. Christine would not suffer Mrs. Mandel to approach her, and she had with her father a sullen submission which was not resignation. For her, apparently, Conrad had not died, or had died in vain.

“Pshaw!” said Mela, one morning when she came to breakfast, “I reckon if we was to send up an old card of Mr. Beaton’s she’d rattle down-stairs fast enough. If she’s sick, she’s love-sick. It makes me sick to see her.”

Mela was talking to Mrs. Mandel, but her father looked up from his plate and listened. Mela went on: “I don’t know what’s made the fellow quit comun’. But he was an aggravatun’ thing, and no more dependable than water. It’s just like Air. Fulkerson said, if he thinks you want him he’ll take a pleasure in not lettun’ you have him. I reckon that’s what’s the matter with Christine. I believe in my heart the girl ’ll die if she don’t git him.”

Mela went on to eat her breakfast with her own good appetite. She now always came down to keep her father company, as she said, and she did her best to cheer and comfort him. At least she kept the talk going, and she had it nearly all to herself, for Mrs. Mandel was now merely staying on provisionally, and, in the absence of any regrets or excuses from Christine, was looking ruefully forward to the moment when she must leave even this ungentle home for the chances of the ruder world outside.

The old man said nothing at table, but, when Mela went up to see if she could do anything for Christine, he asked Mrs. Mandel again about all the facts of her last interview with Beaton.

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She gave them as fully as she could remember them, and the old man made no comment on them. But he went out directly after, and at the 'Every Other Week' office he climbed the stairs to Fulkerson's room and asked for Beaton's address. No one yet had taken charge of Conrad's work, and Fulkerson was running the thing himself, as he said, till he could talk with Dryfoos about it. The old man would not look into the empty room where he had last seen his son alive; he turned his face away and hurried by the door.

XIII.

The course of public events carried Beaton's private affairs beyond the reach of his simple first intention to renounce his connection with 'Every Other Week.' In fact, this was not perhaps so simple as it seemed, and long before it could be put in effect it appeared still simpler to do nothing about the matter—to remain passive and leave the initiative to Dryfoos, to maintain the dignity of unconsciousness and let recognition of any change in the situation come from those who had caused the change. After all, it was rather absurd to propose making a purely personal question the pivot on which his relations with 'Every Other Week' turned. He took a hint from March's position and decided that he did not know Dryfoos in these relations; he knew only Fulkerson, who had certainly had nothing to do with Mrs. Mandel's asking his intentions. As he reflected upon this he became less eager to look Fulkerson up and make the magazine a partner of his own sufferings. This was the soberer mood to which Beaton trusted that night even before he slept, and he awoke fully confirmed in it. As he examined the offence done him in the cold light of day, he perceived that it had not come either from Mrs. Mandel, who was visibly the faltering and unwilling instrument of it, or from Christine, who was altogether ignorant of it, but from Dryfoos, whom he could not hurt by giving up his place. He could only punish Fulkerson by that, and Fulkerson was innocent. Justice and interest alike dictated the passive course to which Beaton inclined; and he reflected that he might safely leave the punishment of Dryfoos to Christine, who would find out what had happened, and would be able to take care of herself in any encounter of tempers with her father.

Beaton did not go to the office during the week that followed upon this conclusion; but they were used there to these sudden absences of his, and, as his work for the time was in train, nothing was made of his staying away, except the sarcastic comment which the thought of him was apt to excite in the literary department. He no longer came so much to the Leightons, and Fulkerson was in no state of mind to miss any one there except Miss Woodburn, whom he never missed. Beaton was left, then, unmolestedly awaiting the course of destiny, when he read in the morning paper, over his coffee at Maroni's, the deeply scare-headed story of Conrad's death and the

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clubbing of Lindau. He probably cared as little for either of them as any man that ever saw them; but he felt a shock, if not a pang, at Conrad's fate, so out of keeping with his life and character. He did not know what to do; and he did nothing. He was not asked to the funeral, but he had not expected that, and, when Fulkerson brought him notice that Lindau was also to be buried from Dryfoos's house, it was without his usual sullen vindictiveness that he kept away. In his sort, and as much as a man could who was necessarily so much taken up with himself, he was sorry for Conrad's father; Beaton had a peculiar tenderness for his own father, and he imagined how his father would feel if it were he who had been killed in Conrad's place, as it might very well have been; he sympathized with himself in view of the possibility; and for once they were mistaken who thought him indifferent and merely brutal in his failure to appear at Lindau's obsequies.

He would really have gone if he had known how to reconcile his presence in that house with the terms of his effective banishment from it; and he was rather forgivingly finding himself wronged in the situation, when Dryfoos knocked at the studio door the morning after Lindau's funeral. Beaton roared out, "Come in!" as he always did to a knock if he had not a model; if he had a model he set the door slightly ajar, and with his palette on his thumb frowned at his visitor and told him he could not come in. Dryfoos fumbled about for the knob in the dim passageway outside, and Beaton, who had experience of people's difficulties with it, suddenly jerked the door open. The two men stood confronted, and at first sight of each other their quiescent dislike revived. Each would have been willing to turn away from the other, but that was not possible. Beaton snorted some sort of inarticulate salutation, which Dryfoos did not try to return; he asked if he could see him alone for a minute or two, and Beaton bade him come in, and swept some paint-blotched rags from the chair which he told him to take. He noticed, as the old man sank tremulously into it, that his movement was like that of his own father, and also that he looked very much like Christine. Dryfoos folded his hands tremulously on the top of his horn-handled stick, and he was rather finely haggard, with the dark hollows round his black eyes and the fall of the muscles on either side of his chin. He had forgotten to take his soft, wide-brimmed hat off; and Beaton felt a desire to sketch him just as he sat.

Dryfoos suddenly pulled himself together from the dreary absence into which he fell at first. "Young man," he began, "maybe I've come here on a fool's errand," and Beaton rather fancied that beginning.

But it embarrassed him a little, and he said, with a shy glance aside, "I don't know what you mean." "I reckon," Dryfoos answered, quietly, "you got your notion, though. I set that woman on to speak to you the way she done. But if there was anything wrong in the way she spoke, or if you didn't feel like she had any right to question you up as if we suspected you of anything mean, I want you to say so."

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Beaton said nothing, and the old man went on.

“I ain’t very well up in the ways of the world, and I don’t pretend to be. All I want is to be fair and square with everybody. I’ve made mistakes, though, in my time—” He stopped, and Beaton was not proof against the misery of his face, which was twisted as with some strong physical ache. “I don’t know as I want to make any more, if I can help it. I don’t know but what you had a right to keep on comin’, and if you had I want you to say so. Don’t you be afraid but what I’ll take it in the right way. I don’t want to take advantage of anybody, and I don’t ask you to say any more than that.”

Beaton did not find the humiliation of the man who had humiliated him so sweet as he could have fancied it might be. He knew how it had come about, and that it was an effect of love for his child; it did not matter by what ungracious means she had brought him to know that he loved her better than his own will, that his wish for her happiness was stronger than his pride; it was enough that he was now somehow brought to give proof of it. Beaton could not be aware of all that dark coil of circumstance through which Dryfoos’s present action evolved itself; the worst of this was buried in the secret of the old man’s heart, a worm of perpetual torment. What was apparent to another was that he was broken by the sorrow that had fallen upon him, and it was this that Beaton respected and pitied in his impulse to be frank and kind in his answer.

“No, I had no right to keep coming to your house in the way I did, unless—unless I meant more than I ever said.” Beaton added: “I don’t say that what you did was usual—in this country, at any rate; but I can’t say you were wrong. Since you speak to me about the matter, it’s only fair to myself to say that a good deal goes on in life without much thinking of consequences. That’s the way I excuse myself.”

“And you say Mrs. Mandel done right?” asked Dryfoos, as if he wished simply to be assured of a point of etiquette.

“Yes, she did right. I’ve nothing to complain of.”

“That’s all I wanted to know,” said Dryfoos; but apparently he had not finished, and he did not go, though the silence that Beaton now kept gave him a chance to do so. He began a series of questions which had no relation to the matter in hand, though they were strictly personal to Beaton. “What countryman are you?” he asked, after a moment.

“What countryman?” Beaton frowned back at him.

“Yes, are you an American by birth?”

“Yes; I was born in Syracuse.”

“Protestant?”

“My father is a Scotch Seceder.”

“What business is your father in?”

Beaton faltered and blushed; then he answered:

“He’s in the monument business, as he calls it. He’s a tombstone cutter.” Now that he was launched, Beaton saw no reason for not declaring, “My father’s always been a poor man, and worked with his own hands for his living.” He had too slight esteem socially for Dryfoos to conceal a fact from him that he might have wished to blink with others.

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“Well, that’s right,” said Dryfoos. “I used to farm it myself. I’ve got a good pile of money together, now. At first it didn’t come easy; but now it’s got started it pours in and pours in; it seems like there was no end to it. I’ve got well on to three million; but it couldn’t keep me from losin’ my son. It can’t buy me back a minute of his life; not all the money in the world can do it!”

He grieved this out as if to himself rather than to Beaton, who, scarcely ventured to say, “I know—I am very sorry—”

“How did you come,” Dryfoos interrupted, “to take up paintin’?”

“Well, I don’t know,” said Beaton, a little scornfully. “You don’t take a thing of that kind up, I fancy. I always wanted to paint.”

“Father try to stop you?”

“No. It wouldn’t have been of any use. Why—”

“My son, he wanted to be a preacher, and I did stop him or I thought I did. But I reckon he was a preacher, all the same, every minute of his life. As you say, it ain’t any use to try to stop a thing like that. I reckon if a child has got any particular bent, it was given to it; and it’s goin’ against the grain, it’s goin’ against the law, to try to bend it some other way. There’s lots of good business men, Mr. Beaton, twenty of ’em to every good preacher?”

“I imagine more than twenty,” said Beaton, amused and touched through his curiosity as to what the old man was driving at by the quaint simplicity of his speculations.

“Father ever come to the city?”

“No; he never has the time; and my mother’s an invalid.”

“Oh! Brothers and sisters?”

“Yes; we’re a large family.”

“I lost two little fellers—twins,” said Dryfoos, sadly. “But we hain’t ever had but just the five. Ever take portraits?”

“Yes,” said Beaton, meeting this zigzag in the queries as seriously as the rest. “I don’t think I am good at it.”

Dryfoos got to his feet. “I wish you’d paint a likeness of my son. You’ve seen him plenty of times. We won’t fight about the price, don’t you be afraid of that.”

Beaton was astonished, and in a mistaken way he was disgusted. He saw that Dryfoos was trying to undo Mrs. Mandel's work practically, and get him to come again to his house; that he now conceived of the offence given him as condoned, and wished to restore the former situation. He knew that he was attempting this for Christine's sake, but he was not the man to imagine that Dryfoos was trying not only to tolerate him, but to like him; and, in fact, Dryfoos was not wholly conscious himself of this end. What they both understood was that Dryfoos was endeavoring to get at Beaton through Conrad's memory; but with one this was its dedication to a purpose of self sacrifice, and with the other a vulgar and shameless use of it.

"I couldn't do it," said Beaton. "I couldn't think of attempting it."

"Why not?" Dryfoos persisted. "We got some photographs of him; he didn't like to sit very well; but his mother got him to; and you know how he looked."

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“I couldn’t do it—I couldn’t. I can’t even consider it. I’m very sorry. I would, if it were possible. But it isn’t possible.”

“I reckon if you see the photographs once”

“It isn’t that, Mr. Dryfoos. But I’m not in the way of that kind of thing any more.”

“I’d give any price you’ve a mind to name—”

“Oh, it isn’t the money!” cried Beaton, beginning to lose control of himself.

The old man did not notice him. He sat with his head fallen forward, and his chin resting on his folded hands. Thinking of the portrait, he saw Conrad’s face before him, reproachful, astonished, but all gentle as it looked when Conrad caught his hand that day after he struck him; he heard him say, “Father!” and the sweat gathered on his forehead. “Oh, my God!” he groaned. “No; there ain’t anything I can do now.”

Beaton did not know whether Dryfoos was speaking to him or not. He started toward him. “Are you ill?”

“No, there ain’t anything the matter,” said the old man. “But I guess I’ll lay down on your settee a minute.” He tottered with Beaton’s help to the aesthetic couch covered with a tiger-skin, on which Beaton had once thought of painting a Cleopatra; but he could never get the right model. As the old man stretched himself out on it, pale and suffering, he did not look much like a Cleopatra, but Beaton was struck with his effectiveness, and the likeness between him and his daughter; she would make a very good Cleopatra in some ways. All the time, while these thoughts passed through his mind, he was afraid Dryfoos would die. The old man fetched his breath in gasps, which presently smoothed and lengthened into his normal breathing. Beaton got him a glass of wine, and after tasting it he sat up.

“You’ve got to excuse me,” he said, getting back to his characteristic grimness with surprising suddenness, when once he began to recover himself. “I’ve been through a good deal lately; and sometimes it ketches me round the heart like a pain.”

In his life of selfish immunity from grief, Beaton could not understand this experience that poignant sorrow brings; he said to himself that Dryfoos was going the way of angina pectoris; as he began shuffling off the tiger-skin he said: “Had you better get up? Wouldn’t you like me to call a doctor?”

“I’m all right, young man.” Dryfoos took his hat and stick from him, but he made for the door so uncertainly that Beaton put his hand under his elbow and helped him out, and down the stairs, to his coupe.

“Hadn’t you better let me drive home with you?” he asked.

“What?” said Dryfoos, suspiciously.

Beaton repeated his question.

“I guess I’m able to go home alone,” said Dryfoos, in a surly tone, and he put his head out of the window and called up “Home!” to the driver, who immediately started off and left Beaton standing beside the curbstone.

XIV.

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Beaton wasted the rest of the day in the emotions and speculations which Dryfoos's call inspired. It was not that they continuously occupied him, but they broke up the train of other thoughts, and spoiled him for work; a very little spoiled Beaton for work; he required just the right mood for work. He comprehended perfectly well that Dryfoos had made him that extraordinary embassy because he wished him to renew his visits, and he easily imagined the means that had brought him to this pass. From what he knew of that girl he did not envy her father his meeting with her when he must tell her his mission had failed. But had it failed? When Beaton came to ask himself this question, he could only perceive that he and Dryfoos had failed to find any ground of sympathy, and had parted in the same dislike with which they had met. But as to any other failure, it was certainly tacit, and it still rested with him to give it effect. He could go back to Dryfoos's house, as freely as before, and it was clear that he was very much desired to come back. But if he went back it was also clear that he must go back with intentions more explicit than before, and now he had to ask himself just how much or how little he had meant by going there. His liking for Christine had certainly not increased, but the charm, on the other hand, of holding a leopardess in leash had not yet palled upon him. In his life of inconstancies, it was a pleasure to rest upon something fixed, and the man who had no control over himself liked logically enough to feel his control of some one else. The fact cannot other wise be put in terms, and the attraction which Christine Dryfoos had for him, apart from this, escapes from all terms, as anything purely and merely passional must. He had seen from the first that she was a cat, and so far as youth forecasts such things, he felt that she would be a shrew. But he had a perverse sense of her beauty, and he knew a sort of life in which her power to molest him with her temper could be reduced to the smallest proportions, and even broken to pieces. Then the consciousness of her money entered. It was evident that the old man had mentioned his millions in the way of a hint to him of what he might reasonably expect if he would turn and be his son-in-law. Beaton did not put it to himself in those words; and in fact his cogitations were not in words at all. It was the play of cognitions, of sensations, formlessly tending to the effect which can only be very clumsily interpreted in language. But when he got to this point in them, Beaton rose to magnanimity and in a flash of dramatic reverie disposed of a part of Dryfoos's riches in placing his father and mother, and his brothers and sisters, beyond all pecuniary anxiety forever. He had no shame, no scruple in this, for he had been a pensioner upon others ever since a Syracusan amateur of the arts had detected his talent and given him the money to go and study abroad. Beaton had always considered the money a loan, to be repaid out of his

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future success; but he now never dreamt of repaying it; as the man was rich, he had even a contempt for the notion of repaying him; but this did not prevent him from feeling very keenly the hardships he put his father to in borrowing money from him, though he never repaid his father, either. In this reverie he saw himself sacrificed in marriage with Christine Dryfoos, in a kind of admiring self-pity, and he was melted by the spectacle of the dignity with which he suffered all the lifelong trials ensuing from his unselfishness. The fancy that Alma Leighton came bitterly to regret him, contributed to soothe and flatter him, and he was not sure that Margaret. Vance did not suffer a like loss in him.

There had been times when, as he believed, that beautiful girl's high thoughts had tended toward him; there had been looks, gestures, even words, that had this effect to him, or that seemed to have had it; and Beaton saw that he might easily construe Mrs. Horn's confidential appeal to him to get Margaret interested in art again as something by no means necessarily offensive, even though it had been made to him as to a master of illusion. If Mrs. Horn had to choose between him and the life of good works to which her niece was visibly abandoning herself, Beaton could not doubt which she would choose; the only question was how real the danger of a life of good works was.

As he thought of these two girls, one so charming and the other so divine, it became indefinitely difficult to renounce them for Christine Dryfoos, with her sultry temper and her earthbound ideals. Life had been so flattering to Beaton hitherto that he could not believe them both finally indifferent; and if they were not indifferent, perhaps he did not wish either of them to be very definite. What he really longed for was their sympathy; for a man who is able to walk round quite ruthlessly on the feelings of others often has very tender feelings of his own, easily lacerated, and eagerly responsive to the caresses of compassion. In this frame Beaton determined to go that afternoon, though it was not Mrs. Horn's day, and call upon her in the hope of possibly seeing Miss Vance alone. As he continued in it, he took this for a sign and actually went. It did not fall out at once as he wished, but he got Mrs. Horn to talking again about her niece, and Mrs. Horn again regretted that nothing could be done by the fine arts to reclaim Margaret from good works.

"Is she at home? Will you let me see her?" asked Beacon, with something of the scientific interest of a physician inquiring for a patient whose symptoms have been rehearsed to him. He had not asked for her before.

"Yes, certainly," said Mrs. Horn, and she went herself to call Margaret, and she did not return with her. The girl entered with the gentle grace peculiar to her; and Beaton, bent as he was on his own consolation, could not help being struck with the spiritual exaltation of her look. At sight of her, the vague hope he had never quite relinquished, that they might be something more than aesthetic friends, died in his heart. She wore black, as she often did; but in spite of its fashion her dress received a nun-like effect

from the pensive absence of her face. “Decidedly,” thought Beaton, “she is far gone in good works.”

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But he rose, all the same, to meet her on the old level, and he began at once to talk to her of the subject he had been discussing with her aunt. He said frankly that they both felt she had unjustifiably turned her back upon possibilities which she ought not to neglect.

“You know very well,” she answered, “that I couldn’t do anything in that way worth the time I should waste on it. Don’t talk of it, please. I suppose my aunt has been asking you to say this, but it’s no use. I’m sorry it’s no use, she wishes it so much; but I’m not sorry otherwise. You can find the pleasure at least of doing good work in it; but I couldn’t find anything in it but a barren amusement. Mr. Wetmore is right; for me, it’s like enjoying an opera, or a ball.”

“That’s one of Wetmore’s phrases. He’d sacrifice anything to them.”

She put aside the whole subject with a look. “You were not at Mr. Dryfoos’s the other day. Have you seen them, any of them, lately?”

“I haven’t been there for some time, no,” said Beaton, evasively. But he thought if he was to get on to anything, he had better be candid. “Mr. Dryfoos was at my studio this morning. He’s got a queer notion. He wants me to paint his son’s portrait.”

She started. “And will you—”

“No, I couldn’t do such a thing. It isn’t in my way. I told him so. His son had a beautiful face an antique profile; a sort of early Christian type; but I’m too much of a pagan for that sort of thing.”

“Yes.”

“Yes,” Beaton continued, not quite liking her assent after he had invited it. He had his pride in being a pagan, a Greek, but it failed him in her presence, now; and he wished that she had protested he was none. “He was a singular creature; a kind of survival; an exile in our time and place. I don’t know: we don’t quite expect a saint to be rustic; but with all his goodness Conrad Dryfoos was a country person. If he were not dying for a cause you could imagine him milking.” Beaton intended a contempt that came from the bitterness of having himself once milked the family cow.

His contempt did not reach Miss Vance. “He died for a cause,” she said. “The holiest.”

“Of labor?”

“Of peace. He was there to persuade the strikers to be quiet and go home.”

“I haven’t been quite sure,” said Beaton. “But in any case he had no business there. The police were on hand to do the persuading.”

“I can’t let you talk so!” cried the girl. “It’s shocking! Oh, I know it’s the way people talk, and the worst is that in the sight of the world it’s the right way. But the blessing on the peacemakers is not for the policemen with their clubs.”

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Beaton saw that she was nervous; he made his reflection that she was altogether too far gone in good works for the fine arts to reach her; he began to think how he could turn her primitive Christianity to the account of his modern heathenism. He had no deeper design than to get flattered back into his own favor far enough to find courage for some sort of decisive step. In his heart he was trying to will whether he should or should not go back to Dryfoos's house. It could not be from the caprice that had formerly taken him; it must be from a definite purpose; again he realized this. "Of course; you are right," he said. "I wish I could have answered that old man differently. I fancy he was bound up in his son, though he quarrelled with him, and crossed him. But I couldn't do it; it wasn't possible." He said to himself that if she said "No," now, he would be ruled by her agreement with him; and if she disagreed with him, he would be ruled still by the chance, and would go no more to the Dryfooses'. He found himself embarrassed to the point of blushing when she said nothing, and left him, as it were, on his own hands. "I should like to have given him that comfort; I fancy he hasn't much comfort in life; but there seems no comfort in me."

He dropped his head in a fit attitude for compassion; but she poured no pity upon it.

"There is no comfort for us in ourselves," she said. "It's hard to get outside; but there's only despair within. When we think we have done something for others, by some great effort, we find it's all for our own vanity."

"Yes," said Beaton. "If I could paint pictures for righteousness' sake, I should have been glad to do Conrad Dryfoos for his father. I felt sorry for him. Did the rest seem very much broken up? You saw them all?"

"Not all. Miss Dryfoos was ill, her sister said. It's hard to tell how much people suffer. His mother seemed bewildered. The younger sister is a simple creature; she looks like him; I think she must have something of his spirit."

"Not much spirit of any kind, I imagine," said Beaton. "But she's amiably material. Did they say Miss Dryfoos was seriously ill?"

"No. I supposed she might be prostrated by her brother's death."

"Does she seem that kind of person to you, Miss Vance?" asked Beaton.

"I don't know. I haven't tried to see so much of them as I might, the past winter. I was not sure about her when I met her; I've never seen much of people, except in my own set, and the—very poor. I have been afraid I didn't understand her. She may have a kind of pride that would not let her do herself justice."

Beaton felt the unconscious dislike in the endeavor of praise. "Then she seems to you like a person whose life—its trials, its chances—would make more of than she is now?"

“I didn’t say that. I can’t judge of her at all; but where we don’t know, don’t you think we ought to imagine the best?”

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“Oh yes,” said Beaton. “I didn’t know but what I once said of them might have prejudiced you against them. I have accused myself of it.” He always took a tone of conscientiousness, of self-censure, in talking with Miss Vance; he could not help it.

“Oh no. And I never allowed myself to form any judgment of her. She is very pretty, don’t you think, in a kind of way?”

“Very.”

“She has a beautiful brunette coloring: that floury white and the delicate pink in it. Her eyes are beautiful.”

“She’s graceful, too,” said Beaton. “I’ve tried her in color; but I didn’t make it out.”

“I’ve wondered sometimes,” said Miss Vance, “whether that elusive quality you find in some people you try to paint doesn’t characterize them all through. Miss Dryfoos might be ever so much finer and better than we would find out in the society way that seems the only way.”

“Perhaps,” said Beaton, gloomily; and he went away profoundly discouraged by this last analysis of Christine’s character. The angelic imperviousness of Miss Vance to properties of which his own wickedness was so keenly aware in Christine might have made him laugh, if it had not been such a serious affair with him. As it was, he smiled to think how very differently Alma Leighton would have judged her from Miss Vance’s premises. He liked that clear vision of Alma’s even when it pierced his own disguises. Yes, that was the light he had let die out, and it might have shone upon his path through life. Beaton never felt so poignantly the disadvantage of having on any given occasion been wanting to his own interests through his self-love as in this. He had no one to blame but himself for what had happened, but he blamed Alma for what might happen in the future because she shut out the way of retrieval and return. When be thought of the attitude she had taken toward him, it seemed incredible, and he was always longing to give her a final chance to reverse her final judgment. It appeared to him that the time had come for this now, if ever.

XV.

While we are still young we feel a kind of pride, a sort of fierce pleasure, in any important experience, such as we have read of or heard of in the lives of others, no matter how painful. It was this pride, this pleasure, which Beaton now felt in realizing that the toils of fate were about him, that between him and a future of which Christine Dryfoos must be the genius there was nothing but the will, the mood, the fancy of a girl who had not given him the hope that either could ever again be in his favor. He had nothing to trust to, in fact, but his knowledge that he had once had them all; she did not

deny that; but neither did she conceal that he had flung away his power over them, and she had told him that they never could be his again. A man knows that he can love and wholly cease to love, not once merely, but several times; he recognizes the fact in regard

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to himself, both theoretically and practically; but in regard to women he cherishes the superstition of the romances that love is once for all, and forever. It was because Beaton would not believe that Alma Leighton, being a woman, could put him out of her heart after suffering him to steal into it, that he now hoped anything from her, and she had been so explicit when they last spoke of that affair that he did not hope much. He said to himself that he was going to cast himself on her mercy, to take whatever chance of life, love, and work there was in her having the smallest pity on him. If she would have none, then there was but one thing he could do: marry Christine and go abroad. He did not see how he could bring this alternative to bear upon Alma; even if she knew what he would do in case of a final rejection, he had grounds for fearing she would not care; but he brought it to bear upon himself, and it nerved him to a desperate courage. He could hardly wait for evening to come, before he went to see her; when it came, it seemed to have come too soon. He had wrought himself thoroughly into the conviction that he was in earnest, and that everything depended upon her answer to him, but it was not till he found himself in her presence, and alone with her, that he realized the truth of his conviction. Then the influences of her grace, her gayety, her arch beauty, above all, her good sense, penetrated his soul like a subtle intoxication, and he said to himself that he was right; he could not live without her; these attributes of hers were what he needed to win him, to cheer him, to charm him, to guide him. He longed so to please her, to ingratiate himself with her, that he attempted to be light like her in his talk, but lapsed into abysmal absences and gloomy recesses of introspection.

“What are you laughing at?” he asked, suddenly starting from one of these.

“What you are thinking of.”

“It’s nothing to laugh at. Do you know what I’m thinking of?”

“Don’t tell, if it’s dreadful.”

“Oh, I dare say you wouldn’t think it’s dreadful,” he said, with bitterness. “It’s simply the case of a man who has made a fool of himself and sees no help of retrieval in himself.”

“Can any one else help a man unmake a fool of himself?” she asked, with a smile.

“Yes. In a case like this.”

“Dear me! This is very interesting.”

She did not ask him what the case was, but he was launched now, and he pressed on. “I am the man who has made a fool of himself—”

“Oh!”

“And you can help me out if you will. Alma, I wish you could see me as I really am.”

“Do you, Mr. Beacon? Perhaps I do.”

“No; you don’t. You formulated me in a certain way, and you won’t allow for the change that takes place in every one. You have changed; why shouldn’t I?”

“Has this to do with your having made a fool of yourself?”

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"Yes."

"Oh! Then I don't see how you have changed."

She laughed, and he too, ruefully. "You're cruel. Not but what I deserve your mockery. But the change was not from the capacity of making a fool of myself. I suppose I shall always do that more or less—unless you help me. Alma! Why can't you have a little compassion? You know that I must always love you."

"Nothing makes me doubt that like your saying it, Mr. Beaton. But now you've broken your word—"

"You are to blame for that. You knew I couldn't keep it!"

"Yes, I'm to blame. I was wrong to let you come—after that. And so I forgive you for speaking to me in that way again. But it's perfectly impossible and perfectly useless for me to hear you any more on that subject; and so-good-bye!"

She rose, and he perforce with her. "And do you mean it?" he asked. "Forever?"

"Forever. This is truly the last time I will ever see you if I can help it. Oh, I feel sorry enough for you!" she said, with a glance at his face. "I do believe you are in earnest. But it's too late now. Don't let us talk about it any more! But we shall, if we meet, and so,—"

"And so good-bye! Well, I've nothing more to say, and I might as well say that. I think you've been very good to me. It seems to me as if you had been—shall I say it?—trying to give me a chance. Is that so?" She dropped her eyes and did not answer.

"You found it was no use! Well, I thank you for trying. It's curious to think that I once had your trust, your regard, and now I haven't it. You don't mind my remembering that I had? It'll be some little consolation, and I believe it will be some help. I know I can't retrieve the past now. It is too late. It seems too preposterous—perfectly lurid—that I could have been going to tell you what a tangle I'd got myself in, and to ask you to help untangle me. I must choke in the infernal coil, but I'd like to have the sweetness of your pity in it—whatever it is."

She put out her hand. "Whatever it is, I do pity you; I said that."

"Thank you." He kissed the band she gave him and went.

He had gone on some such terms before; was it now for the last time? She believed it was. She felt in herself a satiety, a fatigue, in which his good looks, his invented airs and poses, his real trouble, were all alike repulsive. She did not acquit herself of the wrong of having let him think she might yet have liked him as she once did; but she had

been honestly willing to see whether she could. It had mystified her to find that when they first met in New York, after their summer in St. Barnaby, she cared nothing for him; she had expected to punish him for his neglect, and then fancy him as before, but she did not. More and more she saw him selfish and mean, weak-willed, narrow-minded, and hard-hearted; and aimless, with all his talent. She admired his talent in proportion as she learned more of artists, and perceived how uncommon it was; but she said to herself that if she were going to devote herself to art, she would do it at first-hand. She was perfectly serene and happy in her final rejection of Beaton; he had worn out not only her fancy, but her sympathy, too.

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This was what her mother would not believe when Alma reported the interview to her; she would not believe it was the last time they should meet; death itself can hardly convince us that it is the last time of anything, of everything between ourselves and the dead. "Well, Alma," she said, "I hope you'll never regret what you've done."

"You may be sure I shall not regret it. If ever I'm low-spirited about anything, I'll think of giving Mr. Beaton his freedom, and that will cheer me up."

"And don't you expect to get married? Do you intend to be an old maid?" demanded her mother, in the bonds of the superstition women have so long been under to the effect that every woman must wish to get married, if for no other purpose than to avoid being an old maid.

"Well, mamma," said Alma, "I intend being a young one for a few years yet; and then I'll see. If I meet the right person, all well and good; if not, not. But I shall pick and choose, as a man does; I won't merely be picked and chosen."

"You can't help yourself; you may be very glad if you are picked and chosen."

"What nonsense, mamma! A girl can get any man she wants, if she goes about it the right way. And when my 'fated fairy prince' comes along, I shall just simply make furious love to him and grab him. Of course, I shall make a decent pretence of talking in my sleep. I believe it's done that way more than half the time. The fated fairy prince wouldn't see the princess in nine cases out of ten if she didn't say something; he would go mooning along after the maids of honor."

Mrs. Leighton tried to look unspeakable horror; but she broke down and laughed. "Well, you are a strange girl, Alma."

"I don't know about that. But one thing I do know, mamma, and that is that Prince Beaton isn't the F. F. P. for me. How strange you are, mamma! Don't you think it would be perfectly disgusting to accept a person you didn't care for, and let him go on and love you and marry you? It's sickening."

"Why, certainly, Alma. It's only because I know you did care for him once—"

"And now I don't. And he didn't care for me once, and now he does. And so we're quits."

"If I could believe—"

"You had better brace up and try, mamma; for as Mr. Fulkerson says, it's as sure as guns. From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he's loathsome to me; and he keeps getting loathsomer. Ugh! Goodnight!"

XVI.

“Well, I guess she’s given him the grand bounce at last,” said Fulkerson to March in one of their moments of confidence at the office. “That’s Mad’s inference from appearances—and disappearances; and some little hints from Alma Leighton.”

“Well, I don’t know that I have any criticisms to offer,” said March. “It may be bad for Beaton, but it’s a very good thing for Miss Leighton. Upon the whole, I believe I congratulate her.”

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“Well, I don’t know. I always kind of hoped it would turn out the other way. You know I always had a sneaking fondness for the fellow.”

“Miss Leighton seems not to have had.”

“It’s a pity she hadn’t. I tell you, March, it ain’t so easy for a girl to get married, here in the East, that she can afford to despise any chance.”

“Isn’t that rather a low view of it?”

“It’s a common-sense view. Beaton has the making of a first-rate fellow in him. He’s the raw material of a great artist and a good citizen. All he wants is somebody to take him in hand and keep him from makin’ an ass of himself and kickin’ over the traces generally, and ridin’ two or three horses bareback at once.”

“It seems a simple problem, though the metaphor is rather complicated,” said March. “But talk to Miss Leighton about it. I haven’t given Beaton the grand bounce.”

He began to turn over the manuscripts on his table, and Fulkerson went away. But March found himself thinking of the matter from time to time during the day, and he spoke to his wife about it when he went home. She surprised him by taking Fulkerson’s view of it.

“Yes, it’s a pity she couldn’t have made up her mind to have him. It’s better for a woman to be married.”

“I thought Paul only went so far as to say it was well. But what would become of Miss Leighton’s artistic career if she married?”

“Oh, her artistic career!” said Mrs. March, with matronly contempt of it.

“But look here!” cried her husband. “Suppose she doesn’t like him?”

“How can a girl of that age tell whether she likes any one or not?”

“It seems to me you were able to tell at that age, Isabel. But let’s examine this thing. (This thing! I believe Fulkerson is characterizing my whole parlance, as well as your morals.) Why shouldn’t we rejoice as much at a non-marriage as a marriage? When we consider the enormous risks people take in linking their lives together, after not half so much thought as goes to an ordinary horse trade, I think we ought to be glad whenever they don’t do it. I believe that this popular demand for the matrimony of others comes from our novel-reading. We get to thinking that there is no other happiness or good-fortune in life except marriage; and it’s offered in fiction as the highest premium for virtue, courage, beauty, learning, and saving human life. We all know it isn’t. We know that in reality marriage is dog cheap, and anybody can have it for the asking—if he

keeps asking enough people. By-and-by some fellow will wake up and see that a first-class story can be written from the anti-marriage point of view; and he'll begin with an engaged couple, and devote his novel to disengaging them and rendering them separately happy ever after in the denouement. It will make his everlasting fortune."

"Why don't you write it, Basil?" she asked. "It's a delightful idea. You could do it splendidly."

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He became fascinated with the notion. He developed it in detail; but at the end he sighed and said: "With this 'Every Other Week' work on my hands, of course I can't attempt a novel. But perhaps I sha'n't have it long."

She was instantly anxious to know what he meant, and the novel and Miss Leighton's affair were both dropped out of their thoughts. "What do you mean? Has Mr. Fulkerson said anything yet?"

"Not a word. He knows no more about it than I do. Dryfoos hasn't spoken, and we're both afraid to ask him. Of course, I couldn't ask him."

"No."

"But it's pretty uncomfortable, to be kept hanging by the gills so, as Fulkerson says."

"Yes, we don't know what to do."

March and Fulkerson said the same to each other; and Fulkerson said that if the old man pulled out, he did not know what would happen. He had no capital to carry the thing on, and the very fact that the old man had pulled out would damage it so that it would be hard to get anybody else to put it. In the mean time Fulkerson was running Conrad's office-work, when he ought to be looking after the outside interests of the thing; and he could not see the day when he could get married.

"I don't know which it's worse for, March: you or me. I don't know, under the circumstances, whether it's worse to have a family or to want to have one. Of course—-of course! We can't hurry the old man up. It wouldn't be decent, and it would be dangerous. We got to wait."

He almost decided to draw upon Dryfoos for some money; he did not need any, but, he said maybe the demand would act as a hint upon him. One day, about a week after Alma's final rejection of Beaton, Dryfoos came into March's office. Fulkerson was out, but the old man seemed not to have tried to see him.

He put his hat on the floor by his chair, after he sat down, and looked at March awhile with his old eyes, which had the vitreous glitter of old. eyes stimulated to sleeplessness. Then he said, abruptly, "Mr. March, how would you like to take this thing off my hands?"

"I don't understand, exactly," March began; but of course he understood that Dryfoos was offering to let him have 'Every Other Week' on some terms or other, and his heart leaped with hope.

The old man knew he understood, and so he did not explain. He said: "I am going to Europe, to take my family there. The doctor thinks it might do my wife some good; and I

ain't very well myself, and my girls both want to go; and so we're goin'. If you want to take this thing off my hands, I reckon I can let you have it in 'most any shape you say. You're all settled here in New York, and I don't suppose you want to break up, much, at your time of life, and I've been thinkin' whether you wouldn't like to take the thing."

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The word, which Dryfoos had now used three times, made March at last think of Fulkerson; he had been filled too full of himself to think of any one else till he had mastered the notion of such wonderful good fortune as seemed about falling to him. But now he did think of Fulkerson, and with some shame and confusion; for he remembered how, when Dryfoos had last approached him there on the business of his connection with 'Every Other Week,' he had been very haughty with him, and told him that he did not know him in this connection. He blushed to find how far his thoughts had now run without encountering this obstacle of etiquette.

"Have you spoken to Mr. Fulkerson?" he asked.

"No, I hain't. It ain't a question of management. It's a question of buying and selling. I offer the thing to you first. I reckon Fulkerson couldn't get on very well without you."

March saw the real difference in the two cases, and he was glad to see it, because he could act more decisively if not hampered by an obligation to consistency. "I am gratified, of course, Mr. Dryfoos; extremely gratified; and it's no use pretending that I shouldn't be happy beyond bounds to get possession of 'Every Other Week.' But I don't feel quite free to talk about it apart from Mr. Fulkerson."

"Oh, all right!" said the old man, with quick offence.

March hastened to say: "I feel bound to Mr. Fulkerson in every way. He got me to come here, and I couldn't even seem to act without him."

He put it questioningly, and the old man answered:

"Yes, I can see that. When 'll he be in? I can wait." But he looked impatient.

"Very soon, now," said March, looking at his watch. "He was only to be gone a moment," and while he went on to talk with Dryfoos, he wondered why the old man should have come first to speak with him, and whether it was from some obscure wish to make him reparation for displeasures in the past, or from a distrust or dislike of Fulkerson. Whichever light he looked at it in, it was flattering.

"Do you think of going abroad soon?" he asked.

"What? Yes—I don't know—I reckon. We got our passage engaged. It's on one of them French boats. We're goin' to Paris."

"Oh! That will be interesting to the young ladies."

"Yes. I reckon we're goin' for them. 'Tain't likely my wife and me would want to pull up stakes at our age," said the old man, sorrowfully.

“But you may find it do you good, Mr. Dryfoos,” said March, with a kindness that was real, mixed as it was with the selfish interest he now had in the intended voyage.

“Well, maybe, maybe,” sighed the old man; and he dropped his head forward. “It don’t make a great deal of difference what we do or we don’t do, for the few years left.”

“I hope Mrs. Dryfoos is as well as usual,” said March, finding the ground delicate and difficult.

“Middlin’, middlin’,” said the old man. “My daughter Christine, she ain’t very well.”

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“Oh,” said March. It was quite impossible for him to affect a more explicit interest in the fact. He and Dryfoos sat silent for a few moments, and he was vainly casting about in his thought for something else which would tide them over the interval till Fulkerson came, when he heard his step on the stairs.

“Hello, hello!” he said. “Meeting of the clans!” It was always a meeting of the clans, with Fulkerson, or a field day, or an extra session, or a regular conclave, whenever he saw people of any common interest together. “Hain’t seen you here for a good while, Mr. Dryfoos. Did think some of running away with ‘Every Other Week’ one while, but couldn’t seem to work March up to the point.”

He gave Dryfoos his hand, and pushed aside the papers on the corner of March’s desk, and sat down there, and went on briskly with the nonsense he could always talk while he was waiting for another to develop any matter of business; he told March afterward that he scented business in the air as soon as he came into the room where he and Dryfoos were sitting.

Dryfoos seemed determined to leave the word to March, who said, after an inquiring look at him, “Mr. Dryfoos has been proposing to let us have ‘Every Other Week,’ Fulkerson.”

“Well, that’s good; that suits yours truly; March & Fulkerson, publishers and proprietors, won’t pretend it don’t, if the terms are all right.”

“The terms,” said the old man, “are whatever you want ’em. I haven’t got any more use for the concern—” He gulped, and stopped; they knew what he was thinking of, and they looked down in pity. He went on: “I won’t put any more money in it; but what I’ve put in a’ready can stay; and you can pay me four per cent.”

He got upon his feet; and March and Fulkerson stood, too.

“Well, I call that pretty white,” said Fulkerson. “It’s a bargain as far as I’m concerned. I suppose you’ll want to talk it over with your wife, March?”

“Yes; I shall,” said March. “I can see that it’s a great chance; but I want to talk it over with my wife.”

“Well, that’s right,” said the old man. “Let me hear from you tomorrow.”

He went out, and Fulkerson began to dance round the room. He caught March about his stalwart girth and tried to make him waltz; the office-boy came to the door and looked on with approval.

“Come, come, you idiot!” said March, rooting himself to the carpet.

“It’s just throwing the thing into our mouths,” said Fulkerson. “The wedding will be this day week. No cards! Teedle-lumpty-diddle! Teedle-lumpty-dee! What do you suppose he means by it, March?” he asked, bringing himself soberly up, of a sudden. “What is his little game? Or is he crazy? It don’t seem like the Dryfoos of my previous acquaintance.”

“I suppose,” March suggested, “that he’s got money enough, so that he don’t care for this—”

“Pshaw! You’re a poet! Don’t you know that the more money that kind of man has got, the more he cares for money? It’s some fancy of his—like having Lindau’s funeral at his house—By Jings, March, I believe you’re his fancy!”

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“Oh, now! Don’t you be a poet, Fulkerson!”

“I do! He seemed to take a kind of shine to you from the day you wouldn’t turn off old Lindau; he did, indeed. It kind of shook him up. It made him think you had something in you. He was deceived by appearances. Look here! I’m going round to see Mrs. March with you, and explain the thing to her. I know Mrs. March! She wouldn’t believe you knew what you were going in for. She has a great respect for your mind, but she don’t think you’ve got any sense. Heigh?”

“All right,” said March, glad of the notion; and it was really a comfort to have Fulkerson with him to develop all the points; and it was delightful to see how clearly and quickly she seized them; it made March proud of her. She was only angry that they had lost any time in coming to submit so plain a case to her.

Mr. Dryfoos might change his mind in the night, and then everything would be lost. They must go to him instantly, and tell him that they accepted; they must telegraph him.

“Might as well send a district messenger; he’d get there next week,” said Fulkerson. “No, no! It ’ll all keep till to-morrow, and be the better for it. If he’s got this fancy for March, as I say, he ain’t agoing to change it in a single night. People don’t change their fancies for March in a lifetime. Heigh?”

When Fulkerson turned up very early at the office next morning, as March did, he was less strenuous about Dryfoos’s fancy for March. It was as if Miss Woodburn might have blown cold upon that theory, as something unjust to his own merit, for which she would naturally be more jealous than he.

March told him what he had forgotten to tell him the day before, though he had been trying, all through their excited talk, to get it in, that the Dryfooses were going abroad.

“Oh, ho!” cried Fulkerson. “That’s the milk in the cocoanut, is it? Well, I thought there must be something.”

But this fact had not changed Mrs. March at all in her conviction that it was Mr. Dryfoos’s fancy for her husband which had moved him to make him this extraordinary offer, and she reminded him that it had first been made to him, without regard to Fulkerson. “And perhaps,” she went on, “Mr. Dryfoos has been changed——softened; and doesn’t find money all in all any more. He’s had enough to change him, poor old man!”

“Does anything from without change us?” her husband mused aloud. “We’re brought up to think so by the novelists, who really have the charge of people’s thinking, nowadays. But I doubt it, especially if the thing outside is some great event, something cataclysmal, like this tremendous sorrow of Dryfoos’s.”

“Then what is it that changes us?” demanded his wife, almost angry with him for his heresy.

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“Well, it won’t do to say, the Holy Spirit indwelling. That would sound like cant at this day. But the old fellows that used to say that had some glimpses of the truth. They knew that it is the still, small voice that the soul heeds, not the deafening blasts of doom. I suppose I should have to say that we didn’t change at all. We develop. There’s the making of several characters in each of us; we are each several characters, and sometimes this character has the lead in us, and sometimes that. From what Fulkerson has told me of Dryfoos, I should say he had always had the potentiality of better things in him than he has ever been yet; and perhaps the time has come for the good to have its chance. The growth in one direction has stopped; it’s begun in another; that’s all. The man hasn’t been changed by his son’s death; it stunned, it benumbed him; but it couldn’t change him. It was an event, like any other, and it had to happen as much as his being born. It was forecast from the beginning of time, and was as entirely an effect of his coming into the world—”

“Basil! Basil!” cried his wife. “This is fatalism!”

“Then you think,” he said, “that a sparrow falls to the ground without the will of God?” and he laughed provokingly. But he went on more soberly: “I don’t know what it all means Isabel though I believe it means good. What did Christ himself say? That if one rose from the dead it would not avail. And yet we are always looking for the miraculous! I believe that unhappy old man truly grieves for his son, whom he treated cruelly without the final intention of cruelty, for he loved him and wished to be proud of him; but I don’t think his death has changed him, any more than the smallest event in the chain of events remotely working through his nature from the beginning. But why do you think he’s changed at all? Because he offers to sell me Every Other Week on easy terms? He says himself that he has no further use for the thing; and he knows perfectly well that he couldn’t get his money out of it now, without an enormous shrinkage. He couldn’t appear at this late day as the owner, and sell it to anybody but Fulkerson and me for a fifth of what it’s cost him. He can sell it to us for all it’s cost him; and four per cent. is no bad interest on his money till we can pay it back. It’s a good thing for us; but we have to ask whether Dryfoos has done us the good, or whether it’s the blessing of Heaven. If it’s merely the blessing of Heaven, I don’t propose being grateful for it.”

March laughed again, and his wife said, “It’s disgusting.”

“It’s business,” he assented. “Business is business; but I don’t say it isn’t disgusting. Lindau had a low opinion of it.”

“I think that with all his faults Mr. Dryfoos is a better man than Lindau,” she proclaimed.

“Well, he’s certainly able to offer us a better thing in ’Every Other Week,’” said March.

She knew he was enamoured of the literary finish of his cynicism, and that at heart he was as humbly and truly grateful as she was for the good-fortune opening to them.

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XVII.

Beaton was at his best when he parted for the last time with Alma Leighton, for he saw then that what had happened to him was the necessary consequence of what he had been, if not what he had done. Afterward he lost this clear vision; he began to deny the fact; he drew upon his knowledge of life, and in arguing himself into a different frame of mind he alleged the case of different people who had done and been much worse things than he, and yet no such disagreeable consequence had befallen them. Then he saw that it was all the work of blind chance, and he said to himself that it was this that made him desperate, and willing to call evil his good, and to take his own wherever he could find it. There was a great deal that was literary and factitious and tawdry in the mood in which he went to see Christine Dryfoos, the night when the Marches sat talking their prospects over; and nothing that was decided in his purpose. He knew what the drift of his mind was, but he had always preferred to let chance determine his events, and now since chance had played him such an ill turn with Alma, he left it the whole responsibility. Not in terms, but in effect, this was his thought as he walked on up-town to pay the first of the visits which Dryfoos had practically invited him to resume. He had an insolent satisfaction in having delayed it so long; if he was going back he was going back on his own conditions, and these were to be as hard and humiliating as he could make them. But this intention again was inchoate, floating, the stuff of an intention, rather than intention; an expression of temperament chiefly.

He had been expected before that. Christine had got out of Mela that her father had been at Beaton's studio; and then she had gone at the old man and got from him every smallest fact of the interview there. She had flung back in his teeth the good-will toward herself with which he had gone to Beaton. She was furious with shame and resentment; she told him he had made bad worse, that he had made a fool of himself to no end; she spared neither his age nor his grief-broken spirit, in which his will could not rise against hers. She filled the house with her rage, screaming it out upon him; but when her fury was once spent, she began to have some hopes from what her father had done. She no longer kept her bed; every evening she dressed herself in the dress Beaton admired the most, and sat up till a certain hour to receive him. She had fixed a day in her own mind before which, if he came, she would forgive him all he had made her suffer: the mortification, the suspense, the despair. Beyond this, she had the purpose of making her father go to Europe; she felt that she could no longer live in America, with the double disgrace that had been put upon her.

Beaton rang, and while the servant was coming the insolent caprice seized him to ask for the young ladies instead of the old man, as he had supposed of course he should do. The maid who answered the bell, in the place of the reluctant Irishman of other days, had all his hesitation in admitting that the young ladies were at home.

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He found Mela in the drawing-room. At sight of him she looked scared; but she seemed to be reassured by his calm. He asked if he was not to have the pleasure of seeing Miss Dryfoos, too; and Mela said she reckoned the girl had gone up-stairs to tell her. Mela was in black, and Beaton noted how well the solid sable became her rich red-blonde beauty; he wondered what the effect would be with Christine.

But she, when she appeared, was not in mourning. He fancied that she wore the lustrous black silk, with the breadths of white Venetian lace about the neck which he had praised, because he praised it. Her cheeks burned with a Jacqueminot crimson; what should be white in her face was chalky white. She carried a plumed ostrich fan, black and soft, and after giving him her hand, sat down and waved it to and fro slowly, as he remembered her doing the night they first met. She had no ideas, except such as related intimately to herself, and she had no gabble, like Mela; and she let him talk. It was past the day when she promised herself she would forgive him; but as he talked on she felt all her passion for him revive, and the conflict of desires, the desire to hate, the desire to love, made a dizzying whirl in her brain. She looked at him, half doubting whether he was really there or not. He had never looked so handsome, with his dreamy eyes floating under his heavy overhanging hair, and his pointed brown beard defined against his lustrous shirtfront. His mellowly modulated, mysterious voice lulled her; when Mela made an errand out of the room, and Beaton crossed to her and sat down by her, she shivered.

“Are you cold?” he asked, and she felt the cruel mockery and exultant consciousness of power in his tone, as perhaps a wild thing feels captivity in the voice of its keeper. But now, she said she would still forgive him if he asked her.

Mela came back, and the talk fell again to the former level; but Beaton had not said anything that really meant what she wished, and she saw that he intended to say nothing. Her heart began to burn like a fire in her breast.

“You been tellun’ him about our goun’ to Europe?” Mela asked.

“No,” said Christine, briefly, and looking at the fan spread out on her lap.

Beaton asked when; and then he rose, and said if it was so soon, he supposed he should not see them again, unless he saw them in Paris; he might very likely run over during the summer. He said to himself that he had given it a fair trial with Christine, and he could not make it go.

Christine rose, with a kind of gasp; and mechanically followed him to the door of the drawing-room; Mela came, too; and while he was putting on his overcoat, she gurgled and bubbled in good-humor with all the world. Christine stood looking at him, and thinking how still handsomer he was in his overcoat; and that fire burned fiercer in her. She felt him more than life to her and knew him lost, and the frenzy, that makes a

woman kill the man she loves, or fling vitriol to destroy the beauty she cannot have for all hers, possessed her lawless soul. He gave his hand to Mela, and said, in his wind-harp stop, “Good-bye.”

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As he put out his hand to Christine, she pushed it aside with a scream of rage; she flashed at him, and with both hands made a feline pass at the face he bent toward her. He sprang back, and after an instant of stupefaction he pulled open the door behind him and ran out into the street.

“Well, Christine Dryfoos!” said Mela, “Sprang at him like a wild-cat!”

“I, don’t care,” Christine shrieked. “I’ll tear his eyes out!” She flew up-stairs to her own room, and left the burden of the explanation to Mela, who did it justice.

Beaton found himself, he did not know how, in his studio, reeking with perspiration and breathless. He must almost have run. He struck a match with a shaking hand, and looked at his face in the glass. He expected to see the bleeding marks of her nails on his cheeks, but he could see nothing. He grovelled inwardly; it was all so low and coarse and vulgar; it was all so just and apt to his deserts.

There was a pistol among the dusty bric-a-brac on the mantel which he had kept loaded to fire at a cat in the area. He took it and sat looking into the muzzle, wishing it might go off by accident and kill him. It slipped through his hand and struck the floor, and there was a report; he sprang into the air, feeling that he had been shot. But he found himself still alive, with only a burning line along his cheek, such as one of Christine’s finger-nails might have left.

He laughed with cynical recognition of the fact that he had got his punishment in the right way, and that his case was not to be dignified into tragedy.

XVIII.

The Marches, with Fulkerson, went to see the Dryfooses off on the French steamer. There was no longer any business obligation on them to be civil, and there was greater kindness for that reason in the attention they offered. ‘Every Other Week’ had been made over to the joint ownership of March and Fulkerson, and the details arranged with a hardness on Dryfoos’s side which certainly left Mrs. March with a sense of his incomplete regeneration. Yet when she saw him there on the steamer, she pitied him; he looked wearied and bewildered; even his wife, with her twitching head, and her prophecies of evil, croaked hoarsely out, while she clung to Mrs. March’s hand where they sat together till the leave-takers were ordered ashore, was less pathetic. Mela was looking after both of them, and trying to cheer them in a joyful excitement. “I tell ’em it’s goun’ to add ten years to both their lives,” she said. “The voyage ‘ll do their healths good; and then, we’re gittun’ away from that miser’ble pack o’ servants that was eatun’ us up, there in New York. I hate the place!” she said, as if they had already left it. “Yes, Mrs. Mandel’s goun’, too,” she added, following the direction of Mrs. March’s eyes where they noted Mrs. Mandel, speaking to Christine on the other side of the cabin.

“Her and Christine had a kind of a spat, and she was goun’ to leave, but here only the other day, Christine offered to make it up with her, and now they’re as thick as thieves. Well, I reckon we couldn’t very well ‘a’ got along without her. She’s about the only one that speaks French in this family.”

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Mrs. March's eyes still dwelt upon Christine's face; it was full of a furtive wildness. She seemed to be keeping a watch to prevent herself from looking as if she were looking for some one. "Do you know," Mrs. March said to her husband as they jingled along homeward in the Christopher Street bob-tail car, "I thought she was in love with that detestable Mr. Beaton of yours at one time; and that he was amusing himself with her."

"I can bear a good deal, Isabel," said March, "but I wish you wouldn't attribute Beaton to me. He's the invention of that Mr. Fulkerson of yours."

"Well, at any rate, I hope, now, you'll both get rid of him, in the reforms you're going to carry out."

These reforms were for a greater economy in the management of 'Every Other Week;' but in their very nature they could not include the suppression of Beaton. He had always shown himself capable and loyal to the interests of the magazine, and both the new owners were glad to keep him. He was glad to stay, though he made a gruff pretence of indifference, when they came to look over the new arrangement with him. In his heart he knew that he was a fraud; but at least he could say to himself with truth that he had not now the shame of taking Dryfoos's money.

March and Fulkerson retrenched at several points where it had seemed indispensable to spend, as long as they were not spending their own: that was only human. Fulkerson absorbed Conrad's department into his, and March found that he could dispense with Kendricks in the place of assistant which he had lately filled since Fulkerson had decided that March was overworked. They reduced the number of illustrated articles, and they systematized the payment of contributors strictly according to the sales of each number, on their original plan of co-operation: they had got to paying rather lavishly for material without reference to the sales.

Fulkerson took a little time to get married, and went on his wedding journey out to Niagara, and down the St. Lawrence to Quebec over the line of travel that the Marches had taken on their wedding journey. He had the pleasure of going from Montreal to Quebec on the same boat on which he first met March.

They have continued very good friends, and their wives are almost without the rivalry that usually embitters the wives of partners. At first Mrs. March did not like Mrs. Fulkerson's speaking of her husband as the Ownah, and March as the Edito'; but it appeared that this was only a convenient method of recognizing the predominant quality in each, and was meant neither to affirm nor to deny anything. Colonel Woodburn offered as his contribution to the celebration of the copartnership, which Fulkerson could not be prevented from dedicating with a little dinner, the story of Fulkerson's magnanimous behavior in regard to Dryfoos at that crucial moment when it was a question whether he should give up Dryfoos or give up March. Fulkerson winced at it; but Mrs. March told her husband that now, whatever happened, she should never have

any misgivings of Fulkerson again; and she asked him if he did not think he ought to apologize to him for the doubts with which he had once inspired her. March said that he did not think so.

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The Fulkersons spent the summer at a seaside hotel in easy reach of the city; but they returned early to Mrs. Leighton's, with whom they are to board till spring, when they are going to fit up Fulkerson's bachelor apartment for housekeeping. Mrs. March, with her Boston scruple, thinks it will be odd, living over the 'Every Other Week' offices; but there will be a separate street entrance to the apartment; and besides, in New York you may do anything.

The future of the Leightons promises no immediate change. Kendricks goes there a good deal to see the Fulkersons, and Mrs. Fulkerson says he comes to see Alma. He has seemed taken with her ever since he first met her at Dryfoos's, the day of Lindau's funeral, and though Fulkerson objects to dating a fancy of that kind from an occasion of that kind, he justly argues with March that there can be no harm in it, and that we are liable to be struck by lightning any time. In the mean while there is no proof that Alma returns Kendricks's interest, if he feels any. She has got a little bit of color into the fall exhibition; but the fall exhibition is never so good as the spring exhibition. Wetmore is rather sorry she has succeeded in this, though he promoted her success. He says her real hope is in black and white, and it is a pity for her to lose sight of her original aim of drawing for illustration.

News has come from Paris of the engagement of Christine Dryfoos. There the Dryfooses met with the success denied them in New York; many American plutocrats must await their apotheosis in Europe, where society has them, as it were, in a translation. Shortly after their arrival they were celebrated in the news papers as the first millionaire American family of natural-gas extraction who had arrived in the capital of civilization; and at a French watering-place Christine encountered her fate—a nobleman full of present debts and of duels in the past. Fulkerson says the old man can manage the debtor, and Christine can look out for the duellist. "They say those fellows generally whip their wives. He'd better not try it with Christine, I reckon, unless he's practised with a panther."

One day, shortly after their return to town in the autumn from the brief summer outing they permitted themselves, the Marches met Margaret Vance. At first they did not know her in the dress of the sisterhood which she wore; but she smiled joyfully, almost gayly, on seeing them, and though she hurried by with the sister who accompanied her, and did not stay to speak, they felt that the peace that passeth understanding had looked at them from her eyes.

"Well, she is at rest, there can't be any doubt of that," he said, as he glanced round at the drifting black robe which followed her free, nun-like walk.

"Yes, now she can do all the good she likes," sighed his wife. "I wonder—I wonder if she ever told his father about her talk with poor Conrad that day he was shot?"

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“I don’t know. I don’t care. In any event, it would be right. She did nothing wrong. If she unwittingly sent him to his death, she sent him to die for God’s sake, for man’s sake.”

“Yes—yes. But still—”

“Well, we must trust that look of hers.”

PG EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS:

Affected absence of mind
Be good, sweet man, and let who will be clever
Comfort of the critical attitude
Conscience weakens to the need that isn’t
Death is an exile that no remorse and no love can reach
Death is peace and pardon
Did not idealize him, but in the highest effect she realized him
Does any one deserve happiness
Does anything from without change us?
Europe, where society has them, as it were, in a translation
Favorite stock of his go up and go down under the betting
Hemmed round with this eternal darkness of death
Indispensable
Love of justice hurry them into sympathy with violence
Married for no other purpose than to avoid being an old maid
Nervous woes of comfortable people
Novelists, who really have the charge of people’s thinking
People that have convictions are difficult
Rejoice as much at a non-marriage as a marriage
Respect for your mind, but she don’t think you’ve got any sense
Superstition of the romances that love is once for all
Superstition that having and shining is the chief good
To do whatever one likes is finally to do nothing that one likes
Took the world as she found it, and made the best of it
What we can be if we must
When you look it—live it
Would sacrifice his best friend to a phrase

THEIR SILVER WEDDING JOURNEY.

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?”

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“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.

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

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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 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.

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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.

"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’.”

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“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.”

“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.

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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.

"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.

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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.

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.

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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.

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?"

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“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.

“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.

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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.

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.

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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.

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.

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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 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.

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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.

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, momently 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'.

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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.

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.

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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.

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.

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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.

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.

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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 be 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."

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.

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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 petted 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 perfervidly 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 retrusive. 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 ebbed 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 preoccupying.

“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 sill 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 benching 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, is 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 robuster 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 come 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 pigtails. 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 estray, 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 pleasurers, 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 bolder 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 strongliest 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

THEIR SILVER WEDDING JOURNEY

PART II.

XXVI.

They found Burnamy expecting them at the station in Carlsbad, and she scolded him like a mother for taking the trouble to meet them, while she kept back for the present any sign of knowing that he had staid over a day with the Triscoes in Leipsic. He was as affectionately glad to see her and her husband as she could have wished, but she would have liked it better if he had owned up at once about Leipsic. He did not, and it seemed to her that he was holding her at arm's-length in his answers about his employer. He would not say how he liked his work, or how he liked Mr. Stoller; he merely said that they were at Pupp's together, and that he had got in a good day's work already; and since he would say no more, she contented herself with that.

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The long drive from the station to the hotel was by streets that wound down the hill-side like those of an Italian mountain town, between gay stuccoed houses, of Southern rather than of Northern architecture; and the impression of a Latin country was heightened at a turn of the road which brought into view a colossal crucifix planted against a curtain of dark green foliage on the brow of one of the wooded heights that surrounded Carlsbad. When they reached the level of the Tepl, the hill-fed torrent that brawls through the little city under pretty bridges within walls of solid masonry, they found themselves in almost the only vehicle on a brilliant promenade thronged with a cosmopolitan world. Germans in every manner of misfit; Polish Jews in long black gabardines, with tight corkscrew curls on their temples under their black velvet derbys; Austrian officers in tight corsets; Greek priests in flowing robes and brimless high hats; Russians in caftans and Cossacks in Astrakhan caps, accented the more homogeneous masses of western Europeans, in which it would have been hard to say which were English, French or Italians. Among the vividly dressed ladies, some were imaginably Parisian from their chic costumes, but they might easily have been Hungarians or Levantines of taste; some Americans, who might have passed unknown in the perfection of their dress, gave their nationality away in the flat wooden tones of their voices, which made themselves heard above the low hum of talk and the whisper of the innumerable feet.

The omnibus worked its way at a slow walk among the promenaders going and coming between the rows of pollard locusts on one side and the bright walls of the houses on the other. Under the trees were tables, served by pretty bareheaded girls who ran to and from the restaurants across the way. On both sides flashed and glittered the little shops full of silver, glass, jewelry, terracotta figurines, wood-carvings, and all the idle frippery of watering-place traffic: they suggested Paris, and they suggested Saratoga, and then they were of Carlsbad and of no place else in the world, as the crowd which might have been that of other cities at certain moments could only have been of Carlsbad in its habitual effect.

“Do you like it?” asked Burnamy, as if he owned the place, and Mrs. March saw how simple-hearted he was in his reticence, after all. She was ready to bless him when they reached the hotel and found that his interest had got them the only rooms left in the house. This satisfied in her the passion for size which is at the bottom of every American heart, and which perhaps above all else marks us the youngest of the peoples. We pride ourselves on the bigness of our own things, but we are not ungenerous, and when we go to Europe and find things bigger than ours, we are magnanimously happy in them. Pupp’s, in its altogether different way, was larger than any hotel at Saratoga or at Niagara; and when Burnamy told her that it sometimes fed fifteen thousand people a day in the height of the season, she was personally proud of it.

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She waited with him in the rotunda of the hotel, while the secretary led March off to look at the rooms reserved for them, and Burnamy hospitably turned the revolving octagonal case in the centre of the rotunda where the names of the guests were put up. They were of all nations, but there were so many New Yorkers whose names ended in berg, and thal, and stern, and baum that she seemed to be gazing upon a cyclorama of the signs on Broadway. A large man of unmistakable American make, but with so little that was of New England or New York in his presence that she might not at once have thought him American, lounged toward them with a quill toothpick in the corner of his mouth. He had a jealous blue eye, into which he seemed trying to put a friendly light; his straight mouth stretched into an involuntary smile above his tawny chin-beard, and he wore his soft hat so far back from his high forehead (it showed to the crown when he took his hat off) that he had the effect of being uncovered.

At his approach Burnamy turned, and with a flush said: "Oh! Let me introduce Mr. Stoller, Mrs. March."

Stoller took his toothpick out of his mouth and bowed; then he seemed to remember, and took off his hat. "You see Jews enough, here to make you feel at home?" he asked; and he added: "Well, we got some of 'em in Chicago, too, I guess. This young man"—-he twisted his head toward Burnamy—"found you easy enough?"

"It was very good of him to meet us," Mrs. March began. "We didn't expect—"

"Oh, that's all right," said Stoller, putting his toothpick back, and his hat on. "We'd got through for the day; my doctor won't let me work all I want to, here. Your husband's going to take the cure, they tell me. Well, he wants to go to a good doctor, first. You can't go and drink these waters hit or miss. I found that out before I came."

"Oh, no!" said Mrs. March, and she wished to explain how they had been advised; but he said to Burnamy:

"I sha'n't want you again till ten to-morrow morning. Don't let me interrupt you," he added patronizingly to Mrs. March. He put his hand up toward his hat, and sauntered away out of the door.

Burnamy did not speak; and she only asked at last, to relieve the silence, "Is Mr. Stoller an American?"

"Why, I suppose so," he answered, with an uneasy laugh. "His people were German emigrants who settled in Southern Indiana. That makes him as much American as any of us, doesn't it?"

Burnamy spoke with his mind on his French-Canadian grandfather, who had come down through Detroit, when their name was Bonami; but Mrs. March answered from her

eight generations of New England ancestry. “Oh, for the West, yes, perhaps,” and they neither of them said anything more about Stoller.

In their room, where she found March waiting for her amidst their arriving baggage, she was so full of her pent-up opinions of Burnamy’s patron that she, would scarcely speak of the view from their windows of the wooded hills up and down the Tepl. “Yes, yes; very nice, and I know I shall enjoy it ever so much. But I don’t know what you will think of that poor young Burnamy!”

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“Why, what’s happened to him?”

“Happened? Stoller’s happened.”

“Oh, have you seen him, already? Well?”

“Well, if you had been going to pick out that type of man, you’d have rejected him, because you’d have said he was too pat. He’s like an actor made up for a Western millionaire. Do you remember that American in ‘L’Etranger’ which Bernhardt did in Boston when she first came? He, looks exactly like that, and he has the worst manners. He stood talking to me with his hat on, and a toothpick in his mouth; and he made me feel as if he had bought me, along with Burnamy, and had paid too much. If you don’t give him a setting down, Basil, I shall never speak to you; that’s all. I’m sure Burnamy is in some trouble with him; he’s got some sort of hold upon him; what it could be in such a short time, I can’t imagine; but if ever a man seemed to be, in a man’s power, he does, in his!

“Now,” said March, “your pronouns have got so far beyond me that I think we’d better let it all go till after supper; perhaps I shall see Stoller myself by that time.”

She had been deeply stirred by her encounter with Stoller, but she entered with impartial intensity into the fact that the elevator at Pupp’s had the characteristic of always coming up and never going down with passengers. It was locked into its closet with a solid door, and there was no bell to summon it, or any place to take it except on the ground-floor; but the stairs by which she could descend were abundant and stately; and on one landing there was the lithograph of one of the largest and ugliest hotels in New York; how ugly it was, she said she should never have known if she had not seen it there.

The dining-room was divided into the grand saloon, where they supped amid rococo sculptures and frescoes, and the glazed veranda opening by vast windows on a spread of tables without, which were already filling up for the evening concert. Around them at the different tables there were groups of faces and figures fascinating in their strangeness, with that distinction which abashes our American level in the presence of European inequality.

“How simple and unimpressive we are, Basil,” she said, “beside all these people! I used to feel it in Europe when I was young, and now I’m certain that we must seem like two faded-in old village photographs. We don’t even look intellectual! I hope we look good.”

“I know I do,” said March. The waiter went for their supper, and they joined in guessing the different nationalities in the room. A French party was easy enough; a Spanish mother and daughter were not difficult, though whether they were not South-American remained uncertain; two elderly maiden ladies were unmistakably of central

Massachusetts, and were obviously of a book-club culture that had left no leaf unturned; some Triestines gave themselves away by their Venetian accent; but a large group at a farther table were

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unassignable in the strange language which they clattered loudly together, with bursts of laughter. They were a family party of old and young, they were having a good time, with a freedom which she called baronial; the ladies wore white satin, or black lace, but the men were in sack-coats; she chose to attribute them, for no reason but their outlandishness, to Transylvania. March pretended to prefer a table full of Germans, who were unmistakably bourgeois, and yet of intellectual effect. He chose as his favorite a middle-aged man of learned aspect, and they both decided to think of him as the Herr Professor, but they did not imagine how perfectly the title fitted him till he drew a long comb from his waistcoat pocket and combed his hair and beard with it above the table.

The wine wrought with the Transylvanians, and they all jargoned together at once, and laughed at the jokes passing among them. One old gentleman had a peculiar fascination from the infantile innocence of his gums when he threw his head back to laugh, and showed an upper jaw toothless except for two incisors, standing guard over the chasm between. Suddenly he choked, coughed to relieve himself, hawked, held his napkin up before him, and—

“Noblesse oblige,” said March, with the tone of irony which he reserved for his wife’s preoccupations with aristocracies of all sorts. “I think I prefer my Hair Professor, bourgeois, as he is.”

The ladies attributively of central Massachusetts had risen from their table, and were making for the door without having paid for their supper. The head waiter ran after them; with a real delicacy for their mistake he explained that though in most places the meals were charged in the bill, it was the custom in Carlsbad to pay for them at the table; one could see that he was making their error a pleasant adventure to them which they could laugh over together, and write home about without a pang.

“And I,” said Mrs. March, shamelessly abandoning the party of the aristocracy, “prefer the manners of the lower classes.”

“Oh, yes,” he admitted. “The only manners we have at home are black ones. But you mustn’t lose courage. Perhaps the nobility are not always so baronial.”

“I don’t know whether we have manners at home,” she said, “and I don’t believe I care. At least we have decencies.”

“Don’t be a jingo,” said her husband.

XXVII.

Though Stoller had formally discharged Burnamy from duty for the day, he was not so full of resources in himself, and he had not so general an acquaintance in the hotel but he was glad to have the young fellow make up to him in the reading-room, that night. He laid down a New York paper ten days old in despair of having left any American news in it, and pushed several continental Anglo-American papers aside with his elbow, as he gave a contemptuous glance at the foreign journals, in Bohemian, Hungarian, German, French, and Italian, which littered the large table.

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“I wonder,” he said, “how long it’ll take’em, over here, to catch on to our way of having pictures?”

Burnamy had come to his newspaper work since illustrated journalism was established, and he had never had any shock from it at home, but so sensitive is youth to environment that, after four days in Europe, the New York paper Stoller had laid down was already hideous to him. From the politic side of his nature, however, he temporized with Stoller’s preference. “I suppose it will be some time yet.”

“I wish,” said Stoller, with a savage disregard of expressed sequences and relevancies, “I could ha’ got some pictures to send home with that letter this afternoon: something to show how they do things here, and be a kind of object-lesson.” This term had come up in a recent campaign when some employers, by shutting down their works, were showing their employees what would happen if the employees voted their political opinions into effect, and Stoller had then mastered its meaning and was fond of using it. “I’d like ’em to see the woods around here, that the city owns, and the springs, and the donkey-carts, and the theatre, and everything, and give ’em some practical ideas.”

Burnamy made an uneasy movement.

“I’d ‘a’ liked to put ’em alongside of some of our improvements, and show how a town can be carried on when it’s managed on business principles.”

“Why didn’t you think of it?”

“Really, I don’t know,” said Burnamy, with a touch of impatience.

They had not met the evening before on the best of terms. Stoller had expected Burnamy twenty-four hours earlier, and had shown his displeasure with him for loitering a day at Leipsic which he might have spent at Carlsbad; and Burnamy had been unsatisfactory in accounting for the delay. But he had taken hold so promptly and so intelligently that by working far into the night, and through the whole forenoon, he had got Stoller’s crude mass of notes into shape, and had sent off in time for the first steamer the letter which was to appear over the proprietor’s name in his paper. It was a sort of rough but very full study of the Carlsbad city government, the methods of taxation, the municipal ownership of the springs and the lands, and the public control in everything. It condemned the aristocratic constitution of the municipality, but it charged heavily in favor of the purity, beneficence, and wisdom of the administration, under which there was no poverty and no idleness, and which was managed like any large business.

Stoller had sulkily recurred to his displeasure, once or twice, and Burnamy suffered it submissively until now. But now, at the change in Burnamy’s tone, he changed his manner a little.

“Seen your friends since supper?” he asked.

“Only a moment. They are rather tired, and they’ve gone to bed.”

That the fellow that edits that book you write for?”

“Yes; he owns it, too.”

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The notion of any sort of ownership moved Stoller's respect, and he asked more deferentially, "Makin' a good thing out of it?"

"A living, I suppose. Some of the high-class weeklies feel the competition of the ten-cent monthlies. But 'Every Other Week' is about the best thing we've got in the literary way, and I guess it's holding its own."

"Have to, to let the editor come to Carlsbad," Stoller said, with a return to the sourness of his earlier mood. "I don't know as I care much for his looks; I seen him when he came in with you. No snap to him." He clicked shut the penknife he had been paring his nails with, and started up with the abruptness which marked all his motions, mental and physical; as he walked heavily out of the room he said, without looking at Burnamy, "You want to be ready by half past ten at the latest."

Stoller's father and mother were poor emigrants who made their way to the West with the instinct for sordid prosperity native to their race and class; and they set up a small butcher shop in the little Indiana town where their son was born, and throve in it from the start. He could remember his mother helping his father make the sausage and head-cheese and pickle the pigs' feet, which they took turns in selling at as great a price as they could extort from the townspeople. She was a good and tender mother, and when her little Yawcup, as the boys called Jacob in mimicry after her, had grown to the school-going age, she taught him to fight the Americans, who stoned him when he came out of his gate, and mobbed his home-coming; and mocked and tormented him at play-time till they wore themselves into a kindlier mind toward him through the exhaustion of their invention. No one, so far as the gloomy, stocky, rather dense little boy could make out, ever interfered in his behalf; and he grew up in bitter shame for his German origin, which entailed upon him the hard fate of being Dutch among the Americans. He hated his native speech so much that he cried when he was forced to use it with his father and mother at home; he furiously denied it with the boys who proposed to parley with him in it on such terms as "Nix come arouce in de Dytchman's house." He disused it so thoroughly that after his father took him out of school, when he was old enough to help in the shop, he could not get back to it. He regarded his father's business as part of his national disgrace, and at the cost of leaving his home he broke away from it, and informally apprenticed himself to the village blacksmith and wagon-maker. When it came to his setting up for himself in the business he had chosen, he had no help from his father, who had gone on adding dollar to dollar till he was one of the richest men in the place.

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Jacob prospered too; his old playmates, who had used him so cruelly, had many of them come to like him; but as a Dutchman they never dreamt of asking him to their houses when they were young people, any more than when they were children. He was long deeply in love with an American girl whom he had never spoken to, and the dream of his life was to marry an American. He ended by marrying the daughter of Pferd the brewer, who had been at an American school in Indianapolis, and had come home as fragilely and nasally American as anybody. She made him a good, sickly, fretful wife; and bore him five children, of whom two survived, with no visible taint of their German origin.

In the mean time Jacob's father had died and left his money to his son, with the understanding that he was to provide for his mother, who would gladly have given every cent to him and been no burden to him, if she could. He took her home, and cared tenderly for her as long as she lived; and she meekly did her best to abolish herself in a household trying so hard to be American. She could not help her native accent, but she kept silence when her son's wife had company; and when her eldest granddaughter began very early to have American callers, she went out of the room; they would not have noticed her if she had staid.

Before this Jacob had come forward publicly in proportion to his financial importance in the community. He first commended himself to the Better Element by crushing out a strike in his Buggy Works, which were now the largest business interest of the place; and he rose on a wave of municipal reform to such a height of favor with the respectable classes that he was elected on a citizens' ticket to the Legislature. In the reaction which followed he was barely defeated for Congress, and was talked of as a dark horse who might be put up for the governorship some day; but those who knew him best predicted that he would not get far in politics, where his bull-headed business ways would bring him to ruin sooner or later; they said, "You can't swing a bolt like you can a strike."

When his mother died, he surprised his old neighbors by going to live in Chicago, though he kept his works in the place where he and they had grown up together. His wife died shortly after, and within four years he lost his three eldest children; his son, it was said, had begun to go wrong first. But the rumor of his increasing wealth drifted back from Chicago; he was heard of in different enterprises and speculations; at last it was said that he had bought a newspaper, and then his boyhood friends decided that Jake was going into politics again.

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In the wider horizons and opener atmosphere of the great city he came to understand better that to be an American in all respects was not the best. His mounting sense of importance began to be retroactive in the direction of his ancestral home; he wrote back to the little town near Wurzburg which his people had come from, and found that he had relatives still living there, some of whom had become people of substance; and about the time his health gave way from life-long gluttony, and he was ordered to Carlsbad, he had pretty much made up his mind to take his younger daughters and put them in school for a year or two in Wurzburg, for a little discipline if not education. He had now left them there, to learn the language, which he had forgotten with such heart-burning and shame, and music, for which they had some taste.

The twins loudly lamented their fate, and they parted from their father with open threats of running away; and in his heart he did not altogether blame them. He came away from Wurzburg raging at the disrespect for his money and his standing in business which had brought him a more galling humiliation there than anything he had suffered in his boyhood at Des Vaches. It intensified him in his dear-bought Americanism to the point of wishing to commit lese majesty in the teeth of some local dignitaries who had snubbed him, and who seemed to enjoy putting our eagle to shame in his person; there was something like the bird of his step-country in Stoller's pale eyes and huge beak.

XXVIII.

March sat with a company of other patients in the anteroom of the doctor, and when it came his turn to be prodded and kneaded, he was ashamed at being told he was not so bad a case as he had dreaded. The doctor wrote out a careful dietary for him, with a prescription of a certain number of glasses of water at a certain spring and a certain number of baths, and a rule for the walks he was to take before and after eating; then the doctor patted him on the shoulder and pushed him caressingly out of his inner office. It was too late to begin his treatment that day, but he went with his wife to buy a cup, with a strap for hanging it over his shoulder, and he put it on so as to be an invalid with the others at once; he came near forgetting the small napkin of Turkish towelling which they stuffed into their cups, but happily the shopman called him back in time to sell it to him.

At five the next morning he rose, and on his way to the street exchanged with the servants cleaning the hotel stairs the first of the gloomy 'Guten Morgens' which usher in the day at Carlsbad. They cannot be so finally hopeless as they sound; they are probably expressive only of the popular despair of getting through with them before night; but March heard the salutations sorrowfully groaned out on every hand as he joined the straggling current of invalids which swelled on the way past the silent shops and

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cafes in the Alte Wiese, till it filled the street, and poured its thousands upon the promenade before the classic colonnade of the Muhlbrunn. On the other bank of the Tepl the Sprudel flings its steaming waters by irregular impulses into the air under a pavilion of iron and glass; but the Muhlbrunn is the source of most resort. There is an instrumental concert somewhere in Carlsbad from early rising till bedtime; and now at the Muhlbrunn there was an orchestra already playing; and under the pillared porch, as well as before it, the multitude shuffled up and down, draining their cups by slow sips, and then taking each his place in the interminable line moving on to replenish them at the spring.

A picturesque majority of Polish Jews, whom some vice of their climate is said peculiarly to fit for the healing effects of Carlsbad, most took his eye in their long gabardines of rusty black and their derby hats of plush or velvet, with their corkscrew curls coming down before their ears. They were old and young, they were grizzled and red and black, but they seemed all well-to-do; and what impresses one first and last at Carlsbad is that its waters are mainly for the healing of the rich. After the Polish Jews, the Greek priests of Russian race were the most striking figures. There were types of Latin ecclesiastics, who were striking in their way too; and the uniforms of certain Austrian officers and soldiers brightened the picture. Here and there a southern face, Italian or Spanish or Levantine, looked passionately out of the mass of dull German visages; for at Carlsbad the Germans, more than any other gentile nation, are to the fore. Their misfits, their absence of style, imparted the prevalent effect; though now and then among the women a Hungarian, or Pole, or Parisian, or American, relieved the eye which seeks beauty and grace rather than the domestic virtues. There were certain faces, types of discomfort and disease, which appealed from the beginning to the end. A young Austrian, yellow as gold, and a livid South-American, were of a lasting fascination to March.

What most troubled him, in his scrutiny of the crowd, was the difficulty of assigning people to their respective nations, and he accused his years of having dulled his perceptions; but perhaps it was from their long disuse in his homogeneous American world. The Americans themselves fused with the European races who were often so hard to make out; his fellow-citizens would not be identified till their bad voices gave them away; he thought the women's voices the worst.

At the springs, a line of young girls with a steady mechanical action dipped the cups into the steaming source, and passed them impersonally up to their owners. With the patients at the Muhlbrunn it was often a half-hour before one's turn came, and at all a strict etiquette forbade any attempt to anticipate it. The water was merely warm and flat, and after the first repulsion one could forget it. March

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formed a childish habit of counting ten between the sips, and of finishing the cup with a gulp which ended it quickly; he varied his walks between cups by going sometimes to a bridge at the end of the colonnade where a group of Triestines were talking Venetian, and sometimes to the little Park beyond the Kurhaus, where some old women were sweeping up from the close sward the yellow leaves which the trees had untidily dropped overnight. He liked to sit there and look at the city beyond the Tepl, where it climbed the wooded heights in terraces till it lost its houses in the skirts and folds of the forest. Most mornings it rained, quietly, absent-mindedly, and this, with the chili in the air, deepened a pleasant illusion of Quebec offered by the upper town across the stream; but there were sunny mornings when the mountains shone softly through a lustrous mist, and the air was almost warm.

Once in his walk he found himself the companion of Burnamy's employer, whom he had sometimes noted in the line at the Muhlbrunn, waiting his turn, cup in hand, with a face of sullen impatience. Stoller explained that though you could have the water brought to you at your hotel, he chose to go to the spring for the sake of the air; it was something you had got to live through; before he had that young Burnamy to help him he did not know what to do with his time, but now, every minute he was not eating or sleeping he was working; his cure did not oblige him to walk much. He examined March, with a certain mixture of respect and contempt, upon the nature of the literary life, and how it differed from the life of a journalist. He asked if he thought Burnamy would amount to anything as a literary man; he so far assented to March's faith in him as to say, "He's smart." He told of leaving his daughters in school at Wurzburg; and upon the whole he moved March with a sense of his pathetic loneliness without moving his liking, as he passed lumberingly on, dangling his cup.

March gave his own cup to the little maid at his spring, and while she gave it to a second, who dipped it and handed it to a third for its return to him, he heard an unmistakable fellow-countryman saying good-, morning to them all in English. "Are you going to teach them United States?" he asked of a face with which he knew such an appeal would not fail.

"Well," the man admitted, "I try to teach them that much. They like it. You are an American? I am glad of it. I have 'most lost the use of my lungs, here. I'm a great talker, and I talk to my wife till she's about dead; then I'm out of it for the rest of the day; I can't speak German."

His manner was the free, friendly manner of the West. He must be that sort of untravelled American whom March had so seldom met, but he was afraid to ask him if this was his first time at Carlsbad, lest it should prove the third or fourth. "Are you taking the cure?" he asked instead.

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“Oh, no. My wife is. She’ll be along directly; I come down here and drink the waters to encourage her; doctor said to. That gets me in for the diet, too. I’ve e’t more cooked fruit since I been here than I ever did in my life before. Prunes? My Lord, I’m full o’ prunes! Well, it does me good to see an American, to know him. I couldn’t ‘a’ told you, it you hadn’t have spoken.”

“Well,” said March, “I shouldn’t have been so sure of you, either, by your looks.”

“Yes, we can’t always tell ourselves from these Dutch. But they know us, and they don’t want us, except just for one thing, and that’s our money. I tell you, the Americans are the chumps over here. Soon’s they got all our money, or think they have, they say, ’Here, you Americans, this is my country; you get off;’ and we got to get. Ever been over before?”

“A great while ago; so long that I can hardly believe it.”

“It’s my first time. My name’s Otterson: I’m from out in Iowa.”

March gave him his name, and added that he was from New York.

“Yes. I thought you was Eastern. But that wasn’t an Eastern man you was just with?”

“No; he’s from Chicago. He’s a Mr. Stoller.”

“Not the buggy man?”

“I believe he makes buggies.”

“Well, you do meet everybody here.” The Iowan was silent for a moment, as if, hushed by the weighty thought. “I wish my wife could have seen him. I just want her to see the man that made our buggy. I don’t know what’s keeping her, this morning,” he added, apologetically. “Look at that fellow, will you, tryin’ to get away from those women!” A young officer was doing his best to take leave of two ladies, who seemed to be mother and daughter; they detained him by their united arts, and clung to him with caressing words and looks. He was red in the face with his polite struggles when he broke from them at last. “How they do hang on to a man, over here!” the Iowa man continued. “And the Americans are as bad as any. Why, there’s one ratty little Englishman up at our place, and our girls just swarm after him; their mothers are worse. Well, it’s so, Jenny,” he said to the lady who had joined them and whom March turned round to see when he spoke to her. “If I wanted a foreigner I should go in for a man. And these officers! Put their mustaches up at night in curl-papers, they tell me. Introduce you to Mrs. Otterson, Mr. March. Well, had your first glass, yet, Jenny? I’m just going for my second tumbler.”

He took his wife back to the spring, and began to tell her about Stoller; she made no sign of caring for him; and March felt inculpated. She relented a little toward him as they drank together; when he said he must be going to breakfast with his wife, she asked where he breakfasted, and said, “Why, we go to the Posthof, too.” He answered that then they should be sure some time to meet there; he did not venture further; he reflected that Mrs. March had her reluctances too; she distrusted people who had amused or interested him before she met them.

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XXIX.

Burnamy had found the Posthof for them, as he had found most of the other agreeable things in Carlsbad, which he brought to their knowledge one by one, with such forethought that March said he hoped he should be cared for in his declining years as an editor rather than as a father; there was no tenderness like a young contributor's.

Many people from the hotels on the hill found at Pupp's just the time and space between their last cup of water and their first cup of coffee which are prescribed at Carlsbad; but the Marches were aware somehow from the beginning that Pupp's had not the hold upon the world at breakfast which it had at the mid-day dinner, or at supper on the evenings when the concert was there. Still it was amusing, and they were patient of Burnamy's delay till he could get a morning off from Stoller and go with them to the Posthof. He met Mrs. March in the reading-room, where March was to join them on his way from the springs with his bag of bread. The earlier usage of buying the delicate pink slices of Westphalia ham, which form the chief motive of a Carlsbad breakfast, at a certain shop in the town, and carrying them to the cafe with you, is no longer of such binding force as the custom of getting your bread at the Swiss bakery. You choose it yourself at the counter, which begins to be crowded by half past seven, and when you have collected the prescribed loaves into the basket of metallic filigree given you by one of the baker's maids, she puts it into a tissue-paper bag of a gay red color, and you join the other invalids streaming away from the bakery, their paper bags making a festive rustling as they go.

Two roads lead out of the town into the lovely meadow-lands, a good mile up the brawling Tepl, before they join on the right side of the torrent, where the Posthof lurks nestled under trees whose boughs let the sun and rain impartially through upon its army of little tables. By this time the slow omnibus plying between Carlsbad and some villages in the valley beyond has crossed from the left bank to the right, and keeps on past half a dozen other cafes, where patients whose prescriptions marshal them beyond the Posthof drop off by the dozens and scores.

The road on the left bank of the Tepl is wild and overhung at points with wooded steeps, when it leaves the town; but on the right it is bordered with shops and restaurants a great part of its length. In leafy nooks between these, uphill walks begin their climb of the mountains, from the foot of votive shrines set round with tablets commemorating in German, French, Russian, Hebrew, Magyar and Czech, the cure of high-well-borns of all those races and languages. Booths glittering with the lapidary's work in the cheaper gems, or full of the ingenious figures of the toy-makers, alternate with the shrines and the cafes on the way to the Posthof, and with their shoulders against the overhanging cliff, spread for the passing crowd a lure of Viennese jewelry in garnets, opals, amethysts, and the like, and of such Bohemian playthings as carrot-eating rabbits,

worsted-working cats, dancing-bears, and peacocks that strut about the feet of the passers and expand their iridescent tails in mimic pride.

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Burnamy got his charges with difficulty by the shrines in which they felt the far-reflected charm of the crucifixes of the white-hot Italian highways of their early travel, and by the toyshops where they had a mechanical, out-dated impulse to get something for the children, ending in a pang for the fact that they were children no longer. He waited politely while Mrs. March made up her mind that she would not buy any laces of the motherly old women who showed them under pent-roofs on way-side tables; and he waited patiently at the gate of the flower-gardens beyond the shops where March bought lavishly of sweetpease from the businesslike flower-woman, and feigned a grateful joy in her because she knew no English, and gave him a chance of speaking his German.

“You’ll find,” he said, as they crossed the road again, “that it’s well to trifle a good deal; it makes the time pass. I should still be lagging along in my thirties if it hadn’t been for fooling, and here I am well on in my fifties, and Mrs. March is younger than ever.”

They were at the gate of the garden and grounds of the cafe at last, and a turn of the path brought them to the prospect of its tables, under the trees, between the two long glazed galleries where the breakfasters take refuge at other tables when it rains; it rains nearly always, and the trunks of the trees are as green with damp as if painted; but that morning the sun was shining. At the verge of the open space a group of pretty serving-maids, each with her name on a silver band pinned upon her breast, met them and bade them a ‘Guten Morgen’ of almost cheerful note, but gave way, to an eager little smiling blonde, who came pushing down the path at sight of Burnamy, and claimed him for her own.

“Ah, Lili! We want an extra good table, this morning. These are some American Excellencies, and you must do your best for them.”

“Oh, yes,” the girl answered in English, after a radiant salutation of the Marches; “I get you one.”

“You are a little more formerly, to-day, and I didn’t had one already.”

She ran among the tables along the edge of the western edge of the gallery, and was far beyond hearing his protest that he was not earlier than usual when she beckoned him to the table she had found. She had crowded it in between two belonging to other girls, and by the time her breakfasters came up she was ready for their order, with the pouting pretence that the girls always tried to rob her of the best places. Burnamy explained proudly, when she went, that none of the other girls ever got an advantage of her; she had more custom than any three of them, and she had hired a man to help her carry her orders. The girls were all from the neighboring villages, he said, and they lived at home in the winter on their summer tips; their wages were nothing, or less, for sometimes they paid for their places.

“What a mass of information!” said March. “How did you come by it?”

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“Newspaper habit of interviewing the universe.”

“It’s not a bad habit, if one doesn’t carry it too far. How did Lili learn her English?”

“She takes lessons in the winter. She’s a perfect little electric motor. I don’t believe any Yankee girl could equal her.”

“She would expect to marry a millionaire if she did. What astonishes one over here is to see how contentedly people prosper along on their own level. And the women do twice the work of the men without expecting to equal them in any other way. At Pupp’s, if we go to one end of the out-door restaurant, it takes three men to wait on us: one to bring our coffee or tea, another to bring our bread and meat, and another to make out our bill, and I have to tip all three of them. If we go to the other end, one girl serves us, and I have to give only one fee; I make it less than the least I give any three of the men waiters.”

“You ought to be ashamed of that,” said his wife.

“I’m not. I’m simply proud of your sex, my dear.”

“Women do nearly everything, here,” said Burnamy, impartially. “They built that big new Kaiserbad building: mixed the mortar, carried the hods, and laid the stone.”

“That makes me prouder of the sex than ever. But come, Mr. Burnamy! Isn’t there anybody of polite interest that you know of in this crowd?”

“Well, I can’t say,” Burnamy hesitated.

The breakfasters had been thronging into the grove and the galleries; the tables were already filled, and men were bringing other tables on their heads, and making places for them, with entreaties for pardon everywhere; the proprietor was anxiously directing them; the pretty serving-girls were running to and from the kitchen in a building apart with shrill, sweet promises of haste. The morning sun fell broken through the leaves on the gay hats and dresses of the ladies, and dappled the figures of the men with harlequin patches of light and shade. A tall woman, with a sort of sharpened beauty, and an artificial permanency of tint in her cheeks and yellow hair, came trailing herself up the sun-shot path, and found, with hardy insistence upon the publicity, places for the surly-looking, down-faced young man behind her, and for her maid and her black poodle; the dog was like the black poodle out of Faust. Burnamy had heard her history; in fact, he had already roughed out a poem on it, which he called Europa, not after the old fable, but because it seemed to him that she expressed Europe, on one side of its civilization, and had an authorized place in its order, as she would not have had in ours. She was where she was by a toleration of certain social facts which corresponds in Europe to our reverence for the vested interests. In her history there, had been officers

and bankers; even foreign dignitaries; now there was this sullen young fellow . . . . Burnamy had wondered if it would do to offer his poem to March, but the presence of the original abashed him, and in his mind he had torn the poem up, with a heartache for its aptness.

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“I don’t believe,” he said, “that I recognize-any celebrities here.”

“I’m sorry,” said March. “Mrs. March would have been glad of some Hoheits, some Grafs and Grafins, or a few Excellenzes, or even some mere well-borns. But we must try to get along with the picturesqueness.”

“I’m satisfied with the picturesqueness,” said his wife. “Don’t worry about me, Mr. Burnamy.”

“Why can’t we have this sort of thing at home?”

“We’re getting something like it in the roof-gardens,” said March. “We couldn’t have it naturally because the climate is against it, with us. At this time in the morning over there, the sun would be burning the life out of the air, and the flies would be swarming on every table. At nine A. M. the mosquitoes would be eating us up in such a grove as this. So we have to use artifice, and lift our Posthof above the fly-line and the mosquito-line into the night air. I haven’t seen a fly since I came to Europe. I really miss them; it makes me homesick.”

“There are plenty in Italy,” his wife suggested.

“We must get down there before we go home.”

“But why did nobody ever tell us that there were no flies in Germany? Why did no traveller ever put it in his book? When your stewardess said so on the steamer, I remember that you regarded it as a bluff.” He turned to Burnamy, who was listening with the deference of a contributor: “Isn’t Lili rather long? I mean for such a very prompt person. Oh, no!”

But Burnamy got to his feet, and shouted “Fraulein!” to Lili; with her hireling at her heels she was flying down a distant aisle between the tables. She called back, with a face laughing over her shoulder, “In a minute!” and vanished in the crowd.

“Does that mean anything in particular? There’s really no hurry.”

“Oh, I think she’ll come now,” said Burnamy. March protested that he had only been amused at Lili’s delay; but his wife scolded him for his impatience; she begged Burnamy’s pardon, and repeated civilities passed between them. She asked if he did not think some of the young ladies were pretty beyond the European average; a very few had style; the mothers were mostly fat, and not stylish; it was well not to regard the fathers too closely; several old gentlemen were clearing their throats behind their newspapers, with noises that made her quail. There was no one so effective as the Austrian officers, who put themselves a good deal on show, bowing from their hips to favored groups; with the sun glinting from their eyeglasses, and their hands pressing their sword-hilts, they moved between the tables with the gait of tight-laced women.

“They all wear corsets,” Burnamy explained.

“How much you know already!” said Mrs. March. “I can see that Europe won’t be lost on you in anything. Oh, who’s that?” A lady whose costume expressed saris at every point glided up the middle aisle of the grove with a graceful tilt. Burnamy was silent. “She must be an American. Do you know who she is?”

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“Yes.” He hesitated, a little to name a woman whose tragedy had once filled the newspapers.

Mrs. March gazed after her with the fascination which such tragedies inspire. “What grace! Is she beautiful?”

“Very.” Burnamy had not obtruded his knowledge, but somehow Mrs. March did not like his knowing who she was, and how beautiful. She asked March to look, but he refused.

“Those things are too squalid,” he said, and she liked him for saying it; she hoped it would not be lost upon Burnamy.

One of the waitresses tripped on the steps near them and flung the burden off her tray on the stone floor before her; some of the dishes broke, and the breakfast was lost. Tears came into the girl’s eyes and rolled down her hot cheeks. “There! That is what I call tragedy,” said March. “She’ll have to pay for those things.”

“Oh, give her the money, dearest!”

“How can I?”

The girl had just got away with the ruin when Lili and her hireling behind her came bearing down upon them with their three substantial breakfasts on two well-laden trays. She forestalled Burnamy’s reproaches for her delay, laughing and bridling, while she set down the dishes of ham and tongue and egg, and the little pots of coffee and frothed milk.

“I could not so soon I wanted, because I was to serve an American princess.”

Mrs. March started with proud conjecture of one of those noble international marriages which fill our women with vainglory for such of their compatriots as make them.

“Oh, come now, Lili!” said Burnamy. “We have queens in America, but nothing so low as princesses. This was a queen, wasn’t it?”

She referred the case to her hireling, who confirmed her. “All people say it is princess,” she insisted.

“Well, if she’s a princess we must look her up after breakfast,” said Burnamy. “Where is she sitting?”

She pointed at a corner so far off on the other side that no one could be distinguished, and then was gone, with a smile flashed over her shoulder, and her hireling trying to keep up with her.

“We’re all very proud of Lili’s having a hired man,” said Burnamy. “We think it reflects credit on her customers.”

March had begun his breakfast with-the voracious appetite of an early-rising invalid. “What coffee!”

He drew a long sigh after the first draught.

“It’s said to be made of burnt figs,” said Burnamy, from the inexhaustible advantage of his few days’ priority in Carlsbad.

“Then let’s have burnt figs introduced at home as soon as possible. But why burnt figs? That seems one of those doubts which are much more difficult than faith.”

“It’s not only burnt figs,” said Burnamy, with amiable superiority, “if it is burnt figs, but it’s made after a formula invented by a consensus of physicians, and enforced by the municipality. Every cafe in Carlsbad makes the same kind of coffee and charges the same price.”

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“You are leaving us very little to find out for ourselves,” sighed March.

“Oh, I know a lot more things. Are you fond of fishing?”

“Not very.”

“You can get a permit to catch trout in the Tepl, but they send an official with you who keeps count, and when you have had your sport, the trout belong to the municipality just as they did before you caught them.”

“I don’t see why that isn’t a good notion: the last thing I should want to do would be to eat a fish that I had caught, and that I was personally acquainted with. Well, I’m never going away from Carlsbad. I don’t wonder people get their doctors to tell them to come back.”

Burnamy told them a number of facts he said Stoller had got together about the place, and had given him to put in shape. It was run in the interest of people who had got out of order, so that they would keep coming to get themselves in order again; you could hardly buy an unwholesome meal in the town; all the cooking was ‘kurgemass’. He won such favor with his facts that he could not stop in time: he said to March, “But if you ever should have a fancy for a fish of your personal acquaintance, there’s a restaurant up the Tepl, where they let you pick out your trout in the water; then they catch him and broil him for you, and you know what you are eating.”

“Is it a municipal restaurant?”

“Semi-municipal,” said Burnamy, laughing.

“We’ll take Mrs. March,” said her husband, and in her gravity Burnamy felt the limitations of a woman’s sense of humor, which always define themselves for men so unexpectedly.

He did what he could to get back into her good graces by telling her what he knew about distinctions and dignities that he now saw among the breakfasters. The crowd had now grown denser till the tables were set together in such labyrinths that any one who left the central aisle was lost in them. The serving-girls ran more swiftly to and fro, responding with a more nervous shrillness to the calls of “Fraulein! Fraulein!” that followed them. The proprietor, in his bare head, stood like one paralyzed by his prosperity, which sent up all round him the clash of knives and crockery, and the confusion of tongues. It was more than an hour before Burnamy caught Lili’s eye, and three times she promised to come and be paid before she came. Then she said, “It is so nice, when you stay a little,” and when he told her of the poor Fraulein who had broken the dishes in her fall near them, she almost wept with tenderness; she almost winked with wickedness when he asked if the American princess was still in her place.

“Do go and see who it can be!” Mrs. March entreated. “We’ll wait here,” and he obeyed. “I am not sure that I like him,” she said, as soon as he was out of hearing. “I don’t know but he’s coarse, after all. Do you approve of his knowing so many people’s ‘taches’ already?”

“Would it be any better later?” he asked in tern. “He seemed to find you interested.”

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“It’s very different with us; we’re not young,” she urged, only half seriously.

Her husband laughed. “I see you want me to defend him. Oh, hello!” he cried, and she saw Burnamy coming toward them with a young lady, who was nodding to them from as far as she could see them. “This is the easy kind of thing that makes you Blush for the author if you find it in a novel.”

XXX.

Mrs. March fairly took Miss Triscoe in her arms to kiss her. “Do you know I felt it must be you, all the time! When did you come? Where is your father? What hotel are you staying at?”

It appeared, while Miss Triscoe was shaking hands with March, that it was last night, and her father was finishing his breakfast, and it was one of the hotels on the hill. On the way back to her father it appeared that he wished to consult March’s doctor; not that there was anything the matter.

The general himself was not much softened by the reunion with his fellow-Americans; he confided to them that his coffee was poisonous; but he seemed, standing up with the Paris-New York Chronicle folded in his hand, to have drunk it all. Was March going off on his forenoon tramp? He believed that was part of the treatment, which was probably all humbug, though he thought of trying it, now he was there. He was told the walks were fine; he looked at Burnamy as if he had been praising them, and Burnamy said he had been wondering if March would not like to try a mountain path back to his hotel; he said, not so sincerely, that he thought Mrs. March would like it.

“I shall like your account of it,” she answered. “But I’ll walk back on a level, if you please.”

“Oh, yes,” Miss Triscoe pleaded, “come with us!”

She played a little comedy of meaning to go back with her father so gracefully that Mrs. March herself could scarcely have told just where the girl’s real purpose of going with Burnamy began to be evident, or just how she managed to make General Triscoe beg to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. March back to her hotel.

March went with the young people across the meadow behind the Posthof and up into the forest, which began at the base of the mountain. At first they tried to keep him in the range of their talk; but he fell behind more and more, and as the talk narrowed to themselves it was less and less possible to include him in it. When it began to concern their common appreciation of the Marches, they even tried to get out of his hearing.

“They’re so young in their thoughts,” said Burnamy, “and they seem as much interested in everything as they could have been thirty years ago. They belong to a time when the world was a good deal fresher than it is now; don’t you think? I mean, in the eighteen-sixties.”

“Oh, yes, I can see that.”

“I don’t know why we shouldn’t be born older in each generation than people were in the last. Perhaps we are,” he suggested.

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“I don’t know how you mean,” said the girl, keeping vigorously up with him; she let him take the jacket she threw off, but she would not have his hand at the little steeps where he wanted to give it.

“I don’t believe I can quite make it out myself. But fancy a man that began to act at twenty, quite unconsciously of course, from the past experience of the whole race—”

“He would be rather a dreadful person, wouldn’t he?”

“Rather monstrous, yes,” he owned, with a laugh. “But that’s where the psychological interest would come in.”

As if she did not feel the notion quite pleasant she turned from it. “I suppose you’ve been writing all sorts of things since you came here.”

“Well, it hasn’t been such a great while as it’s seemed, and I’ve had Mr. Stoller’s psychological interests to look after.”

“Oh, yes! Do you like him?”

“I don’t know. He’s a lump of honest selfishness. He isn’t bad. You know where to have him. He’s simple, too.”

“You mean, like Mr. March?”

“I didn’t mean that; but why not? They’re not of the same generation, but Stoller isn’t modern.”

“I’m very curious to see him,” said the girl.

“Do you want me to introduce him?”

“You can introduce him to papa.”

They stopped and looked across the curve of the mounting path, down on March, who had sunk on a way-side seat, and was mopping his forehead. He saw them, and called up: “Don’t wait for me. I’ll join you, gradually.”

“I don’t want to lose you,” Burnamy called back, but he kept on with Miss Triscoe. “I want to get the Hirschensprung in,” he explained. “It’s the cliff where a hunted deer leaped down several hundred feet to get away from an emperor who was after him.”

“Oh, yes. They have them everywhere.”

“Do they? Well, anyway, there’s a noble view up there.”

There was no view on the way up. The Germans' notion of a woodland is everywhere that of a dense forest such as their barbarous tribes primevally herded in. It means the close-set stems of trees, with their tops interwoven in a roof of boughs and leaves so densely that you may walk dry through it almost as long as a German shower lasts. When the sun shines there is a pleasant greenish light in the aisles, shot here and there with the gold that trickles through. There is nothing of the accident of an American wood in these forests, which have been watched and weeded by man ever since they burst the soil. They remain nurseries, but they have the charm which no human care can alienate. The smell of their bark and their leaves, and of the moist, flowerless earth about their roots, came to March where he sat rich with the memories of his country-bred youth, and drugged all consciousness of his long life in cities since, and made him a part of nature, with dulled interests and dimmed perspectives, so that for the moment he had the enjoyment of exemption from care. There was no wild life to penetrate his isolation; no birds, not a squirrel, not an insect; an old man who had bidden him good-morning, as he came up, kept fumbling at the path with his hoe, and was less intrusive than if he had not been there.

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March thought of the impassioned existence of these young people playing the inevitable comedy of hide and seek which the youth of the race has played from the beginning of time. The other invalids who haunted the forest, and passed up and down before him in fulfilment of their several prescriptions, had a thin unreality in spite of the physical bulk that prevailed among them, and they heightened the relief that the forest-spirit brought him from the strenuous contact of that young drama. He had been almost painfully aware that the persons in it had met, however little they knew it, with an eagerness intensified by their brief separation, and he fancied it was the girl who had unconsciously operated their reunion in response to the young man's longing, her will making itself electrically felt through space by that sort of wireless telegraphy which love has long employed, and science has just begun to imagine.

He would have been willing that they should get home alone, but he knew that his wife would require an account of them from him, and though he could have invented something of the kind, if it came to the worst, he was aware that it would not do for him to arrive without them. The thought goaded him from his seat, and he joined the upward procession of his fellow-sick, as it met another procession straggling downward; the ways branched in all directions, with people on them everywhere, bent upon building up in a month the health which they would spend the rest of the year in demolishing.

He came upon his charges unexpectedly at a turn of the path, and Miss Triscoe told him that he ought to have been with them for the view from the Hirschensprung. It was magnificent, she said, and she made Burnamy corroborate her praise of it, and agree with her that it was worth the climb a thousand times; he modestly accepted the credit she appeared willing to give him, of inventing the Hirschensprung.

XXXI.

Between his work for Stoller and what sometimes seemed the obstructiveness of General Triscoe, Burnamy was not very much with Miss Triscoe. He was not devout, but he went every Sunday to the pretty English church on the hill, where he contributed beyond his means to the support of the English clergy on the Continent, for the sake of looking at her back hair during the service, and losing himself in the graceful lines which defined, the girl's figure from the slant of her flowery hat to the point where the pewtop crossed her elastic waist. One happy morning the general did not come to church, and he had the fortune to walk home with her to her pension, where she lingered with him a moment, and almost made him believe she might be going to ask him to come in.

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The next evening, when he was sauntering down the row of glittering shops beside the Tepl, with Mrs. March, they overtook the general and his daughter at a place where the girl was admiring some stork-scissors in the window; she said she wished she were still little, so that she could get them. They walked home with the Triscoes, and then he hurried Mrs. March back to the shop. The man had already put up his shutters, and was just closing his door, but Burnamy pushed in, and asked to look at the stork-scissors they had seen in the window. The gas was out, and the shopman lighted a very dim candle, to show them.

“I knew you wanted to get them for her, after what she said, Mrs. March,” he laughed, nervously, “and you must let me lend you the money.”

“Why, of course!” she answered, joyfully humoring his feint. “Shall I put my card in for the man to send home to her with them?”

“Well—no. No. Not your card—exactly. Or, yes! Yes, you must, I suppose.”

They made the hushing street gay with their laughter; the next evening Miss Triscoe came upon the Marches and Burnamy where they sat after supper listening to the concert at Pupp’s, and thanked Mrs. March for the scissors. Then she and Burnamy had their laugh again, and Miss Triscoe joined them, to her father’s frowning mystification. He stared round for a table; they were all taken, and he could not refuse the interest Burnamy made with the waiters to bring them one and crowd it in. He had to ask him to sup with them, and Burnamy sat down and heard the concert through beside Miss Triscoe.

“What is so tremendously amusing in a pair of stork-scissors?” March demanded, when his wife and he were alone.

“Why, I was wanting to tell you, dearest,” she began, in a tone which he felt to be wheedling, and she told the story of the scissors.

“Look here, my dear! Didn’t you promise to let this love-affair alone?”

“That was on the ship. And besides, what would you have done, I should like to know? Would you have refused to let him buy them for her?” She added, carelessly, “He wants us to go to the Kurhaus ball with him.”

“Oh, does he!”

“Yes. He says he knows that she can get her father to let her go if we will chaperon them. And I promised that you would.”

“That I would?”

“It will do just as well if you go. And it will be very amusing; you can see something of Carlsbad society.”

“But I’m not going!” he declared. “It would interfere with my cure. The sitting up late would be bad enough, but I should get very hungry, and I should eat potato salad and sausages, and drink beer, and do all sorts of unwholesome things.”

“Nonsense! The refreshments will be ‘kurgemass’, of course.”

“You can go yourself,” he said.

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A ball is not the same thing for a woman after fifty as it is before twenty, but still it has claims upon the imagination, and the novel circumstance of a ball in the Kurhaus in Carlsbad enhanced these for Mrs. March. It was the annual reunion which is given by municipal authority in the large hall above the bathrooms; it is frequented with safety and pleasure by curious strangers, and now, upon reflection, it began to have for Mrs. March the charm of duty; she believed that she could finally have made March go in her place, but she felt that she ought really to go in his, and save him from the late hours and the late supper.

“Very well, then,” she said at last, “I will go.”

It appeared that any civil person might go to the reunion who chose to pay two florins and a half. There must have been some sort of restriction, and the ladies of Burnamy’s party went with a good deal of amused curiosity to see what the distinctions were; but they saw none unless it was the advantages which the military had. The long hall over the bathrooms shaped itself into a space for the dancing at one end, and all the rest of it was filled with tables, which at half past eight were crowded with people, eating, drinking, and smoking. The military enjoyed the monopoly of a table next the rail dividing the dancing from the dining space. There the tight-laced Herr Hauptmanns and Herr Lieutenants sat at their sausage and beer and cigars in the intervals of the waltzes, and strengthened themselves for a foray among the gracious Fraus and Frauleins on the benches lining three sides of the dancing-space. From the gallery above many civilian spectators looked down upon the gayety, and the dress-coats of a few citizens figured among the uniforms.

As the evening wore on some ladies of greater fashion found their way to the dancing-floor, and toward ten o’clock it became rather crowded. A party of American girls showed their Paris dresses in the transatlantic versions of the waltz. At first they danced with the young men who came with them; but after a while they yielded to the custom of the place, and danced with any of the officers who asked them.

“I know it’s the custom,” said Mrs. March to Miss Triscoe, who was at her side in one of the waltzes she had decided to sit out, so as not to be dancing all the time with Burnamy, “but I never can like it without an introduction.”

“No,” said the girl, with the air of putting temptation decidedly away, “I don’t believe papa would, either.”

A young officer came up, and drooped in mute supplication before her. She glanced at Mrs. March, who turned her face away; and she excused herself with the pretence that she had promised the dance, and by good fortune, Burnamy, who had been unscrupulously waltzing with a lady he did not know, came up at the moment. She rose and put her hand on his arm, and they both bowed to the officer before they whirled away. The officer looked after them with amiable admiration; then he turned to Mrs.

March with a light of banter in his friendly eyes, and was unmistakably asking her to dance. She liked his ironical daring, she liked it so much that she forgot her objection to partners without introductions; she forgot her fifty-odd years; she forgot that she was a mother of grown children and even a mother-in-law; she remembered only the step of her out-dated waltz.

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It seemed to be modern enough for the cheerful young officer, and they were suddenly revolving with the rest. . . A tide of long-forgotten girlhood welled up in her heart, and she laughed as she floated off on it past the astonished eyes of Miss Triscoe and Burnamy. She saw them falter, as if they had lost their step in their astonishment; then they seemed both to vanish, and her partner had released her, and was helping Miss Triscoe up from the floor; Burnamy was brushing the dust from his knees, and the citizen who had bowled them over was boisterously apologizing and incessantly bowing.

“Oh, are you hurt?” Mrs. March implored. “I’m sure you must be killed; and I did it! I don’t know, what I was thinking of!”

The girl laughed. “I’m not hurt a bit!”

They had one impulse to escape from the place, and from the sympathy and congratulation. In the dressing-room she declared again that she was all right. “How beautifully you waltz, Mrs. March!” she said, and she laughed again, and would not agree with her that she had been ridiculous. “But I’m glad those American girls didn’t see me. And I can’t be too thankful papa didn’t come!”

Mrs. March’s heart sank at the thought of what General Triscoe would think of her. “You must tell him I did it. I can never lift up my head!”

“No, I shall not. No one did it,” said the girl, magnanimously. She looked down sidelong at her draperies. “I was so afraid I had torn my dress! I certainly heard something rip.”

It was one of the skirts of Burnamy’s coat, which he had caught into his hand and held in place till he could escape to the men’s dressing-room, where he had it pinned up so skillfully that the damage was not suspected by the ladies. He had banged his knee abominably too; but they did not suspect that either, as he limped home on the air beside them, first to Miss Triscoe’s pension, and then to Mrs. March’s hotel.

It was quite eleven o’clock, which at Carlsbad is as late as three in the morning anywhere else, when she let herself into her room. She decided not to tell her husband, then; and even at breakfast, which they had at the Posthof, she had not got to her confession, though she had told him everything else about the ball, when the young officer with whom she had danced passed between the tables near her. He caught her eye and bowed with a smile of so much meaning that March asked, “Who’s your pretty young friend?”

“Oh, that!” she answered carelessly. “That was one of the officers at the ball,” and she laughed.

“You seem to be in the joke, too,” he said. “What is it?”

“Oh, something. I’ll tell you some time. Or perhaps you’ll find out.”

“I’m afraid you won’t let me wait.”

“No, I won’t,” and now she told him. She had expected teasing, ridicule, sarcasm, anything but the psychological interest mixed with a sort of retrospective tenderness which he showed. “I wish I could have seen you; I always thought you danced well.” He added: “It seems that you need a chaperon too.”

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The next morning, after March and General Triscoe had started off upon one of the hill climbs, the young people made her go with them for a walk up the Tepl, as far as the cafe of the Freundschaftsaal. In the grounds an artist in silhouettes was cutting out the likenesses of people who supposed themselves to have profiles, and they begged Mrs. March to sit for hers. It was so good that she insisted on Miss Triscoe's sitting in turn, and then Burnamy. Then he had the inspiration to propose that they should all three sit together, and it appeared that such a group was within the scope of the silhouettist's art; he posed them in his little bower, and while he was mounting the picture they took turns, at five kreutzers each, in listening to American tunes played by his Edison phonograph.

Mrs. March felt that all this was weakening her moral fibre; but she tried to draw the line at letting Burnamy keep the group. "Why not?" he pleaded.

"You oughtn't to ask," she returned. "You've no business to have Miss Triscoe's picture, if you must know."

"But you're there to chaperon us!" he persisted.

He began to laugh, and they all laughed when she said, "You need a chaperon who doesn't lose her head, in a silhouette." But it seemed useless to hold out after that, and she heard herself asking, "Shall we let him keep it, Miss Triscoe?"

Burnamy went off to his work with Stoller, carrying the silhouette with him, and she kept on with Miss Triscoe to her hotel. In turning from the gate after she parted with the girl she found herself confronted with Mrs. Adding and Rose. The ladies exclaimed at each other in an astonishment from which they had to recover before they could begin to talk, but from the first moment Mrs. March perceived that Mrs. Adding had something to say. The more freely to say it she asked Mrs. March into her hotel, which was in the same street with the pension of the Triscoes, and she let her boy go off about the exploration of Carlsbad; he promised to be back in an hour.

"Well, now what scrape are you in?" March asked when his wife came home, and began to put off her things, with signs of excitement which he could not fail to note. He was lying down after a long tramp, and he seemed very comfortable.

His question suggested something of anterior import, and she told him about the silhouettes, and the advantage the young people had taken of their power over her through their knowledge of her foolish behavior at the ball.

He said, lazily: "They seem to be working you for all you're worth. Is that it?"

"No; there is something worse. Something's happened which throws all that quite in the shade. Mrs. Adding is here."

“Mrs. Adding?” he repeated, with a dimness for names which she would not allow was growing on him.

“Don’t be stupid, dear! Mrs. Adding, who sat opposite Mr. Kenby on the Norumbia. The mother of the nice boy.”

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“Oh, yes! Well, that’s good!”

“No, it isn’t! Don’t say such a thing—till you know!” she cried, with a certain shrillness which warned him of an unfathomed seriousness in the fact. He sat up as if better to confront the mystery. “I have been at her hotel, and she has been telling me that she’s just come from Berlin, and that Mr. Kenby’s been there, and—Now I won’t have you making a joke of it, or breaking out about it, as if it were not a thing to be looked for; though of course with the others on our hands you’re not to blame for not thinking of it. But you can see yourself that she’s young and good-looking. She did speak beautifully of her son, and if it were not for him, I don’t believe she would hesitate—”

“For heaven’s sake, what are you driving at?” March broke in, and she answered him as vehemently:

“He’s asked her to marry him!”

“Kenby? Mrs. Adding?”

“Yes!”

“Well, now, Isabel, this won’t do! They ought to be ashamed of themselves. With that morbid, sensitive boy! It’s shocking—”

“Will you listen? Or do you want me to stop?” He arrested himself at her threat, and she resumed, after giving her contempt of his turbulence time to sink in, “She refused him, of course!”

“Oh, all right, then!”

“You take it in such a way that I’ve a great mind not to tell you anything more about it.”

“I know you have,” he said, stretching himself out again; “but you’ll do it, all the same. You’d have been awfully disappointed if I had been calm and collected.”

“She refused him,” she began again, “although she respects him, because she feels that she ought to devote herself to her son. Of course she’s very young, still; she was married when she was only nineteen to a man twice her age, and she’s not thirty-five yet. I don’t think she ever cared much for her husband; and she wants you to find out something about him.”

“I never heard of him. I—”

Mrs. March made a “tchck!” that would have recalled the most consequent of men from the most logical and coherent interpretation to the true intent of her words. He

perceived his mistake, and said, resolutely: “Well, I won’t do it. If she’s refused him, that’s the end of it; she needn’t know anything about him, and she has no right to.”

“Now I think differently,” said Mrs. March, with an inductive air. “Of course she has to know about him, now.” She stopped, and March turned his head and looked expectantly at her. “He said he would not consider her answer final, but would hope to see her again and—She’s afraid he may follow her—What are you looking at me so for?”

“Is he coming here?”

“Am I to blame if he is? He said he was going to write to her.”

March burst into a laugh. “Well, they haven’t been beating about the bush! When I think how Miss Triscoe has been pursuing Burnamy from the first moment she set eyes on him, with the settled belief that she was running from him, and he imagines that he has been boldly following her, without the least hope from her, I can’t help admiring the simple directness of these elders.”

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“And if Kenby wants to talk with you, what will you say?” she cut in eagerly.

“I’ll say I don’t like the subject. What am I in Carlsbad for? I came for the cure, and I’m spending time and money on it. I might as well go and take my three cups of Felsenquelle on a full stomach as to listen to Kenby.”

“I know it’s bad for you, and I wish we had never seen those people,” said Mrs. March. “I don’t believe he’ll want to talk with you; but if—”

“Is Mrs. Adding in this hotel? I’m not going to have them round in my bread-trough!”

“She isn’t. She’s at one of the hotels on the hill.”

“Very well, let her stay there, then. They can manage their love-affairs in their own way. The only one I care the least for is the boy.”

“Yes, it is forlorn for him. But he likes Mr. Kenby, and—No, it’s horrid, and you can’t make it anything else!”

“Well, I’m not trying to.” He turned his face away. “I must get my nap, now.” After she thought he must have fallen asleep, he said, “The first thing you know, those old Eltwins will be coming round and telling us that they’re going to get divorced.” Then he really slept.

XXXII.

The mid-day dinner at Pupp’s was the time to see the Carlsbad world, and the Marches had the habit of sitting long at table to watch it.

There was one family in whom they fancied a sort of literary quality, as if they had come out of some pleasant German story, but they never knew anything about them. The father by his dress must have been a Protestant clergyman; the mother had been a beauty and was still very handsome; the daughter was good-looking, and of a good-breeding which was both girlish and ladylike. They commended themselves by always taking the table d’hote dinner, as the Marches did, and eating through from the soup and the rank fresh-water fish to the sweet, upon the same principle: the husband ate all the compote and gave the others his dessert, which was not good for him. A young girl of a different fascination remained as much a mystery. She was small and of an extreme tenuity, which became more bewildering as she advanced through her meal, especially at supper, which she made of a long cucumber pickle, a Frankfort sausage of twice the pickle’s length, and a towering goblet of beer; in her lap she held a shivering little hound; she was in the decorous keeping of an elderly maid, and had every effect of being a gracious Fraulein. A curious contrast to her Teutonic voracity was the temperance of a young Latin swell, imaginably from Trieste, who sat long over his small

coffee and cigarette, and tranquilly mused upon the pages of an Italian newspaper. At another table there was a very noisy lady, short and fat, in flowing draperies of white, who commanded a sallow family of South-Americans, and loudly harangued them in South-American Spanish; she flared out in a picture which nowhere lacked strong effects; and in her background lurked a mysterious black face and figure, ironically subservient to the old man, the mild boy, and the pretty young girl in the middle distance of the family group.

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Amidst the shows of a hardened worldliness there were touching glimpses of domesticity and heart: a young bride fed her husband soup from her own plate with her spoon, unabashed by the publicity; a mother and her two pretty daughters hung about a handsome officer, who must have been newly betrothed to one of the girls; and, the whole family showed a helpless fondness for him, which he did not despise, though he held it in check; the girls dressed alike, and seemed to have for their whole change of costume a difference from time to time in the color of their sleeves. The Marches believed they had seen the growth of the romance which had eventuated so happily; and they saw other romances which did not in any wise eventuate. Carlsbad was evidently one of the great marriage marts of middle Europe, where mothers brought their daughters to be admired, and everywhere the flower of life was blooming for the hand of love. It blew by on all the promenades in dresses and hats as pretty as they could be bought or imagined; but it was chiefly at Pupp's that it flourished. For the most part it seemed to flourish in vain, and to be destined to be put by for another season to dream, bulblike, of the coming summer in the quiet of Moldavian and Transylvanian homes.

Perhaps it was oftener of fortunate effect than the spectators knew; but for their own pleasure they would not have had their pang for it less; and March objected to having a more explicit demand upon his sympathy. "We could have managed," he said, at the close of their dinner, as he looked compassionately round upon the parterre of young girls, "we could have managed with Burnamy and Miss Triscoe; but to have Mrs. Adding and Kenby launched upon us is too much. Of course I like Kenby, and if the widow alone were concerned I would give him my blessing: a wife more or a widow less is not going to disturb the equilibrium of the universe; but—" He stopped, and then he went on: "Men and women are well enough. They complement each other very agreeably, and they have very good times together. But why should they get in love?—It is sure to make them uncomfortable to themselves and annoying to others." He broke off, and stared about him. "My dear, this is really charming—almost as charming as the Posthof." The crowd spread from the open vestibule of the hotel and the shelter of its branching pavilion roofs until it was dimmed in the obscurity of the low grove across the way in an ultimate depth where the musicians were giving the afternoon concert. Between its two stationary divisions moved a current of promenaders, with some such effect as if the colors of a lovely garden should have liquefied and flowed in mingled rose and lilac, pink and yellow, and white and orange, and all the middle tints of modern millinery. Above on one side were the agreeable bulks of architecture, in the buff and gray of Carlsbad; and far beyond on the other were the upland slopes, with villas and long curves of country roads, belted in with miles of wall. "It would be about as offensive to have a love-interest that one personally knew about intruded here," he said, "as to have a two-spanner carriage driven through this crowd. It ought to be forbidden by the municipality."

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Mrs. March listened with her ears, but not with her eyes, and she answered: "See that handsome young Greek priest! Isn't he an archimandrite? The portier said he was."

"Then let him pass for an archimandrite. Now," he recurred to his grievance again, dreamily, "I have got to take Papa Triscoe in hand, and poison his mind against Burnamy, and I shall have to instil a few drops of venomous suspicion against Kenby into the heart of poor little Rose Adding. Oh;" he broke out, "they will spoil everything. They'll be with us morning, noon, and night," and he went on to work the joke of repining at his lot. The worst thing, he said, would be the lovers' pretence of being interested in something besides themselves, which they were no more capable of than so many lunatics. How could they care for pretty girls playing tennis on an upland level, in the waning afternoon? Or a cartful of peasant women stopping to cross themselves at a way-side shrine? Or a whistling boy with holes in his trousers pausing from some wayside raspberries to touch his hat and say good-morning? Or those preposterous maidens sprinkling linen on the grass from watering-pots while the skies were full of rain? Or that blacksmith shop where Peter the Great made a horseshoe. Or the monument of the young warrior-poet Koerner, with a gentle-looking girl and her mother reading and knitting on a bench before it? These simple pleasures sufficed them, but what could lovers really care for them? A peasant girl flung down on the grassy road-side, fast asleep, while her yoke-fellow, the gray old dog, lay in his harness near her with one drowsy eye half open for her and the other for the contents of their cart; a boy chasing a red squirrel in the old upper town beyond the Tepl, and enlisting the interest of all the neighbors; the negro door-keeper at the Golden Shield who ought to have spoken our Southern English, but who spoke bad German and was from Cairo; the sweet afternoon stillness in the woods; the good German mothers crocheting at the Posthof concerts. Burnamy as a young poet might hate felt the precious quality of these things, if his senses had not been holden by Miss Triscoe; and she might have felt it if only he had done so. But as it was it would be lost upon their preoccupation; with Mrs. Adding and Kenby it would be hopeless.

A day or two after Mrs: March had met Mrs. Adding, she went with her husband to revere a certain magnificent blackamoor whom he had discovered at the entrance of one of the aristocratic hotels on the Schlossberg, where he performed the function of a kind of caryatid, and looked, in the black of his skin and the white of his flowing costume, like a colossal figure carved in ebony and ivory. They took a roundabout way through a street entirely of villa-pensions; every house in Carlsbad but one is a pension if it is not n hotel; but these were of a sort of sentimental prettiness; with each a little garden before it, and a bower with

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an iron table in it for breakfasting and supping out-doors; and he said that they would be the very places for bridal couples who wished to spend the honey-moon in getting well of the wedding surfeit. She denounced him for saying such a thing as that, and for his inconsistency in complaining of lovers while he was willing to think of young married people. He contended that there was a great difference in the sort of demand that young married people made upon the interest of witnesses, and that they were at least on their way to sanity; and before they agreed, they had come to the hotel with the blackamoor at the door. While they lingered, sharing the splendid creature's hospitable pleasure in the spectacle he formed, they were aware of a carriage with liveried coachman and footman at the steps of the hotel; the liveries were very quiet and distinguished, and they learned that the equipage was waiting for the Prince of Coburg, or the Princess of Montenegro, or Prince Henry of Prussia; there were differing opinions among the twenty or thirty bystanders. Mrs. March said she did not care which it was; and she was patient of the denouement, which began to postpone itself with delicate delays. After repeated agitations at the door among portiers, proprietors, and waiters, whose fluttered spirits imparted their thrill to the spectators, while the coachman and footman remained sculpturesquely impassive in their places, the carriage moved aside and let an energetic American lady and her family drive up to the steps. The hotel people paid her a tempered devotion, but she marred the effect by rushing out and sitting on a balcony to wait for the delaying royalties. There began to be more promises of their early appearance; a footman got down and placed himself at the carriage door; the coachman stiffened himself on his box; then he relaxed; the footman drooped, and even wandered aside. There came a moment when at some signal the carriage drove quite away from the portal and waited near the gate of the stableyard; it drove back, and the spectators redoubled their attention. Nothing happened, and some of them dropped off. At last an indescribable significance expressed itself in the official group at the door; a man in a high hat and dresscoat hurried out; a footman hurried to meet him; they spoke inaudibly together. The footman mounted to his place; the coachman gathered up his reins and drove rapidly out of the hotel-yard, down the street, round the corner, out of sight. The man in the tall hat and dress-coat went in; the official group at the threshold dissolved; the statue in ivory and ebony resumed its place; evidently the Hoheit of Coburg, or Montenegro, or Prussia, was not going to take the air.

"My dear, this is humiliating."

"Not at all! I wouldn't have missed it for anything. Think how near we came to seeing them!"

"I shouldn't feel so shabby if we had seen them. But to hang round here in this plebeian abeyance, and then to be defeated and defrauded at last! I wonder how long this sort of thing is going on?"

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“What thing?”

“This base subjection of the imagination to the Tom Foolery of the Ages.”

“I don’t know what you mean. I’m sure it’s very natural to want to see a Prince.”

“Only too natural. It’s so deeply founded in nature that after denying royalty by word and deed for a hundred years, we Americans are hungrier for it than anybody else. Perhaps we may come back to it!”

“Nonsense!”

They looked up at the Austrian flag on the tower of the hotel, languidly curling and uncurling in the bland evening air, as it had over a thousand years of stupid and selfish monarchy, while all the generous republics of the Middle Ages had perished, and the commonwealths of later times had passed like fever dreams. That dull, inglorious empire had antedated or outlived Venice and Genoa, Florence and Siena, the England of Cromwell, the Holland of the Stadtholders, and the France of many revolutions, and all the fleeting democracies which sprang from these.

March began to ask himself how his curiosity differed from that of the Europeans about him; then he became aware that these had detached themselves, and left him exposed to the presence of a fellow countryman. It was Otterson, with Mrs. Otterson; he turned upon March with hilarious recognition. “Hello! Most of the Americans in Carlsbad seem to be hanging round here for a sight of these kings. Well, we don’t have a great many of ’em, and it’s natural we shouldn’t want to miss any. But now, you Eastern fellows, you go to Europe every summer, and yet you don’t seem to get enough of ’em. Think it’s human nature, or did it get so ground into us in the old times that we can’t get it out, no difference what we say?”

“That’s very much what I’ve been asking myself,” said March. “Perhaps it’s any kind of show. We’d wait nearly as long for the President to come out, wouldn’t we?”

“I reckon we would. But we wouldn’t for his nephew, or his second cousin.”

“Well, they wouldn’t be in the way of the succession.”

“I guess you’re right.” The Iowan seemed better satisfied with March’s philosophy than March felt himself, and he could not forbear adding:

“But I don’t, deny that we should wait for the President because he’s a kind of king too. I don’t know that we shall ever get over wanting to see kings of some kind. Or at least my wife won’t. May I present you to Mrs. March?”

“Happy to meet you, Mrs. March,” said the Iowan. “Introduce you to Mrs. Otterson. I’m the fool in my family, and I know just how you feel about a chance like this. I don’t mean that you’re—”

They all laughed at the hopeless case, and Mrs. March said, with one of her unexpected likings: “I understand, Mr. Otterson. And I would rather be our kind of fool than the kind that pretends not to care for the sight of a king.”

“Like you and me, Mrs. Otterson,” said March.

“Indeed, indeed,” said the lady, “I’d like to see a king too, if it didn’t take all night. Good-evening,” she said, turning her husband about with her, as if she suspected a purpose of patronage in Mrs. March, and was not going to have it.

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Otterson looked over his shoulder to explain, despairingly: "The trouble with me is that when I do get a chance to talk English, there's such a flow of language it carries me away, and I don't know just where I'm landing."

XXXIII.

There were several kings and their kindred at Carlsbad that summer. One day the Duchess of Orleans drove over from Marienbad, attended by the Duke on his bicycle. After luncheon, they reappeared for a moment before mounting to her carriage with their Secretaries: two young French gentlemen whose dress and bearing better satisfied Mrs. March's exacting passion for an aristocratic air in their order. The Duke was fat and fair, as a Bourbon should be, and the Duchess fatter, though not so fair, as became a Hapsburg, but they were both more plebeian-looking than their retainers, who were slender as well as young, and as perfectly appointed as English tailors could imagine them.

"It wouldn't do for the very highest sort of Highhotes," March declared, "to look their own consequence personally; they have to leave that, like everything else, to their inferiors."

By a happy heterophemy of Mrs. March's the German Hoheit had now become Highhote, which was so much more descriptive that they had permanently adopted it, and found comfort to their republican pride in the mockery which it poured upon the feudal structure of society. They applied it with a certain compunction, however, to the King of Servia, who came a few days after the Duke and Duchess: he was such a young King, and of such a little country. They watched for him from the windows of the reading-room, while the crowd outside stood six deep on the three sides of the square before the hotel, and the two plain public carriages which brought the King and his suite drew tamely up at the portal, where the proprietor and some civic dignitaries received him. His moderated approach, so little like that of royalty on the stage, to which Americans are used, allowed Mrs. March to make sure of the pale, slight, insignificant, amiable-looking youth in spectacles as the sovereign she was ambuscading. Then no appeal to her principles could keep her from peeping through the reading-room door into the rotunda, where the King graciously but speedily dismissed the civic gentlemen and the proprietor, and vanished into the elevator. She was destined to see him so often afterwards that she scarcely took the trouble to time her dining and supping by that of the simple potentate, who had his meals in one of the public rooms, with three gentlemen of his suite, in sack-coats like himself, after the informal manner of the place.

Still another potentate, who happened that summer to be sojourning abroad, in the interval of a successful rebellion, was at the opera one night with some of his faithful followers. Burnamy had offered Mrs. March, who supposed that he merely wanted her and her husband with him, places in a box; but after she eagerly accepted, it seemed

that he wished her to advise him whether it would do to ask Miss Triscoe and her father to join them.

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“Why not?” she returned, with an arching of the eyebrows.

“Why,” he said, “perhaps I had better make a clean breast of it.”

“Perhaps you had,” she said, and they both laughed, though he laughed with a knot between his eyes.

“The fact is, you know, this isn’t my treat, exactly. It’s Mr. Stoller’s.” At the surprise in her face he hurried on. “He’s got back his first letter in the paper, and he’s so much pleased with the way he reads in print, that he wants to celebrate.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. March, non-committally.

Burnamy laughed again. “But he’s bashful, and he isn’t sure that you would all take it in the right way. He wants you as friends of mine; and he hasn’t quite the courage to ask you himself.”

This seemed to Mrs. March so far from bad that she said: “That’s very nice of him. Then he’s satisfied with—with your help? I’m glad of that.”

“Thank you. He’s met the Triscoes, and he thought it would be pleasant to you if they went, too.”

“Oh, certainly.”

“He thought,” Burnamy went on, with the air of feeling his way, “that we might all go to the opera, and then—then go for a little supper afterwards at Schwarzkopf’s.”

He named the only place in Carlsbad where you can sup so late as ten o’clock; as the opera begins at six, and is over at half past eight, none but the wildest roisterers frequent the place.

“Oh!” said Mrs. March. “I don’t know how a late supper would agree with my husband’s cure. I should have to ask him.”

“We could make it very hygienic,” Burnamy explained.

In repeating his invitation she blamed Burnamy’s uncandor so much that March took his part, as perhaps she intended, and said, “Oh, nonsense,” and that he should like to go in for the whole thing; and General Triscoe accepted as promptly for himself and his daughter. That made six people, Burnamy counted up, and he feigned a decent regret that there was not room for Mrs. Adding and her son; he would have liked to ask them.

Mrs. March did not enjoy it so much as coming with her husband alone when they took two florin seats in the orchestra for the comedy. The comedy always began half an hour

earlier than the opera, and they had a five-o'clock supper at the Theatre-Cafe before they went, and they got to sleep by nine o'clock; now they would be up till half past ten at least, and that orgy at Schwarzkopf's might not be at all good for him. But still she liked being there; and Miss Triscoe made her take the best seat; Burnamy and Stoller made the older men take the other seats beside the ladies, while they sat behind, or stood up, when they, wished to see, as people do in the back of a box. Stoller was not much at ease in evening dress, but he bore himself with a dignity which was not perhaps so gloomy as it looked; Mrs. March thought him handsome in his way, and required Miss Triscoe to admire him. As for Burnamy's

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beauty it was not necessary to insist upon that; he had the distinction of slender youth; and she liked to think that no Highhote there was of a more patrician presence than this yet unprinted contributor to 'Every Other Week'. He and Stoller seemed on perfect terms; or else in his joy he was able to hide the uneasiness which she had fancied in him from the first time she saw them together, and which had never been quite absent from his manner in Stoller's presence. Her husband always denied that it existed, or if it did that it was anything but Burnamy's effort to get on common ground with an inferior whom fortune had put over him.

The young fellow talked with Stoller, and tried to bring him into the range of the general conversation. He leaned over the ladies, from time to time, and pointed out the notables whom he saw in the house; she was glad, for his sake, that he did not lean less over her than over Miss Triscoe. He explained certain military figures in the boxes opposite, and certain ladies of rank who did not look their rank; Miss Triscoe, to Mrs. March's thinking, looked their united ranks, and more; her dress was very simple, but of a touch which saved it from being insipidly girlish; her beauty was dazzling.

"Do you see that old fellow in the corner chair just behind the orchestra?" asked Burnamy. "He's ninety-six years old, and he comes to the theatre every night, and falls asleep as soon as the curtain rises, and sleeps through till the end of the act."

"How dear!" said the girl, leaning forward to fix the nonagenarian with her glasses, while many other glasses converged upon her. "Oh, wouldn't you like to know him, Mr. March?"

"I should consider it a liberal education. They have brought these things to a perfect system in Europe. There is nothing to make life pass smoothly like inflexible constancy to an entirely simple custom. My dear," he added to his wife, "I wish we'd seen this sage before. He'd have helped us through a good many hours of unintelligible comedy. I'm always coming as Burnamy's guest, after this."

The young fellow swelled with pleasure in his triumph, and casting an eye about the theatre to cap it, he caught sight of that other potentate. He whispered joyfully, "Ah! We've got two kings here to-night," and he indicated in a box of their tier just across from that where the King of Servia sat, the well-known face of the King of New York.

"He isn't bad-looking," said March, handing his glass to General Triscoe. "I've not seen many kings in exile; a matter of a few Carlist princes and ex-sovereign dukes, and the good Henry V. of France, once, when I was staying a month in Venice; but I don't think they any of them looked the part better. I suppose he has his dream of recurring power like the rest."

“Dream!” said General Triscoe with the glass at his eyes. “He’s dead sure of it.”

“Oh, you don’t really mean that!”

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“I don’t know why I should have changed my mind.”

“Then it’s as if we were in the presence of Charles II. just before he was called back to England, or Napoleon in the last moments of Elba. It’s better than that. The thing is almost unique; it’s a new situation in history. Here’s a sovereign who has no recognized function, no legal status, no objective existence. He has no sort of public being, except in the affection of his subjects. It took an upheaval little short of an earthquake to unseat him. His rule, as we understand it, was bad for all classes; the poor suffered more than the rich; the people have now had three years of self-government; and yet this wonderful man has such a hold upon the masses that he is going home to win the cause of oppression at the head of the oppressed. When he’s in power again, he will be as subjective as ever, with the power of civic life and death, and an idolatrous following perfectly ruthless in the execution of his will.”

“We’ve only begun,” said the general. “This kind of king is municipal, now; but he’s going to be national. And then, good-by, Republic!”

“The only thing like it,” March resumed, too incredulous of the evil future to deny himself the aesthetic pleasure of the parallel, “is the rise of the Medici in Florence, but even the Medici were not mere manipulators of pulls; they had some sort of public office, with some sort of legislated tenure of it. The King of New York is sovereign by force of will alone, and he will reign in the voluntary submission of the majority. Is our national dictator to be of the same nature and quality?”

“It would be the scientific evolution, wouldn’t it?”

The ladies listened with the perfunctory attention which women pay to any sort of inquiry which is not personal. Stoller had scarcely spoken yet; he now startled them all by demanding, with a sort of vindictive force, “Why shouldn’t he have the power, if they’re willing to let him?”

“Yes,” said General Triscoe, with a tilt of his head towards March. “That’s what we must ask ourselves more and more.”

March leaned back in his chair, and looked up over his shoulder at Stoller. “Well, I don’t know. Do you think it’s quite right for a man to use an unjust power, even if others are willing that he should?”

Stoller stopped with an air of bewilderment as if surprised on the point of saying that he thought just this. He asked instead, “What’s wrong about it?”

“Well, that’s one of those things that have to be felt, I suppose. But if a man came to you, and offered to be your slave for a certain consideration—say a comfortable house,

and a steady job, that wasn't too hard—should you feel it morally right to accept the offer? I don't say think it right, for there might be a kind of logic for it."

Stoller seemed about to answer; he hesitated; and before he had made any response, the curtain rose.

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XXXIV.

There are few prettier things than Carlsbad by night from one of the many bridges which span the Tepl in its course through the town. If it is a starry night, the torrent glides swiftly away with an inverted firmament in its bosom, to which the lamps along its shores and in the houses on either side contribute a planetary splendor of their own. By nine o'clock everything is hushed; not a wheel is heard at that dead hour; the few feet shuffling stealthily through the Alte Wiese whisper a caution of silence to those issuing with a less guarded tread from the opera; the little bowers that overhang the stream are as dark and mute as the restaurants across the way which serve meals in them by day; the whole place is as forsaken as other cities at midnight. People get quickly home to bed, or if they have a mind to snatch a belated joy, they slip into the Theater-Cafe, where the sleepy Frauleins serve them, in an exemplary drowse, with plates of cold ham and bottles of the gently gaseous waters of Giesshubl. Few are of the bold badness which delights in a supper at Schwarzkopf's, and even these are glad of the drawn curtains which hide their orgy from the chance passer.

The invalids of Burnamy's party kept together, strengthening themselves in a mutual purpose not to be tempted to eat anything which was not strictly 'kurgemass'. Mrs. March played upon the interest which each of them felt in his own case so artfully that she kept them talking of their cure, and left Burnamy and Miss Triscoe to a moment on the bridge, by which they profited, while the others strolled on, to lean against the parapet and watch the lights in the skies and the water, and be alone together. The stream shone above and below, and found its way out of and into the darkness under the successive bridges; the town climbed into the night with lamp-lit windows here and there, till the woods of the hill-sides darkened down to meet it, and fold it in an embrace from which some white edifice showed palely in the farthest gloom.

He tried to make her think they could see that great iron crucifix which watches over it day and night from its piny cliff. He had a fancy for a poem, very impressionistic, which should convey the notion of the crucifix's vigil. He submitted it to her; and they remained talking till the others had got out of sight and hearing; and she was letting him keep the hand on her arm which he had put there to hold her from falling over the parapet, when they were both startled by approaching steps, and a voice calling, "Look here! Who's running this supper party, anyway?"

His wife had detached March from her group for the mission, as soon as she felt that the young people were abusing her kindness. They answered him with hysterical laughter, and Burnamy said, "Why, it's Mr. Stoller's treat, you know."

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At the restaurant, where the proprietor obsequiously met the party on the threshold and bowed them into a pretty inner room, with a table set for their supper, Stoller had gained courage to play the host openly. He appointed General Triscoe to the chief seat; he would have put his daughter next to him, if the girl had not insisted upon Mrs. March's having the place, and going herself to sit next to March, whom she said she had not been able to speak a word to the whole evening. But she did not talk a great deal to him; he smiled to find how soon he dropped out of the conversation, and Burnamy, from his greater remoteness across the table, dropped into it. He really preferred the study of Stoller, whose instinct of a greater worldly quality in the Triscoes interested him; he could see him listening now to what General Triscoe was saying to Mrs. March, and now to what Burnamy was saying to Miss Triscoe; his strong, selfish face, as he turned it on the young people, expressed a mingled grudge and greed that was very curious.

Stoller's courage, which had come and gone at moments throughout, rose at the end, and while they lingered at the table well on to the hour of ten, he said, in the sort of helpless offence he had with Burnamy, "What's the reason we can't all go out tomorrow to that old castle you was talking about?"

"To Engelhaus? I don't know any reason, as far as I'm concerned," answered Burnamy; but he refused the initiative offered him, and Stoller was obliged to ask March:

"You heard about it?"

"Yes." General Triscoe was listening, and March added for him, "It was the hold of an old robber baron; Gustavus Adolphus knocked it down, and it's very picturesque, I believe."

"It sounds promising," said the general. "Where is it?"

"Isn't to-morrow our mineral bath?" Mrs. March interposed between her husband and temptation.

"No; the day after. Why, it's about ten or twelve miles out on the old postroad that Napoleon took for Prague."

"Napoleon knew a good road when he saw it," said the general, and he alone of the company lighted a cigar. He was decidedly in favor of the excursion, and he arranged for it with Stoller, whom he had the effect of using for his pleasure as if he were doing him a favor. They were six, and two carriages would take them: a two-spanner for four, and a one-spanner for two; they could start directly after dinners and get home in time for supper.

Stoller asserted himself to say: "That's all right, then. I want you to be my guests, and I'll see about the carriages." He turned to Burnamy: "Will you order them?"

“Oh,” said the young fellow, with a sort of dryness, “the portier will get them.”

“I don’t understand why General Triscoe was so willing to accept. Surely, he can’t like that man!” said Mrs. March to her husband in their own room.

“Oh, I fancy that wouldn’t be essential. The general seems to me, capable of letting even an enemy serve his turn. Why didn’t you speak, if you didn’t want to go?”

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“Why didn’t you?”

“I wanted to go.”

“And I knew it wouldn’t do to let Miss Triscoe go alone; I could see that she wished to go.”

“Do you think Burnamy did?”

“He seemed rather indifferent. And yet he must have realized that he would be with Miss Triscoe the whole afternoon.”

XXXV.

If Burnamy and Miss Triscoe took the lead in the one-spanner, and the others followed in the two-spanner, it was not from want of politeness on the part of the young people in offering to give up their places to each of their elders in turn. It would have been grotesque for either March or Stoller to drive with the girl; for her father it was apparently no question, after a glance at the more rigid uprightness of the seat in the one-spanner; and he accepted the place beside Mrs. March on the back seat of the two-spanner without demur. He asked her leave to smoke, and then he scarcely spoke to her. But he talked to the two men in front of him almost incessantly, haranguing them upon the inferiority of our conditions and the futility of our hopes as a people, with the effect of bewildering the cruder arrogance of Stoller, who could have got on with Triscoe’s contempt for the worthlessness of our working-classes, but did not know what to do with his scorn of the vulgarity and venality of their employers. He accused some of Stoller’s most honored and envied capitalists of being the source of our worst corruptions, and guiltier than the voting-cattle whom they bought and sold.

“I think we can get rid of the whole trouble if we go at it the right way,” Stoller said, diverging for the sake of the point he wished to bring in. “I believe in having the government run on business principles. They’ve got it here in Carlsbad, already, just the right sort of thing, and it works. I been lookin’ into it, and I got this young man, yonder”—he twisted his hand in the direction of the one-spanner! “to help me put it in shape. I believe it’s going to make our folks think, the best ones among them. Here!” He drew a newspaper out of his pocket, folded to show two columns in their full length, and handed it to Triscoe, who took it with no great eagerness, and began to run his eye over it. “You tell me what you think of that. I’ve put it out for a kind of a feeler. I got some money in that paper, and I just thought I’d let our people see how a city can be managed on business principles.”

He kept his eye eagerly upon Triscoe, as if to follow his thought while he read, and keep him up to the work, and he ignored the Marches so entirely that they began in self-defence to talk with each other.

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Their carriage had climbed from Carlsbad in long irregular curves to the breezy upland where the great highroad to Prague ran through fields of harvest. They had come by heights and slopes of forest, where the serried stems of the tall firs showed brown and whitish-blue and grew straight as stalks of grain; and now on either side the farms opened under a sky of unwonted cloudlessness. Narrow strips of wheat and rye, which the men were cutting with sickles, and the women in red bodices were binding, alternated with ribands of yellowing oats and grass, and breadths of beets and turnips, with now and then lengths of ploughed land. In the meadows the peasants were piling their carts with heavy rowen, the girls lifting the hay on the forks, and the men giving themselves the lighter labor of ordering the load. From the upturned earth, where there ought to have been troops of strutting crows, a few sombre ravens rose. But they could not rob the scene of its gayety; it smiled in the sunshine with colors which vividly followed the slope of the land till they were dimmed in the forests on the far-off mountains. Nearer and farther, the cottages and villages shone in the valleys, or glimmered through the veils of the distant haze. Over all breathed the keen pure air of the hills, with a sentiment of changeless eld, which charmed March, back to his boyhood, where he lost the sense of his wife's presence, and answered her vaguely. She talked contentedly on in the monologue to which the wives of absent-minded men learn to resign themselves. They were both roused from their vagary by the voice of General Triscoe. He was handing back the folded newspaper to Stoller, and saying, with a queer look at him over his glasses, "I should like to see what your contemporaries have to say to all that."

"Well, sir," Stoller returned, "maybe I'll have the chance to show you. They got my instructions over there to send everything to me."

Burnamy and Miss Triscoe gave little heed to the landscape as landscape. They agreed that the human interest was the great thing on a landscape, after all; but they ignored the peasants in the fields and meadows, who were no more to them than the driver on the box, or the people in the two-spanner behind. They were talking of the hero and heroine of a novel they had both read, and he was saying, "I suppose you think he was justly punished."

"Punished?" she repeated. "Why, they got married, after all!"

"Yes, but you could see that they were not going to be happy."

"Then it seems to me that she was punished; too."

"Well, yes; you might say that. The author couldn't help that."

Miss Triscoe was silent a moment before she said:

"I always thought the author was rather hard on the hero. The girl was very exacting."

“Why,” said Burnamy, “I supposed that women hated anything like deception in men too much to tolerate it at all. Of course, in this case, he didn’t deceive her; he let her deceive herself; but wasn’t that worse?”

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“Yes, that was worse. She could have forgiven him for deceiving her.”

“Oh!”

“He might have had to do that. She wouldn’t have minded his fibbing outright, so much, for then it wouldn’t have seemed to come from his nature. But if he just let her believe what wasn’t true, and didn’t say a word to prevent her, of course it was worse. It showed something weak, something cowardly in him.”

Burnamy gave a little cynical laugh. “I suppose it did. But don’t you think it’s rather rough, expecting us to have all the kinds of courage?”

“Yes, it is,” she assented. “That is why I say she was too exacting. But a man oughn’t to defend him.”

Burnamy’s laugh had more pleasure in it, now. “Another woman might?”

“No. She might excuse him.”

He turned to look back at the two-spanner; it was rather far behind, and he spoke to their driver bidding him go slowly till it caught up with them. By the time it did so, they were so close to it that they could distinguish the lines of its wandering and broken walls. Ever since they had climbed from the wooded depths of the hills above Carlsbad to the open plateau, it had shown itself in greater and greater detail. The detached mound of rock on which it stood rose like an island in the midst of the plain, and commanded the highways in every direction.

“I believe,” Burnamy broke out, with a bitterness apparently relevant to the ruin alone, “that if you hadn’t required any quarterings of nobility from him, Stoller would have made a good sort of robber baron. He’s a robber baron by nature, now, and he wouldn’t have any scruple in levying tribute on us here in our one-spanner, if his castle was in good repair and his crossbowmen were not on a strike. But they would be on a strike, probably, and then he would lock them out, and employ none but non-union crossbowmen.”

If Miss Triscoe understood that he arraigned the morality as well as the civility of his employer, she did not take him more seriously than he meant, apparently, for she smiled as she said, “I don’t see how you can have anything to do with him, if you feel so about him.”

“Oh,” Burnamy replied in kind, “he buys my poverty and not my will. And perhaps if I thought better of myself, I should respect him more.”

“Have you been doing something very wicked?”

“What should you have to say to me, if I had?” he bantered.

“Oh, I should have nothing at all to say to you,” she mocked back.

They turned a corner of the highway, and drove rattling through a village street up a long slope to the rounded hill which it crowned. A church at its base looked out upon an irregular square.

A gaunt figure of a man, with a staring mask, which seemed to hide a darkling mind within, came out of the church, and locked it behind him. He proved to be the sacristan, and the keeper of all the village’s claims upon the visitors’ interest; he mastered, after a moment, their wishes in respect to the castle, and showed the path that led to it; at the top, he said, they would find a custodian of the ruins who would admit them.

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XXXVI.

The, path to the castle slanted upward across the shoulder of the hill, to a certain point, and there some rude stone steps mounted more directly. Wilding lilac-bushes, as if from some forgotten garden, bordered the ascent; the chickory opened its blue flower; the clean bitter odor of vermouth rose from the trodden turf; but Nature spreads no such lavish feast in wood or field in the Old World as she spoils us with in the New; a few kinds, repeated again and again, seem to be all her store, and man must make the most of them. Miss Triscoe seemed to find flowers enough in the simple bouquet which Burnamy put together for her. She took it, and then gave it back to him, that she might have both hands for her skirt, and so did him two favors.

A superannuated forester of the nobleman who owns the ruin opened a gate for the party at the top, and levied a tax of thirty kreutzers each upon them, for its maintenance. The castle, by his story, had descended from robber sire to robber son, till Gustavus knocked it to pieces in the sixteenth century; three hundred years later, the present owner restored it; and now its broken walls and arches, built of rubble mixed with brick, and neatly pointed up with cement, form a ruin satisfyingly permanent. The walls were not of great extent, but such as they were they enclosed several dungeons and a chapel, all underground, and a cistern which once enabled the barons and their retainers to water their wine in time of siege.

From that height they could overlook the neighboring highways in every direction, and could bring a merchant train to, with a shaft from a crossbow, or a shot from an arquebuse, at pleasure. With General Triscoe's leave, March praised the strategic strength of the unique position, which he found expressive of the past, and yet suggestive of the present. It was more a difference in method than anything else that distinguished the levy of customs by the authorities then and now. What was the essential difference, between taking tribute of travellers passing on horseback, and collecting dues from travellers arriving by steamer? They did not pay voluntarily in either case; but it might be proof of progress that they no longer fought the customs officials.

"Then you believe in free trade," said Stoller, severely.

"No. I am just inquiring which is the best way of enforcing the tariff laws."

"I saw in the Paris Chronicle, last night," said Miss Triscoe, "that people are kept on the docks now for hours, and ladies cry at the way their things are tumbled over by the inspectors."

"It's shocking," said Mrs. March, magisterially.

“It seems to be a return to the scenes of feudal times,” her husband resumed. “But I’m glad the travellers make no resistance. I’m opposed to private war as much as I am to free trade.”

“It all comes round to the same thing at last,” said General Triscoe. “Your precious humanity—”

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“Oh, I don’t claim it exclusively,” March protested.

“Well, then, our precious humanity is like a man that has lost his road. He thinks he is finding his way out, but he is merely rounding on his course, and coming back to where he started.”

Stoller said, “I think we ought to make it so rough for them, over here, that they will come to America and set up, if they can’t stand the duties.”

“Oh, we ought to make it rough for them anyway,” March consented.

If Stoller felt his irony, he did not know what to answer. He followed with his eyes the manoeuvre by which Burnamy and Miss Triscoe eliminated themselves from the discussion, and strayed off to another corner of the ruin, where they sat down on the turf in the shadow of the wall; a thin, upland breeze drew across them, but the sun was hot. The land fell away from the height, and then rose again on every side in carpetlike fields and in long curving bands, whose parallel colors passed unblended into the distance. “I don’t suppose,” Burnamy said, “that life ever does much better than this, do you? I feel like knocking on a piece of wood and saying ‘Unberufen.’ I might knock on your bouquet; that’s wood.”

“It would spoil the flowers,” she said, looking down at them in her belt. She looked up and their eyes met.

“I wonder,” he said, presently, “what makes us always have a feeling of dread when we are happy?”

“Do you have that, too?” she asked.

“Yes. Perhaps it’s because we know that change must come, and it must be for the worse.”

“That must be it. I never thought of it before, though.”

“If we had got so far in science that we could predict psychological weather, and could know twenty-four hours ahead when a warm wave of bliss or a cold wave of misery was coming, and prepare for smiles and tears beforehand—it may come to that.”

“I hope it won’t. I’d rather not know when I was to be happy; it would spoil the pleasure; and wouldn’t be any compensation when it was the other way.”

A shadow fell across them, and Burnamy glanced round to see Stoller looking down at them, with a slant of the face that brought his aquiline profile into relief. “Oh! Have a turf, Mr. Stoller?” he called gayly up to him.

“I guess we’ve seen about all there is,” he answered. “Hadn’t we better be going?” He probably did not mean to be mandatory.

“All right,” said Burnamy, and he turned to speak to Miss Triscoe again without further notice of him.

They all descended to the church at the foot of the hill where the weird sacristan was waiting to show them the cold, bare interior, and to account for its newness with the fact that the old church had been burnt, and this one built only a few years before. Then he locked the doors after them, and ran forward to open against their coming the chapel of the village cemetery, which they were to visit after they had fortified themselves for it at the village cafe.

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They were served by a little hunch-back maid; and she told them who lived in the chief house of the village. It was uncommonly pretty; where all the houses were picturesque, and she spoke of it with respect as the dwelling of a rich magistrate who was clearly the great man of the place. March admired the cat which rubbed against her skirt while she stood and talked, and she took his praises modestly for the cat; but they wrought upon the envy, of her brother so that he ran off to the garden, and came back with two fat, sleepy-eyed puppies which he held up, with an arm across each of their stomachs, for the acclaim of the spectators.

“Oh, give him something!” Mrs. March entreated. “He’s such a dear.”

“No, no! I am not going to have my little hunchback and her cat outdone,” he refused; and then he was about to yield.

“Hold on!” said Stoller, assuming the host. “I got the change.”

He gave the boy a few kreutzers, when Mrs. March had meant her husband to reward his naivete with half a florin at least; but he seemed to feel that he had now ingratiated himself with the ladies, and he put himself in charge of them for the walk to the cemetery chapel; he made Miss Triscoe let him carry her jacket when she found it warm.

The chapel is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and the Jesuit brother who designed it, two or three centuries ago, indulged a devotional fancy in the triangular form of the structure and the decorative details. Everything is three-cornered; the whole chapel, to begin with, and then the ark of the high altar in the middle of it, and each of the three side-altars. The clumsy baroque taste of the architecture is a German version of the impulse that was making Italy fantastic at the time; the carving is coarse, and the color harsh and unsoftened by years, though it is broken and obliterated in places.

The sacristan said that the chapel was never used for anything but funeral services, and he led the way out into the cemetery, where he wished to display the sepultural devices. The graves here were planted with flowers, and some were in a mourning of black pansies; but a space fenced apart from the rest held a few neglected mounds, overgrown with weeds and brambles: This space, he said, was for suicides; but to March it was not so ghastly as the dapper grief of certain tombs in consecrated ground where the stones had photographs of the dead on porcelain let into them. One was the picture of a beautiful young woman, who had been the wife of the local magnate; an eternal love was vowed to her in the inscription, but now, the sacristan said, with nothing of irony, the magnate was married again, and lived in that prettiest house of the village. He seemed proud of the monument, as the thing worthiest the attention of the strangers, and he led them with less apparent hopefulness to the unfinished chapel representing a Gethsemane, with the figure of Christ praying and his apostles sleeping. It is a subject

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much celebrated in terra-cotta about Carlsbad, and it was not a novelty to his party; still, from its surroundings, it had a fresh pathos, and March tried to make him understand that they appreciated it. He knew that his wife wished the poor man to think he had done them a great favor in showing it; he had been touched with all the vain shows of grief in the poor, ugly little place; most of all he had felt the exile of those who had taken their own lives and were parted in death from the more patient sufferers who had waited for God to take them. With a curious, unpainful self-analysis he noted that the older members of the party, who in the course of nature were so much nearer death, did not shrink from its shows; but the young girl and the young man had not borne to look on them, and had quickly escaped from the place, somewhere outside the gate. Was it the beginning, the promise of that reconciliation with death which nature brings to life at last, or was it merely the effect, or defect, of ossified sensibilities, of toughened nerves?

“That is all?” he asked of the spectral sacristan.

“That is all,” the man said, and March felt in his pocket for a coin commensurate to the service he had done them; it ought to be something handsome.

“No, no,” said Stoller, detecting his gesture. “Your money a’n’t good.”

He put twenty or thirty kreutzers into the hand of the man, who regarded them with a disappointment none the less cruel because it was so patient. In France, he would have been insolent; in Italy, he would have frankly said it was too little; here, he merely looked at the money and whispered a sad “Danke.”

Burnamy and Miss Triscoe rose from the grassy bank outside where they were sitting, and waited for the elders to get into their two-spanner.

“Oh, have I lost my glove in there?” said Mrs. March, looking at her hands and such parts of her dress as a glove might cling to.

“Let me go and find it for you,” Burnamy entreated.

“Well,” she consented, and she added, “If the sacristan has found it, give him something for me something really handsome, poor fellow.”

As Burnamy passed her, she let him see that she had both her gloves, and her heart yearned upon him for his instant smile of intelligence: some men would have blundered out that she had the lost glove in her hand. He came back directly, saying, “No, he didn’t find it.”

She laughed, and held both gloves up. “No wonder! I had it all the time. Thank you ever so much.”

“How are we going to ride back?” asked Stoller.

Burnamy almost turned pale; Miss Triscoe smiled impenetrably. No one else spoke, and Mrs. March said, with placid authority, “Oh, I think the way we came, is best.”

“Did that absurd creature,” she apostrophized her husband as soon as she got him alone after their arrival at Pupp’s, “think I was going to let him drive back with Agatha?”

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“I wonder,” said March, “if that’s what Burnamy calls her now?”

“I shall despise him if it isn’t.”

XXXVII.

Burnamy took up his mail to Stoller after the supper which they had eaten in a silence natural with two men who have been off on a picnic together. He did not rise from his writing-desk when Burnamy came in, and the young man did not sit down after putting his letters before him. He said, with an effort of forcing himself to speak at once, “I have looked through the papers, and there is something that I think you ought to see.”

“What do you mean?” said Stoller.

Burnamy laid down three or four papers opened to pages where certain articles were strongly circumscribed in ink. The papers varied, but their editorials did not, in purport at least. Some were grave and some were gay; one indignantly denounced; another affected an ironical bewilderment; the third simply had fun with the Hon. Jacob Stoller. They all, however, treated his letter on the city government of Carlsbad as the praise of municipal socialism, and the paper which had fun with him gleefully congratulated the dangerous classes on the accession of the Honorable Jacob to their ranks.

Stoller read the articles, one after another, with parted lips and gathering drops of perspiration on his upper lip, while Burnamy waited on foot. He flung the papers all down at last. “Why, they’re a pack of fools! They don’t know what they’re talking about! I want city government carried on on business principles, by the people, for the people. I don’t care what they say! I know I’m right, and I’m going ahead on this line if it takes all—” The note of defiance died out of his voice at the sight of Burnamy’s pale face. “What’s the matter with you?”

“There’s nothing the matter with me.”

“Do you mean to tell me it is”—he could not bring himself to use the word—“what they say?”

“I suppose,” said Burnamy, with a dry mouth, “it’s what you may call municipal socialism.”

Stoller jumped from his seat. “And you knew it when you let me do it?”

“I supposed you knew what you were about.”

“It’s a lie!” Stoller advanced upon him, wildly, and Burnamy took a step backward.

“Look out!” shouted Burnamy. “You never asked me anything about it. You told me what you wanted done, and I did it. How could I believe you were such an ignoramus as not to know the a b c of the thing you were talking about?” He added, in cynical contempt, “But you needn’t worry. You can make it right with the managers by spending a little more money than you expected to spend.”

Stoller started as if the word money reminded him of something. “I can take care of myself, young man. How much do I owe you?”

“Nothing!” said Burnamy, with an effort for grandeur which failed him.

The next morning as the Marches sat over their coffee at the Posthof, he came dragging himself toward them with such a haggard air that Mrs. March called, before he reached their table, “Why, Mr. Burnamy, what’s the matter?”

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He smiled miserably. “Oh, I haven’t slept very well. May I have my coffee with you? I want to tell you something; I want you to make me. But I can’t speak till the coffee comes. Fraulein!” he besought a waitress going off with a tray near them. “Tell Lili, please, to bring me some coffee—only coffee.”

He tried to make some talk about the weather, which was rainy, and the Marches helped him, but the poor endeavor lagged wretchedly in the interval between the ordering and the coming of the coffee. “Ah, thank you, Lili,” he said, with a humility which confirmed Mrs. March in her instant belief that he had been offering himself to Miss Triscoe and been rejected. After gulping his coffee, he turned to her: “I want to say good-by. I’m going away.”

“From Carlsbad?” asked Mrs. March with a keen distress.

The water came into his eyes. “Don’t, don’t be good to me, Mrs. March! I can’t stand it. But you won’t, when you know.”

He began to speak of Stoller, first to her, but addressing himself more and more to the intelligence of March, who let him go on without question, and laid a restraining hand upon his wife when he saw her about to prompt him. At the end, “That’s all,” he said, huskily, and then he seemed to be waiting for March’s comment. He made none, and the young fellow was forced to ask, “Well, what do you think, Mr. March?”

“What do you think yourself?”

“I think, I behaved badly,” said Burnamy, and a movement of protest from Mrs. March nerved him to add: “I could make out that it was not my business to tell him what he was doing; but I guess it was; I guess I ought to have stopped him, or given him a chance to stop himself. I suppose I might have done it, if he had treated me decently when I turned up a day late, here; or hadn’t acted toward me as if I were a hand in his buggy-works that had come in an hour after the whistle sounded.”

He set his teeth, and an indignant sympathy shone in Mrs. March’s eyes; but her husband only looked the more serious.

He asked gently, “Do you offer that fact as an explanation, or as a justification.”

Burnamy laughed forlornly. “It certainly wouldn’t justify me. You might say that it made the case all the worse for me.” March forbore to say, and Burnamy went on. “But I didn’t suppose they would be onto him so quick, or perhaps at all. I thought—if I thought anything—that it would amuse some of the fellows in the office, who know about those things.” He paused, and in March’s continued silence he went on. “The chance was one in a hundred that anybody else would know where he had brought up.”

“But you let him take that chance,” March suggested.

“Yes, I let him take it. Oh, you know how mixed all these things are!”

“Yes.”

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“Of course I didn’t think it out at the time. But I don’t deny that I had a satisfaction in the notion of the hornets’ nest he was poking his thick head into. It makes me sick, now, to think I had. I oughtn’t to have let him; he was perfectly innocent in it. After the letter went, I wanted to tell him, but I couldn’t; and then I took the chances too. I don’t believe he could have ever got forward in politics; he’s too honest—or he isn’t dishonest in the right way. But that doesn’t let me out. I don’t defend myself! I did wrong; I behaved badly. But I’ve suffered for it.

“I’ve had a foreboding all the time that it would come to the worst, and felt like a murderer with his victim when I’ve been alone with Stoller. When I could get away from him I could shake it off, and even believe that it hadn’t happened. You can’t think what a nightmare it’s been! Well, I’ve ruined Stoller politically, but I’ve ruined myself, too. I’ve spoiled my own life; I’ve done what I can never explain to—to the people I want to have believe in me; I’ve got to steal away like the thief I am. Good-by!” He jumped to his feet, and put out his hand to March, and then to Mrs. March.

“Why, you’re not going away now!” she cried, in a daze.

“Yes, I am. I shall leave Carlsbad on the eleven-o’clock train. I don’t think I shall see you again.” He clung to her hand. “If you see General Triscoe—I wish you’d tell them I couldn’t—that I had to—that I was called away suddenly—Good-by!” He pressed her hand and dropped it, and mixed with the crowd. Then he came suddenly back, with a final appeal to March: “Should you—do you think I ought to see Stoller, and—and tell him I don’t think I used him fairly?”

“You ought to know—” March began.

But before he could say more, Burnamy said, “You’re right,” and was off again.

“Oh, how hard you were with him, my dear!” Mrs. March lamented.

“I wish,” he said, “if our boy ever went wrong that some one would be as true to him as I was to that poor fellow. He condemned himself; and he was right; he has behaved very badly.”

“You always overdo things so, when you act righteously!”

“Now, Isabel!”

“Oh, yes, I know what you will say. But I should have tempered justice with mercy.”

Her nerves tingled with pity for Burnamy, but in her heart she was glad that her husband had had strength to side with him against himself, and she was proud of the forbearance with which he had done it. In their earlier married life she would have confidently taken the initiative on all moral questions. She still believed that she was

better fitted for their decision by her Puritan tradition and her New England birth, but once in a great crisis when it seemed a question of their living, she had weakened before it, and he, with no such advantages, had somehow met the issue with courage and conscience. She could not believe he did so by inspiration, but she had since let him take the brunt of all such issues and the responsibility. He made no reply, and she said: "I suppose you'll admit now there was always something peculiar in the poor boy's manner to Stoller."

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He would confess no more than that there ought to have been. "I don't see how he could stagger through with that load on his conscience. I'm not sure I like his being able to do so."

She was silent in the misgiving which she shared with him, but she said: "I wonder how far it has gone with him and Miss Triscoe?"

"Well, from his wanting you to give his message to the general in the plural—"

"Don't laugh! It's wicked to laugh! It's heartless!" she cried, hysterically. "What will he do, poor fellow?"

"I've an idea that he will light on his feet, somehow. But, at any rate, he's doing the right thing in going to own up to Stoller."

"Oh, Stoller! I care nothing for Stoller! Don't speak to me of Stoller!"

Burnamy fond the Bird of Prey, as he no longer had the heart to call him, walking up and down in his room like an eagle caught in a trap. He erected his crest fiercely enough, though, when the young fellow came in at his loudly shouted, "Herein!"

"What do you want?" he demanded, brutally.

This simplified Burnamy's task, while it made it more loathsome. He answered not much less brutally, "I want to tell you that I think I used you badly, that I let you betray yourself, that I feel myself to blame." He could have added, "Curse you!" without change of tone.

Stoller sneered in a derision that showed his lower teeth like a dog's when he snarls. "You want to get back!"

"No," said Burnamy, mildly, and with increasing sadness as he spoke. "I don't want to get back. Nothing would induce me. I'm going away on the first train."

"Well, you're not!" shouted Stoller. "You've lied me into this—"

"Look out!" Burnamy turned white.

"Didn't you lie me into it, if you let me fool myself, as you say?" Stoller pursued, and Burnamy felt himself weaken through his wrath. "Well, then, you got to lie me out of it. I been going over the damn thing, all night—and you can do it for me. I know you can do it," he gave way in a plea that was almost a whimper. "Look here! You see if you can't. I'll make it all right with you. I'll pay you whatever you think is right—whatever you say."

"Oh!" said Burnamy, in otherwise unutterable disgust.

“You kin,” Stoller went on, breaking down more and more into his adopted Hoosier, in the stress of his anxiety. “I know you kin, Mr. Burnamy.” He pushed the paper containing his letter into Burnamy’s hands, and pointed out a succession of marked passages. “There! And here! And this place! Don’t you see how you could make out that it meant something else, or was just ironical?” He went on to prove how the text might be given the complexion he wished, and Burnamy saw that he had really thought it not impossibly out. “I can’t put it in writing as well as you; but I’ve done all the work, and all you’ve got to do is to give it some of them turns of yours. I’ll

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cable the fellows in our office to say I've been misrepresented, and that my correction is coming. We'll get it into shape here together, and then I'll cable that. I don't care for the money. And I'll get our counting-room to see this scoundrel"—he picked up the paper that had had fun with him—"and fix him all right, so that he'll ask for a suspension of public opinion, and—You see, don't you?"

The thing did appeal to Burnamy. If it could be done, it would enable him to make Stoller the reparation he longed to make him more than anything else in the world. But he heard himself saying, very gently, almost tenderly, "It might be done, Mr. Stoller. But I couldn't do it. It wouldn't be honest—for me."

"Yah!" yelled Stoller, and he crushed the paper into a wad and flung it into Burnamy's face. "Honest, you damn humbug! You let me in for this, when you knew I didn't mean it, and now you won't help me out because it a'n't honest! Get out of my room, and get out quick before I—"

He hurled himself toward Burnamy, who straightened himself, with "If you dare!" He knew that he was right in refusing; but he knew that Stoller was right, too, and that he had not meant the logic of what he had said in his letter, and of what Burnamy had let him imply. He braved Stoller's onset, and he left his presence untouched, but feeling as little a moral hero as he well could.

XXXVIII.

General Triscoe woke in the bad humor of an elderly man after a day's pleasure, and in the self-reproach of a pessimist who has lost his point of view for a time, and has to work back to it. He began at the belated breakfast with his daughter when she said, after kissing him gayly, in the small two-seated bower where they breakfasted at their hotel when they did not go to the Posthof, "Didn't you have a nice time, yesterday, papa?"

She sank into the chair opposite, and beamed at him across the little iron table, as she lifted the pot to pour out his coffee.

"What do you call a nice time?" he temporized, not quite able to resist her gayety.

"Well, the kind of time I had."

"Did you get rheumatism from sitting on the grass? I took cold in that old church, and the tea at that restaurant must have been brewed in a brass kettle. I suffered all night from it. And that ass from Illinois—"

“Oh, poor papa! I couldn’t go with Mr. Stoller alone, but I might have gone in the two-spanner with him and let you have Mr. or Mrs. March in the one-spanner.”

“I don’t know. Their interest in each other isn’t so interesting to other people as they seem to think.”

“Do you feel that way really, papa? Don’t you like their being so much in love still?”

“At their time of life? Thank you it’s bad enough in young people.”

The girl did not answer; she appeared altogether occupied in pouring out her father’s coffee.

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He tasted it, and then he drank pretty well all of it; but he said, as he put his cup down, "I don't know what they make this stuff of. I wish I had a cup of good, honest American coffee."

"Oh, there's nothing like American food!" said his daughter, with so much conciliation that he looked up sharply.

But whatever he might have been going to say was at least postponed by the approach of a serving-maid, who brought a note to his daughter. She blushed a little at sight of it, and then tore it open and read:

"I am going away from Carlsbad, for a fault of my own which forbids me to look you in the face. If you wish to know the worst of me, ask Mrs. March. I have no heart to tell you."

Agatha read these mystifying words of Burnamy's several times over in a silent absorption with them which left her father to look after himself, and he had poured out a second cup of coffee with his own hand, and was reaching for the bread beside her before she came slowly back to a sense of his presence.

"Oh, excuse me, papa," she said, and she gave him the butter. "Here's a very strange letter from Mr. Burnamy, which I think you'd better see." She held the note across the table to him, and watched his face as he read it.

After he had read it twice, he turned the sheet over, as people do with letters that puzzle them, in the vain hope of something explanatory on the back. Then he looked up and asked: "What do you suppose he's been doing?"

"I don't believe he's been doing anything. It's something that Mr. Stoller's been doing to him."

"I shouldn't infer that from his own words. What makes you think the trouble is with Stoller?"

"He said—he said yesterday—something about being glad to be through with him, because he disliked him so much he was always afraid of wronging him. And that proves that now Mr. Stoller has made him believe that he's done wrong, and has worked upon him till he does believe it."

"It proves nothing of the kind," said the general, recurring to the note. After reading it again, he looked keenly at her: "Am I to understand that you have given him the right to suppose you would want to know the worst—or the best of him?"

The girl's eyes fell, and she pushed her knife against her plate. She began: "No—"

“Then confound his impudence!” the general broke out. “What business has he to write to you at all about this?”

“Because he couldn’t go away without it!” she returned; and she met her father’s eye courageously. “He had a right to think we were his friends; and if he has done wrong, or is in disgrace any way, isn’t it manly of him to wish to tell us first himself?”

Her father could not say that it was not. But he could and did say, very sceptically: “Stuff! Now, see here, Agatha: what are you going to do?”

“I’m going to see Mrs. March, and then—”

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“You mustn’t do anything of the kind, my dear,” said her father, gently. “You’ve no right to give yourself away to that romantic old goose.” He put up his hand to interrupt her protest. “This thing has got to be gone to the bottom of. But you’re not to do it. I will see March myself. We must consider your dignity in this matter—and mine. And you may as well understand that I’m not going to have any nonsense. It’s got to be managed so that it can’t be supposed we’re anxious about it, one way or the other, or that he was authorized to write to you in this way—”

“No, no! He oughtn’t to have done so. He was to blame. He couldn’t have written to you, though, papa—”

“Well, I don’t know why. But that’s no reason why we should let it be understood that he has written to you. I will see March; and I will manage to see his wife, too. I shall probably find them in the reading-room at Pupp’s, and—”

The Marches were in fact just coming in from their breakfast at the Posthof, and he met them at the door of Pupp’s, where they all sat down on one of the iron settees of the piazza, and began to ask one another questions of their minds about the pleasure of the day before, and to beat about the bush where Burnamy lurked in their common consciousness.

Mrs. March was not able to keep long from starting him. “You knew,” she said, “that Mr. Burnamy had left us?”

“Left! Why?” asked the general.

She was a woman of resource, but in a case like this she found it best to trust her husband’s poverty of invention. She looked at him, and he answered for her with a promptness that made her quake at first, but finally seemed the only thing, if not the best thing: “He’s had some trouble with Stoller.” He went on to tell the general just what the trouble was.

At the end the general grunted as from an uncertain mind. “You think he’s behaved badly.”

“I think he’s behaved foolishly—youthfully. But I can understand how strongly he was tempted. He could say that he was not authorized to stop Stoller in his mad career.”

At this Mrs. March put her hand through her husband’s arm.

“I’m not so sure about that,” said the general.

March added: “Since I saw him this morning, I’ve heard something that disposes me to look at his performance in a friendlier light. It’s something that Stoller told me himself; to heighten my sense of Burnamy’s wickedness. He seems to have felt that I ought to

know what a serpent I was cherishing in my bosom," and he gave Triscoe the facts of Burnamy's injurious refusal to help Stoller put a false complexion on the opinions he had allowed him ignorantly to express.

The general grunted again. "Of course he had to refuse, and he has behaved like a gentleman so far. But that doesn't justify him in having let Stoller get himself into the scrape."

"No," said March. "It's a tough nut for the casuist to try his tooth on. And I must say I feel sorry for Stoller."

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Mrs. March plucked her hand from his arm. “I don’t, one bit. He was thoroughly selfish from first to last. He has got just what he deserved.”

“Ah, very likely,” said her husband. “The question is about Burnamy’s part in giving him his deserts; he had to leave him to them, of course.”

The general fixed her with the impenetrable glitter of his eye-glasses, and left the subject as of no concern to him. “I believe,” he said, rising, “I’ll have a look at some of your papers,” and he went into the reading-room.

“Now,” said Mrs. March, “he will go home and poison that poor girl’s mind. And, you will have yourself to thank for prejudicing him against Burnamy.”

“Then why didn’t you do it yourself, my dear?” he teased; but he was really too sorry for the whole affair, which he nevertheless enjoyed as an ethical problem.

The general looked so little at the papers that before March went off for his morning walk he saw him come out of the reading-room and take his way down the Alte Wiese. He went directly back to his daughter, and reported Burnamy’s behavior with entire exactness. He dwelt upon his making the best of a bad business in refusing to help Stoller out of it, dishonorably and mendaciously; but he did not conceal that it was a bad business.

“Now, you know all about it,” he said at the end, “and I leave the whole thing to you. If you prefer, you can see Mrs. March. I don’t know but I’d rather you’d satisfy yourself—”

“I will not see Mrs. March. Do you think I would go back of you in that way? I am satisfied now.”

XXXIX.

Instead of Burnamy, Mrs. Adding and her son now breakfasted with the Marches at the Posthof, and the boy was with March throughout the day a good deal. He rectified his impressions of life in Carlsbad by March’s greater wisdom and experience, and did his best to anticipate his opinions and conform to his conclusions. This was not easy, for sometimes he could not conceal from himself, that March’s opinions were whimsical, and his conclusions fantastic; and he could not always conceal from March that he was matching them with Kenby’s on some points, and suffering from their divergence. He came to join the sage in his early visit to the springs, and they walked up and down talking; and they went off together on long strolls in which Rose was proud to bear him company. He was patient of the absences from which he was often answered, and he learned to distinguish between the earnest and the irony of which March’s replies seemed to be mixed. He examined him upon many features of German civilization, but chiefly upon the treatment of women in it; and upon this his philosopher was less

satisfactory than he could have wished him to be. He tried to excuse his trifling as an escape from the painful stress of questions which he found so afflicting himself; but in the matter of the woman-and-dog teams, this was not easy. March owned that the notion of their being yokemates was shocking; but he urged that it was a stage of evolution, and a distinct advance upon the time when women dragged the carts without the help of the dogs; and that the time might not be far distant when the dogs would drag the carts without the help of the women.

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Rose surmised a joke, and he tried to enjoy it, but inwardly he was troubled by his friend's apparent acceptance of unjust things on their picturesque side. Once as they were sauntering homeward by the brink of the turbid Eger, they came to a man lying on the grass with a pipe in his mouth, and lazily watching from under his fallen lids the cows grazing by the river-side, while in a field of scraggy wheat a file of women were reaping a belated harvest with sickles, bending wearily over to clutch the stems together and cut them with their hooked blades. "Ah, delightful!" March took off his hat as if to salute the pleasant sight.

"But don't you think, Mr. March," the boy ventured, "that the man had better be cutting the wheat, and letting the women watch the cows?"

"Well, I don't know. There are more of them; and he wouldn't be half so graceful as they are, with that flow of their garments, and the sway of their aching backs." The boy smiled sadly, and March put his hand on his shoulder as they walked on. "You find a lot of things in Europe that need putting right, don't you, Rose?"

"Yes; I know it's silly."

"Well, I'm not sure. But I'm afraid it's useless. You see, these old customs go such a way back, and are so grounded in conditions. We think they might be changed, if those who rule could be got to see how cruel and ugly they are; but probably they couldn't. I'm afraid that the Emperor of Austria himself couldn't change them, in his sovereign plenitude of power. The Emperor is only an old custom too, and he's as much grounded in the conditions as any." This was the serious way Rose felt that March ought always to talk; and he was too much grieved to laugh when he went on. "The women have so much of the hard work to do, over here, because the emperors need the men for their armies. They couldn't let their men cut wheat unless it was for their officers' horses, in the field of some peasant whom it would ruin."

If Mrs. March was by she would not allow him to work these paradoxes for the boy's confusion. She said the child adored him, and it was a sacrilege to play with his veneration. She always interfered to save him, but with so little logic though so much justice that Rose suffered a humiliation from her championship, and was obliged from a sense of self-respect to side with the mocker. She understood this, and magnanimously urged it as another reason why her husband should not trifle with Rose's ideal of him; to make his mother laugh at him was wicked.

"Oh, I'm not his only ideal," March protested. "He adores Kenby too, and every now and then he brings me to book with a text from Kenby's gospel."

Mrs. March caught her breath. "Kenby! Do you really think, then, that she—"

“Oh, hold on, now! It isn’t a question of Mrs. Adding; and I don’t say Rose had an eye on poor old Kenby as a step-father. I merely want you to understand that I’m the object of a divided worship, and that when I’m off duty as an ideal I don’t see why I shouldn’t have the fun of making Mrs. Adding laugh. You can’t pretend she isn’t wrapped up in the boy. You’ve said that yourself.”

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“Yes, she’s wrapped up in him; she’d give her life for him; but she is so light. I didn’t suppose she was so light; but it’s borne in upon me more and more.”

They were constantly seeing Rose and his mother, in the sort of abeyance the Triscoes had fallen into. One afternoon the Addings came to Mrs. March’s room to look from her windows at a parade of bicyclers’ clubs from the neighboring towns. The spectacle prospered through its first half-hour, with the charm which German sentiment and ingenuity, are able to lend even a bicycle parade. The wheelmen and wheelwomen filed by on machines wreathed with flowers and ribbons, and decked with streaming banners. Here and there one sat under a moving arch of blossoms, or in a bower of leaves and petals, and they were all gay with their club costumes and insignia. In the height of the display a sudden mountain shower gathered and broke upon them. They braved it till it became a drenching down-pour; then they leaped from their machines and fled to any shelter they could find, under trees and in doorways. The men used their greater agility to get the best places, and kept them; the women made no appeal for them by word or look, but took the rain in the open as if they expected nothing else.

Rose watched the scene with a silent intensity which March interpreted. “There’s your chance, Rose. Why don’t you go down and rebuke those fellows?”

Rose blushed and shrank away without answer, and Mrs. March promptly attacked her husband in his behalf. “Why don’t you go and rebuke them yourself?”

“Well, for one thing, there isn’t any conversation in my phrase-book Between an indignant American Herr and a Party of German Wheelmen who have taken Shelter from the Rain and are keeping the Wheelwomen out in the Wet.” Mrs. Adding shrieked her delight, and he was flattered into going on. “For another thing, I think it’s very well for you ladies to realize from an object-lesson of this sort what spoiled children of our civilization you are. It ought to make you grateful for your privileges.”

“There is something in that,” Mrs. Adding joyfully consented.

“Oh, there is no civilization but ours,” said Mrs. March, in a burst of vindictive patriotism. “I am more and more convinced of it the longer I stay in Europe.”

“Perhaps that’s why we like to stay so long in Europe; it strengthens us in the conviction that America is the only civilized country in the world,” said March.

The shower passed as quickly as it had gathered, and the band which it had silenced for a moment burst forth again in the music which fills the Carlsbad day from dawn till dusk. Just now, it began to play a pot pourri of American airs; at the end some unseen Americans under the trees below clapped and cheered.

“That was opportune of the band,” said March. “It must have been a telepathic impulse from our patriotism in the director. But a pot pourri of American airs is like that tablet dedicating the American Park up here on the Schlossberg, which is signed by six Jews and one Irishman. The only thing in this medley that’s the least characteristic or original is Dixie; and I’m glad the South has brought us back into the Union.”

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“You don’t know one note from another, my dear,” said his wife.

“I know the ‘Washington Post.’”

“And don’t you call that American?”

“Yes, if Sousa is an American name; I should have thought it was Portuguese.”

“Now that sounds a little too much like General Triscoe’s pessimism,” said Mrs. March; and she added: “But whether we have any national melodies or not, we don’t poke women out in the rain and keep them soaking!”

“No, we certainly don’t,” he assented, with such a well-studied effect of yielding to superior logic that Mrs. Adding screamed for joy.

The boy had stolen out of the room, and he said, “I hope Rose isn’t acting on my suggestion?”

“I hate to have you tease him, dearest,” his wife interposed.

“Oh, no,” the mother said, laughing still, but with a note of tenderness in her laugh, which dropped at last to a sigh. “He’s too much afraid of lese-majesty, for that. But I dare say he couldn’t stand the sight. He’s queer.”

“He’s beautiful!” said Mrs. March.

“He’s good,” the mother admitted. “As good as the day’s long. He’s never given me a moment’s trouble—but he troubles me. If you can understand!”

“Oh, I do understand!” Mrs. March returned. “By his innocence, you mean. That is the worst of children. Their innocence breaks our hearts and makes us feel ourselves such dreadful old things.”

“His innocence, yes,” pursued Mrs. Adding, “and his ideals.” She began to laugh again. “He may have gone off for a season of meditation and prayer over the misbehavior of these bicyclers. His mind is turning that way a good deal lately. It’s only fair to tell you, Mr. March, that he seems to be giving up his notion of being an editor. You mustn’t be disappointed.”

“I shall be sorry,” said the editor. “But now that you mention it, I think I have noticed that Rose seems rather more indifferent to periodical literature. I supposed he might simply have exhausted his questions—or my answers.”

“No; it goes deeper than that. I think it’s Europe that’s turned his mind in the direction of reform. At any rate he thinks now he will be a reformer.”

“Really! What kind of one? Not religious, I hope?”

“No. His reform has a religious basis, but its objects are social. I don’t make it out, exactly; but I shall, as soon as Rose does. He tells me everything, and sometimes I don’t feel equal to it, spiritually or even intellectually.”

“Don’t laugh at him, Mrs. Adding!” Mrs. March entreated.

“Oh, he doesn’t mind my laughing,” said the mother, gayly. Rose came shyly back into the room, and she said, “Well, did you rebuke those bad bicyclers?” and she laughed again.

“They’re only a custom, too, Rose,”, said March, tenderly. “Like the man resting while the women worked, and the Emperor, and all the rest of it.”

“Oh, yes, I know,” the boy returned.

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“They ride modern machines, but they live in the tenth century. That’s what we’re always forgetting when we come to Europe and see these barbarians enjoying all our up-to-date improvements.”

“There, doesn’t that console you?” asked his mother, and she took him away with her, laughing back from the door. “I don’t believe it does, a bit!”

“I don’t believe she understands the child,” said Mrs. March. “She is very light, don’t you think? I don’t know, after all, whether it wouldn’t be a good thing for her to marry Kenby. She is very easygoing, and she will be sure to marry somebody.”

She had fallen into a tone of musing censure, and he said, “You might put these ideas to her.”

XL.

With the passage of the days and weeks, the strange faces which had familiarized themselves at the springs disappeared; even some of those which had become the faces of acquaintance began to go. In the diminishing crowd the smile of Otterson was no longer to be seen; the sad, severe visage of Major Eltwin, who seemed never to have quite got his bearings after his error with General Triscoe, seldom showed itself. The Triscoes themselves kept out of the Marches’ way, or they fancied so; Mrs. Adding and Rose alone remained of their daily encounter.

It was full summer, as it is everywhere in mid-August, but at Carlsbad the sun was so late getting up over the hills that as people went to their breakfasts at the cafes up the valley of the Tepl they found him looking very obliquely into it at eight o’clock in the morning. The yellow leaves were thicker about the feet of the trees, and the grass was silvery gray with the belated dews. The breakfasters were fewer than they had been, and there were more little barefooted boys and girls with cups of red raspberries which they offered to the passers with cries of “Himbeeren! Himbeeren!” plaintive as the notes of birds left songless by the receding summer.

March was forbidden the fruit, but his wife and Mrs. Adding bought recklessly of it, and ate it under his eyes with their coffee and bread, pouring over it pots of clotted cream that the ‘schone’ Lili brought them. Rose pretended an indifference to it, which his mother betrayed was a sacrifice in behalf of March’s inability.

Lili’s delays in coming to be paid had been such that the Marches now tried to pay her when she brought their breakfast, but they sometimes forgot, and then they caught her whenever she came near them. In this event she liked to coquet with their impatience; she would lean against their table, and say: “Oh, no. You stay a little. It is so nice.” One day after such an entreaty, she said, “The queen is here, this morning.”

Mrs. March started, in the hope of highhotes. “The queen!”

“Yes; the young lady. Mr. Burnamy was saying she was a queen. She is there with her father.” She nodded in the direction of a distant corner, and the Marches knew that she meant Miss Triscoe and the general. “She is not seeming so gayly as she was being.”

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March smiled. “We are none of us so gayly as we were being, Lili. The summer is going.”

“But Mr. Burnamy will be returning, not true?” the girl asked, resting her tray on the corner of the table.

“No, I’m afraid he won’t,” March returned sadly.

“He was very good. He was paying the proprietor for the dishes that Augusta did break when she was falling down. He was paying before he went away, when he was knowing that the proprietor would make Augusta to pay.”

“Ah!” said March, and his wife said, “That was like him!” and she eagerly explained to Mrs. Adding how good and great Burnamy had been in this characteristic instance, while Lili waited with the tray to add some pathetic facts about Augusta’s poverty and gratitude. “I think Miss Triscoe ought to know it. There goes the wretch, now!” she broke off. “Don’t look at him!” She set her husband the example of averting his face from the sight of Stoller sullenly pacing up the middle aisle of the grove, and looking to the right and left for a vacant table. “Ugh! I hope he won’t be able to find a single place.”

Mrs. Adding gave one of her pealing laughs, while Rose watched March’s face with grave sympathy. “He certainly doesn’t deserve one. Don’t let us keep you from offering Miss Triscoe any consolation you can.” They got up, and the boy gathered up the gloves, umbrella, and handkerchief which the ladies let drop from their laps.

“Have you been telling?” March asked his wife.

“Have I told you anything?” she demanded of Mrs. Adding in turn. “Anything that you didn’t as good as know, already?”

“Not a syllable!” Mrs. Adding replied in high delight. “Come, Rose!”

“Well, I suppose there’s no use saying anything,” said March, after she left them.

“She had guessed everything, without my telling her,” said his wife.

“About Stoller?”

“Well-no. I did tell her that part, but that was nothing. It was about Burnamy and Agatha that she knew. She saw it from the first.”

“I should have thought she would have enough to do to look after poor old Kenby.”

“I’m not sure, after all, that she cares for him. If she doesn’t, she oughtn’t to let him write to her. Aren’t you going over to speak to the Triscoes?”

“No, certainly not. I’m going back to the hotel. There ought to be some steamer letters this morning. Here we are, worrying about these strangers all the time, and we never give a thought to our own children on the other side of the ocean.”

“I worry about them, too,” said the mother, fondly. “Though there is nothing to worry about,” she added.

“It’s our duty to worry,” he insisted.

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At the hotel the portier gave them four letters. There was one from each of their children: one very buoyant, not to say boisterous, from the daughter, celebrating her happiness in her husband, and the loveliness of Chicago as a summer city ("You would think she was born out there!" sighed her mother); and one from the son, boasting his well-being in spite of the heat they were having ("And just think how cool it is here!" his mother upbraided herself), and the prosperity of 'Every Other Week'. There was a line from Fulkerson, praising the boy's editorial instinct, and ironically proposing March's resignation in his favor.

"I do believe we could stay all winter, just as well as not," said Mrs. March, proudly. "What does 'Burnamy say?"

"How do you know it's from him?"

"Because you've been keeping your hand on it! Give it here."

"When I've read it."

The letter was dated at Ansbach, in Germany, and dealt, except for some messages of affection to Mrs. March, with a scheme for a paper which Burnamy wished to write on Kaspar Hauser, if March thought he could use it in 'Every Other Week'. He had come upon a book about that hapless foundling in Nuremberg, and after looking up all his traces there he had gone on to Ansbach, where Kaspar Hauser met his death so pathetically. Burnamy said he could not give any notion of the enchantment of Nuremberg; but he besought March, if he was going to the Tyrol for his after-cure, not to fail staying a day or so in the wonderful place. He thought March would enjoy Ansbach too, in its way.

"And, not a word—not a syllable—about Miss Triscoe!" cried Mrs. March. "Shall you take his paper?"

"It would be serving him right, if I refused it, wouldn't it?"

They never knew what it cost Burnamy to keep her name out of his letter, or by what an effort of the will he forbade himself even to tell of his parting interview with Stoller. He had recovered from his remorse for letting Stoller give himself away; he was still sorry for that, but he no longer suffered; yet he had not reached the psychological moment when he could celebrate his final virtue in the matter. He was glad he had been able to hold out against the temptation to retrieve himself by another wrong; but he was humbly glad, and he felt that until happier chance brought him and his friends together he must leave them to their merciful conjectures. He was young, and he took the chance, with an aching heart. If he had been older, he might not have taken it.

XLI.

The birthday of the Emperor comes conveniently, in late August, in the good weather which is pretty sure to fall then, if ever in the Austrian summer. For a week past, at Carlsbad, the workmen had been building a scaffolding for the illumination in the woods on a height overlooking the town, and making unobtrusive preparations at points within it.

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The day was important as the last of March's cure, and its pleasures began for him by a renewal of his acquaintance in its first kindliness with the Eltwins. He had met them so seldom that at one time he thought they must have gone away, but now after his first cup he saw the quiet, sad old pair, sitting together on a bench in the Stadt Park, and he asked leave to sit down with them till it was time for the next. Eltwin said that this was their last day, too; and explained that his wife always came with him to the springs, while he took the waters.

"Well," he apologized, "we're all that's left, and I suppose we like to keep together." He paused, and at the look in March's face he suddenly went on. "I haven't been well for three or four years; but I always fought against coming out here, when the doctors wanted me to. I said I couldn't leave home; and, I don't suppose I ever should. But my home left me."

As he spoke his wife shrank tenderly near him, and March saw her steal her withered hand into his.

"We'd had a large family, but they'd all died off, with one thing or another, and here in the spring we lost our last daughter. Seemed perfectly well, and all at once she died; heart-failure, they called it. It broke me up, and mother, here, got at me to go. And so we're here." His voice trembled; and his eyes softened; then they flashed up, and March heard him add, in a tone that astonished him less when he looked round and saw General Triscoe advancing toward them, "I don't know what it is always makes me want to kick that man."

The general lifted his hat to their group, and hoped that Mrs. Eltwin was well, and Major Eltwin better. He did not notice their replies, but said to March, "The ladies are waiting for you in Pupp's readingroom, to go with them to the Posthof for breakfast."

"Aren't you going, too?" asked March.

"No, thank you," said the general, as if it were much finer not; "I shall breakfast at our pension." He strolled off with the air of a man who has done more than his duty.

"I don't suppose I ought to feel that way," said Eltwin, with a remorse which March suspected a reproachful pressure of his wife's hand had prompted in him. "I reckon he means well."

"Well, I don't know," March said, with a candor he could not wholly excuse.

On his way to the hotel he fancied mocking his wife for her interest in the romantic woes of her lovers, in a world where there was such real pathos as these poor old people's; but in the company of Miss Triscoe he could not give himself this pleasure. He tried to amuse her on the way from Pupp's, with the doubt he always felt in passing the Cafe

Sans-Souci, whether he should live to reach the Posthof where he meant to breakfast. She said, “Poor Mr. March!” and laughed inattentively; when he went on to philosophize the commonness of the sparse company always observable at the Sans-Souci as a just effect of its Laodicean situation between Pupp’s and the Posthof, the girl sighed absently, and his wife frowned at him.

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The flower-woman at the gate of her garden had now only autumnal blooms for sale in the vases which flanked the entrance; the windrows of the rowen, left steeping in the dews overnight, exhaled a faint fragrance; a poor remnant of the midsummer multitudes trailed itself along to the various cafes of the valley, its pink paper bags of bread rustling like sere foliage as it moved.

At the Posthof the 'schone' Lili alone was as gay, as in the prime of July. She played archly about the guests she welcomed to a table in a sunny spot in the gallery. "You are tired of Carlsbad?" she said caressingly to Miss Triscoe, as she put her breakfast before her.

"Not of the Posthof," said the girl, listlessly.

"Posthof, and very little Lili?" She showed, with one forefinger on another, how very little she was.

Miss Triscoe laughed, not cheerily, and Lili said to Mrs. March, with abrupt seriousness, "Augusta was finding a handkerchief under the table, and she was washing it and ironing it before she did bring it. I have scolded her, and I have made her give it to me."

She took from under her apron a man's handkerchief, which she offered to Mrs. March. It bore, as she saw Miss Triscoe saw, the initials L. J. B. But, "Whose can it be?" they asked each other.

"Why, Burnamy's," said March; and Lili's eyes danced. "Give it here!"

His wife caught it farther away. "No, I'm going to see whose it is, first; if it's his, I'll send it to him myself."

She tried to put it into the pocket which was not in her dress by sliding it down her lap; then she handed it to the girl, who took it with a careless air, but kept it after a like failure to pocket it.

Mrs. March had come out in her India-rubber sandals, but for once in Carlsbad the weather was too dry for them, and she had taken them off and was holding them in her lap. They fell to the ground when she now rose from breakfast, and she stooped to pick them up. Miss Triscoe was too quick for her.

"Oh, let me carry them for you!" she entreated, and after a tender struggle she succeed in enslaving herself to them, and went away wearing them through the heel-bands like manacles on her wrist. She was not the kind of girl to offer such pretty devotions, and Mrs. March was not the kind of woman to suffer them; but they played the comedy through, and let March go off for his last hill-climb with the promise to meet him in the Stadt Park when he came to the Kurhaus for his last mineral bath.

Mrs. March in the mean time went about some final shopping, and invited the girl's advice with a fondness which did not prevent her rejecting it in every case, with Miss Triscoe's eager approval. In the Stadt Park they sat down and talked; from time to time Mrs. March made polite feints of recovering her sandals, but the girl kept them with increased effusion.

When they rose, and strolled away from the bench where they had been sitting, they seemed to be followed. They looked round and saw no one more alarming than a very severe-looking old gentleman, whose hat brim in spite of his severity was limp with much lifting, as all Austrian hat brims are. He touched it, and saying haughtily in German, "Something left lying," passed on.

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They stared at each other; then, as women do, they glanced down at their skirts to see if there was anything amiss with them, and Miss Triscoe perceived her hands empty of Mrs. March's sandals and of Burnamy's handkerchief.

"Oh, I put it in one of the toes!" she lamented, and she fled back to their bench, alarming in her course the fears of a gendarme for the public security, and putting a baby in its nurse's arms into such doubts of its personal safety that it burst into a desolate cry. She laughed breathlessly as she rejoined Mrs. March. "That comes of having no pocket; I didn't suppose I could forget your sandals, Mrs. March! Wasn't it absurd?"

"It's one of those things," Mrs. March said to her husband afterwards, "that they can always laugh over together."

"They? And what about Burnamy's behavior to Stoller?"

"Oh, I don't call that anything but what will come right. Of course he can make it up to him somehow. And I regard his refusal to do wrong when Stoller wanted him to as quite wiping out the first offence."

"Well, my dear, you have burnt your ships behind you. My only hope is that when we leave here tomorrow, her pessimistic papa's poison will neutralize yours somehow."

XLII.

One of the pleasantest incidents of March's sojourn in Carlsbad was his introduction to the manager of the municipal theatre by a common friend who explained the editor in such terms to the manager that he conceived of him as a brother artist. This led to much bowing and smiling from the manager when the Marches met him in the street, or in their frequent visits to the theatre, with which March felt that it might well have ended, and still been far beyond his desert. He had not thought of going to the opera on the Emperor's birthnight, but after dinner a box came from the manager, and Mrs. March agreed with him that they could not in decency accept so great a favor. At the same time she argued that they could not in decency refuse it, and that to show their sense of the pleasure done them, they must adorn their box with all the beauty and distinction possible; in other words, she said they must ask Miss Triscoe and her father.

"And why not Major Eltwin and his wife? Or Mrs. Adding and Rose?"

She begged him, simply in his own interest, not to be foolish; and they went early, so as to be in their box when their guests came. The foyer of the theatre was banked with flowers, and against a curtain of evergreens stood a high-pedestalled bust of the paternal Caesar, with whose side-whiskers a laurel crown comported itself as well as it could. At the foot of the grand staircase leading to the boxes the manager stood in evening dress, receiving his friends and their felicitations upon the honor which the

theatre was sure to do itself on an occasion so august. The Marches were so cordial in their prophecies that the manager yielded to an artist's impulse and begged his fellow-artist to do him the pleasure of coming behind the scenes between the acts of the opera; he bowed a heart-felt regret to Mrs. March that he could not make the invitation include her, and hoped that she would not be too lonely while her husband was gone.

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She explained that they had asked friends, and she should not be alone, and then he entreated March to bring any gentleman who was his guest with him. On the way up to their box, she pressed his arm as she used in their young married days, and asked him if it was not perfect. "I wish we were going to have it all to ourselves; no one else can appreciate the whole situation. Do you think we have made a mistake in having the Triscoes?"

"We!" he retorted. "Oh, that's good! I'm going to shirk him, when it comes to going behind the scenes."

"No, no, dearest," she entreated. "Snubbing will only make it worse. We must stand it to the bitter end, now."

The curtain rose upon another laurelled bust of the Emperor, with a chorus of men formed on either side, who broke into the grave and noble strains of the Austrian Hymn, while every one stood. Then the curtain fell again, and in the interval before the opera could begin, General Triscoe and his daughter came in.

Mrs. March took the splendor in which the girl appeared as a tribute to her hospitality. She had hitherto been a little disappointed of the open homage to American girlhood which her readings of international romance had taught her to expect in Europe, but now her patriotic vanity feasted full. Fat highhotes of her own sex levelled their lorgnettes at Miss Triscoe all around the horseshoe, with critical glances which fell blunted from her complexion and costume; the house was brilliant with the military uniforms, which we have not yet to mingle with our unrivalled millinery, and the ardent gaze of the young officers dwelt on the perfect mould of her girlish arms and neck, and the winning lines of her face. The girl's eyes shone with a joyful excitement, and her little head, defined by its dark hair, trembled as she slowly turned it from side to side, after she removed the airy scarf which had covered it. Her father, in evening dress, looked the Third Emperor complaisant to a civil occasion, and took a chair in the front of the box without resistance; and the ladies disputed which should yield the best place to the other, till Miss Triscoe forced Mrs. March fondly into it for the first act at least.

The piece had to be cut a good deal to give people time for the illuminations afterwards; but as it was it gave scope to the actress who, 'als Gast' from a Viennese theatre, was the chief figure in it. She merited the distinction by the art which still lingered, deeply embedded in her massive balk, but never wholly obscured.

"That is grand, isn't it?" said March, following one of the tremendous strokes by which she overcame her physical disadvantages. "It's fine to see how her art can undo, for one splendid instant, the work of all those steins of beer, those illimitable licks of sausage, those boundless fields of cabbage. But it's rather pathetic."

“It’s disgusting,” said his wife; and at this General Triscoe, who had been watching the actress through his lorgnette, said, as if his contrary-mindedness were irresistibly invoked:

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“Well, I don’t know. It’s amusing. Do you suppose we shall see her when we go behind, March?”

He still professed a desire to do so when the curtain fell, and they hurried to the rear door of the theatre. It was slightly ajar, and they pulled it wide open, with the eagerness of their age and nation, and began to mount the stairs leading up from it between rows of painted dancing-girls, who had come out for a breath of air, and who pressed themselves against the walls to make room for the intruders. With their rouged faces, and the stare of their glassy eyes intensified by the coloring of their brows and lashes, they were like painted statues, as they stood there with their crimsoned lips parted in astonished smiles.

“This is rather weird,” said March, faltering at the sight. “I wonder if we might ask these young ladies where to go?” General Triscoe made no answer, and was apparently no more prepared than himself to accost the files of danseuses, when they were themselves accosted by an angry voice from the head of the stairs with a demand for their business. The voice belonged to a gendarme, who descended toward them and seemed as deeply scandalized at their appearance as they could have been at that of the young ladies.

March explained, in his ineffective German, with every effect of improbability, that they were there by appointment of the manager, and wished to find his room.

The gendarme would not or could not make anything out of it. He pressed down upon them, and laying a rude hand on a shoulder of either, began to force them back to the door. The mild nature of the editor might have yielded to his violence, but the martial spirit of General Triscoe was roused. He shrugged the gendarme’s hand from his shoulder, and with a voice as furious as his own required him, in English, to say what the devil he meant. The gendarme rejoined with equal heat in German; the general’s tone rose in anger; the dancing-girls emitted some little shrieks of alarm, and fled noisily up the stairs. From time to time March interposed with a word of the German which had mostly deserted him in his hour of need; but if it had been a flow of intelligible expostulation, it would have had no effect upon the disputants. They grew more outrageous, till the manager himself, appeared at the head of the stairs, and extended an arresting hand over the hubbub. As soon as the situation clarified itself he hurried down to his visitors with a polite roar of apology and rescued them from the gendarme, and led them up to his room and forced them into arm-chairs with a rapidity of reparation which did not exhaust itself till he had entreated them with every circumstance of civility to excuse an incident so mortifying to him. But with all his haste he lost so much time in this that he had little left to show them through the theatre, and their presentation to the prima donna was reduced to the obeisances with which they met and parted as she went upon the stage at the lifting of the curtain. In the lack of a common language this was perhaps as well as a longer interview; and nothing could have been more honorable than their dismissal at the hands of the gendarme who had

received them so stormily. He opened the door for them, and stood with his fingers to his cap saluting, in the effect of being a whole file of grenadiers.

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XLIII.

At the same moment Burnamy bowed himself out of the box where he had been sitting with the ladies during the absence of the gentlemen. He had knocked at the door almost as soon as they disappeared, and if he did not fully share the consternation which his presence caused, he looked so frightened that Mrs. March reserved the censure which the sight of him inspired, and in default of other inspiration treated his coming simply as a surprise. She shook hands with him, and then she asked him to sit down, and listened to his explanation that he had come back to Carlsbad to write up the birthnight festivities, on an order from the Paris-New York Chronicle; that he had seen them in the box and had ventured to took in. He was pale, and so discomposed that the heart of justice was softened more and more in Mrs. March's breast, and she left him to the talk that sprang up, by an admirable effect of tact in the young lady, between him and Miss Triscoe.

After all, she decided, there was nothing criminal in his being in Carlsbad, and possibly in the last analysis there was nothing so very wicked in his being in her box. One might say that it was not very nice of him after he had gone away under such a cloud; but on the other hand it was nice, though in a different way, if he longed so much to see Miss Triscoe that he could not help coming. It was altogether in his favor that he was so agitated, though he was momently becoming less agitated; the young people were beginning to laugh at the notion of Mr. March and General Triscoe going behind the scenes. Burnamy said he envied them the chance; and added, not very relevantly, that he had come from Baireuth, where he had seen the last of the Wagner performances. He said he was going back to Baireuth, but not to Ansbach again, where he had finished looking up that Kaspar Hauser business. He seemed to think Mrs. March would know about it, and she could not help saying; Oh, yes, Mr. March was so much interested. She wondered if she ought to tell him about his handkerchief; but she remembered in time that she had left it in Miss Triscoe's keeping. She wondered if the girl realized how handsome he was. He was extremely handsome, in his black evening dress, with his Tuxedo, and the pallor of his face repeated in his expanse of shirt front.

At the bell for the rising of the curtain he rose too, and took their offered hands. In offering hers Mrs. March asked if he would not stay and speak with Mr. March and the general; and now for the first time he recognized anything clandestine in his visit. He laughed nervously, and said, "No, thank you!" and shut himself out.

"We must tell them," said Mrs. March, rather interrogatively, and she was glad that the girl answered with a note of indignation.

"Why, certainly, Mrs. March."

They could not tell them at once, for the second act had begun when March and the general came back; and after the opera was over and they got out into the crowded street there was no chance, for the general was obliged to offer his arm to Mrs. March, while her husband followed with his daughter.

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The facades of the theatre and of the hotels were outlined with thickly set little lamps, which beaded the arches of the bridges spanning the Tepl, and lighted the casements and portals of the shops. High above all, against the curtain of black woodland on the mountain where its skeleton had been growing for days, glittered the colossal effigy of the doubleheaded eagle of Austria, crowned with the tiara of the Holy Roman Empire; in the reflected splendor of its myriad lamps the pale Christ looked down from the mountain opposite upon the surging multitudes in the streets and on the bridges.

They were most amiable multitudes, March thought, and they responded docilely to the entreaties of the policemen who stood on the steps of the bridges, and divided their encountering currents with patient appeals of “Bitte schon! Bitte schon!” He laughed to think of a New York cop saying “Please prettily! Please prettily!” to a New York crowd which he wished to have go this way or that, and then he burned with shame to think how far our manners were from civilization, wherever our heads and hearts might be, when he heard a voice at his elbow:

“A punch with a club would start some of these fellows along quicker.”

It was Stoller, and March turned from him to lose his disgust in the sudden terror of perceiving that Miss Triscoe was no longer at his side. Neither could he see his wife and General Triscoe, and he began to push frantically about in the crowd looking for the girl. He had an interminable five or ten minutes in his vain search, and he was going to call out to her by name, when Burnamy saved him from the hopeless absurdity by elbowing his way to him with Miss. Triscoe on his arm.

“Here she is, Mr. March,” he said, as if there were nothing strange in his having been there to find her; in fact he had followed them all from the theatre, and at the moment he saw the party separated, and Miss Triscoe carried off helpless in the human stream, had plunged in and rescued her. Before March could formulate any question in his bewilderment, Burnamy was gone again; the girl offered no explanation for him, and March had not yet decided to ask any when he caught sight of his wife and General Triscoe standing tiptoe in a doorway and craning their necks upward and forward to scan the crowd in search of him and his charge. Then he looked round at her and opened his lips to express the astonishment that filled him, when he was aware of an ominous shining of her eyes and trembling of her hand on his arm.

She pressed his arm nervously, and he understood her to beg him to forbear at once all question of her and all comment on Burnamy’s presence to her father.

It would not have been just the time for either. Not only Mrs. March was with the general, but Mrs. Adding also; she had called to them from that place, where she was safe with Rose when she saw them eddying about in the crowd. The general was still, expressing a gratitude which became more pressing the more it was disclaimed; he said casually at sight of his daughter, “Ah; you’ve found us, have you?” and went on talking

to Mrs. Adding, who nodded to them laughingly, and asked, “Did you see me beckoning?”

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“Look here, my dear!” March said to his wife as soon as they parted from the rest, the general gallantly promising that his daughter and he would see Mrs. Adding safe to her hotel, and were making their way slowly home alone. “Did you know that Burnamy was in Carlsbad?”

“He’s going away on the twelve-o’clock train tonight,” she answered, firmly.

“What has that got to do with it? Where did you see him?”

“In the box, while you were behind the scenes.”

She told him all about it, and he listened in silent endeavor for the ground of censure from which a sense of his own guilt forced him. She asked suddenly, “Where did you see him?” and he told her in turn.

He added severely, “Her father ought to know. Why didn’t you tell him?”

“Why didn’t you?” she retorted with great reason.

“Because I didn’t think he was just in the humor for it.” He began to laugh as he sketched their encounter with the gendarme, but she did not seem to think it amusing; and he became serious again. “Besides, I was afraid she was going to blubber, any way.”

“She wouldn’t have blubbered, as you call it. I don’t know why you need be so disgusting! It would have given her just the moral support she needed. Now she will have to tell him herself, and he will blame us. You ought to have spoken; you could have done it easily and naturally when you came up with her. You will have yourself to thank for all the trouble that comes of it, now, my dear.”

He shouted in admiration of her skill in shifting the blame on him. “All right! I should have had to stand it, even if you hadn’t behaved with angelic wisdom.”

“Why,” she said, after reflection, “I don’t see what either of us has done. We didn’t get Burnamy to come here, or connive at his presence in any way.”

“Oh! Make Triscoe believe that! He knows you’ve done all you could to help the affair on.”

“Well, what if I have? He began making up to Mrs. Adding himself as soon as he saw her, to-night. She looked very pretty.”

“Well, thank Heaven! we’re off to-morrow morning, and I hope we’ve seen the last of them. They’ve done what they could to spoil my cure, but I’m not going to have them spoil my aftercure.”

XLIV.

Mrs. March had decided not to go to the Posthof for breakfast, where they had already taken a lavish leave of the ‘schone’ Lili, with a sense of being promptly superseded in her affections. They found a place in the red-table-cloth end of the pavilion at Pupp’s, and were served by the pretty girl with the rose-bud mouth whom they had known only as Ein-und-Zwanzig, and whose promise of “Komm’ gleich, bitte schon!” was like a bird’s note. Never had the coffee been so good, the bread so aerially light, the Westphalian ham so tenderly pink. A young married couple whom they knew came by, arm in arm, in their morning walk, and sat down with them, like their own youth, for a moment.

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“If you had told them we were going, dear,” said Mrs. March, when the couple were themselves gone, “we should have been as old as ever. Don’t let us tell anybody, this morning, that we’re going. I couldn’t bear it.”

They had been obliged to take the secretary of the hotel into their confidence, in the process of paying their bill. He put on his high hat and came out to see them off. The portier was already there, standing at the step of the lordly two-spanner which they had ordered for the long drive to the station. The Swiss elevator-man came to the door to offer them a fellow-republican’s good wishes for their journey; Herr Pupp himself appeared at the last moment to hope for their return another summer. Mrs. March bent a last look of interest upon the proprietor as their two-spanner whirled away.

“They say that he is going to be made a count.”

“Well, I don’t object,” said March. “A man who can feed fourteen thousand people, mostly Germans, in a day, ought to be made an archduke.”

At the station something happened which touched them even more than these last attentions of the hotel. They were in their compartment, and were in the act of possessing themselves of the best places by putting their bundles and bags on them, when they heard Mrs. March’s name called.

They turned and saw Rose Adding at the door, his thin face flushed with excitement and his eyes glowing. “I was afraid I shouldn’t get here in time,” he panted, and he held up to her a huge bunch of flowers.

“Why Rose! From your mother?”

“From me,” he said, timidly, and he was slipping out into the corridor, when she caught him and his flowers to her in one embrace. “I want to kiss you,” she said; and presently, when he had waved his hand to them from the platform outside, and the train had started, she fumbled for her handkerchief. “I suppose you call it blubbering; but he is the sweetest child!”

“He’s about the only one of our Carlsbad compatriots that I’m sorry to leave behind,” March assented. “He’s the only unmarried one that wasn’t in danger of turning up a lover on my hands; if there had been some rather old girl, or some rather light matron in our acquaintance, I’m not sure that I should have been safe even from Rose. Carlsbad has been an interruption to our silver wedding journey, my dear; but I hope now that it will begin again.”

“Yes,” said his wife, “now we can have each other all to ourselves.”

“Yes. It’s been very different from our first wedding journey in that. It isn’t that we’re not so young now as we were, but that we don’t seem so much our own property. We used

to be the sole proprietors, and now we seem to be mere tenants at will, and any interloping lover may come in and set our dearest interests on the sidewalk. The disadvantage of living along is that we get too much into the hands of other people."

"Yes, it is. I shall be glad to be rid of them all, too."

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“I don’t know that the drawback is serious enough to make us wish we had died young—or younger,” he suggested.

“No, I don’t know that it is,” she assented. She added, from an absence where he was sufficiently able to locate her meaning, “I hope she’ll write and tell me what her father says and does when she tells him that he was there.”

There were many things, in the weather, the landscape, their sole occupancy of an unsmoking compartment, while all the smoking compartments round overflowed with smokers, which conspired to offer them a pleasing illusion of the past; it was sometimes so perfect that they almost held each other’s hands. In later life there are such moments when the youthful emotions come back, as certain birds do in winter, and the elderly heart chirps and twitters to itself as if it were young. But it is best to discourage this fondness; and Mrs. March joined her husband in mocking it, when he made her observe how fit it was that their silver wedding journey should be resumed as part of his after-cure. If he had found the fountain of youth in the warm, flat, faintly nauseous water of the Felsenquelle, he was not going to call himself twenty-eight again till his second month of the Carlsbad regimen was out, and he had got back to salad and fruit.

At Eger they had a memorable dinner, with so much leisure for it that they could form a life-long friendship for the old English-speaking waiter who served them, and would not suffer them to hurry themselves. The hills had already fallen away, and they ran along through a cheerful country, with tracts of forest under white clouds blowing about in a blue sky, and gayly flinging their shadows down upon the brown ploughed land, and upon the yellow oat-fields, where women were cutting the leisurely harvest with sickles, and where once a great girl with swarthy bare arms unbent herself from her toil, and rose, a statue of rude vigor and beauty, to watch them go by. Hedges of evergreen enclosed the yellow oat-fields, where slow wagons paused to gather the sheaves of the week before, and then loitered away with them. Flocks of geese waddled in sculpturesque relief against the close-cropt pastures, herded by little girls with flaxen pigtails, whose eyes, blue as corn-flowers, followed the flying train. There were stretches of wild thyme purpling long barren acreages, and growing up the railroad banks almost to the rails themselves. From the meadows the rowen, tossed in long loose windrows, sent into their car a sad autumnal fragrance which mingled with the tobacco smoke, when two fat smokers emerged into the narrow corridor outside their compartments and tried to pass each other. Their vast stomachs beat together in a vain encounter.

“Zu enge!” said one, and “Ja, zu enge!” said the other, and they laughed innocently in each other’s’ faces, with a joy in their recognition of the corridor’s narrowness as great as if it had been a stroke of the finest wit.

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All the way the land was lovely, and as they drew near Nuremberg it grew enchanting, with a fairy quaintness. The scenery was Alpine, but the scale was toy-like, as befitted the region, and the mimic peaks and valleys with green brooks gushing between them, and strange rock forms recurring in endless caprice, seemed the home of children's story. All the gnomes and elves might have dwelt there in peaceful fellowship with the peasants who ploughed the little fields, and gathered the garlanded hops, and lived in the farmsteads and village houses with those high timber-laced gables.

"We ought to have come here long ago with the children, when they were children," said March.

"No," his wife returned; "it would have been too much for them. Nobody but grown people could bear it."

The spell which began here was not really broken by anything that afterwards happened in Nuremberg, though the old toy-capital was trolley-wired through all its quaintness, and they were lodged in a hotel lighted by electricity and heated by steam, and equipped with an elevator which was so modern that it came down with them as well as went up. All the things that assumed to be of recent structure or invention were as nothing against the dense past, which overwhelmed them with the sense of a world elsewhere outlived. In Nuremberg it is not the quaint or the picturesque that is exceptional; it is the matter-of-fact and the commonplace. Here, more than anywhere else, you are steeped in the gothic spirit which expresses itself in a Teutonic dialect of homely sweetness, of endearing caprice, of rude grotesqueness, but of positive grace and beauty almost never. It is the architectural speech of a strenuous, gross, kindly, honest people's fancy; such as it is it was inexhaustible, and such as it is it was bewitching for the travellers.

They could hardly wait till they had supper before plunging into the ancient town, and they took the first tram-car at a venture. It was a sort of transfer, drawn by horses, which delivered them a little inside. of the city gate to a trolley-car. The conductor with their fare demanded their destination; March frankly owned that they did not know where they wanted to go; they wanted to go anywhere the conductor chose; and the conductor, after reflection, decided to put them down at the public garden, which, as one of the newest things in the city, would make the most favorable impression upon strangers. It was in fact so like all other city gardens, with the foliage of its trimly planted alleys, that it sheltered them effectually from the picturesqueness of Nuremberg, and they had a long, peaceful hour on one of its benches, where they rested from their journey, and repented their hasty attempt to appropriate the charm of the city.

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The next morning it rained, according to a custom which the elevator-boy (flown with the insolent recollection of a sunny summer in Milan) said was invariable in Nuremberg; but after the one-o'clock table d'hote they took a noble two-spanner carriage, and drove all round the city. Everywhere the ancient moat, thickly turfed and planted with trees and shrubs, stretched a girdle of garden between their course and the wall beautifully old, with knots of dead ivy clinging to its crevices, or broad meshes of the shining foliage mantling its blackened masonry. A tile-roofed open gallery ran along the top, where so many centuries of sentries had paced, and arched the massive gates with heavily moulded piers, where so countlessly the fierce burgher troops had sallied forth against their besiegers, and so often the leaguer hosts had dashed themselves in assault. The blood shed in forgotten battles would have flooded the moat where now the grass and flowers grew, or here and there a peaceful stretch of water stagnated.

The drive ended in a visit to the old Burg, where the Hapsburg Kaisers dwelt when they visited their faithful imperial city. From its ramparts the incredible picturesqueness of Nuremberg best shows itself, and if one has any love for the distinctive quality of Teutonic architecture it is here that more than anywhere else one may feast it. The prospect of tower and spire and gable is of such a mediaeval richness, of such an abounding fulness, that all incidents are lost in it. The multitudinous roofs of red-brown tiles, blinking browsily from their low dormers, press upon one another in endless succession; they cluster together on a rise of ground and sink away where the street falls, but they nowhere disperse or scatter, and they end abruptly at the other rim of the city, beyond which looms the green country, merging in the remoter blue of misty uplands.

A pretty young girl waited at the door of the tower for the visitors to gather in sufficient number, and then led them through the terrible museum, discanting in the same gay voice and with the same smiling air on all the murderous engines and implements of torture. First in German and then in English she explained the fearful uses of the Iron Maiden, she winningly illustrated the action of the racks and wheels on which men had been stretched and broken, and she sweetly vaunted a sword which had beheaded eight hundred persons. When she took the established fee from March she suggested, with a demure glance, "And what more you please for saying it in English."

"Can you say it in Russian?" demanded a young man, whose eyes he had seen dwelling on her from the beginning. She laughed archly, and responded with some Slavic words, and then delivered her train of sight-seers over to the custodian who was to show them through the halls and chambers of the Burg. These were undergoing the repairs which the monuments of the past are perpetually suffering in the present,

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and there was some special painting and varnishing for the reception of the Kaiser, who was coming to Nuremberg for the military manoeuvres then at hand. But if they had been in the unmolested discomfort of their unlivable magnificence, their splendor was such as might well reconcile the witness to the superior comfort of a private station in our snugger day. The Marches came out owning that the youth which might once have found the romantic glories of the place enough was gone from them. But so much of it was left to her that she wished to make him stop and look at the flirtation which had blossomed out between that pretty young girl and the Russian, whom they had scarcely missed from their party in the Burg. He had apparently never parted from the girl, and now as they sat together on the threshold of the gloomy tower, he most have been teaching her more Slavic words, for they were both laughing as if they understood each other perfectly.

In his security from having the affair in any wise on his hands, March would have willingly lingered, to see how her education got on; but it began to rain, The rain did not disturb the lovers, but it obliged the elderly spectators to take refuge in their carriage; and they drove off to find the famous Little Goose Man. This is what every one does at Nuremberg; it would be difficult to say why. When they found the Little Goose Man, he was only a mediaeval fancy in bronze, who stood on his pedestal in the market-place and contributed from the bill of the goose under his arm a small stream to the rainfall drenching the wet wares of the wet market-women round the fountain, and soaking their cauliflowers and lettuce, their grapes and pears, their carrots and turnips, to the watery flavor of all fruits and vegetables in Germany.

The air was very raw and chill; but after supper the clouds cleared away, and a pleasant evening tempted the travellers out. The portier dissembled any slight which their eagerness for the only amusement he could think of inspired, and directed them to a popular theatre which was giving a summer season at low prices to the lower classes, and which they surprised, after some search, trying to hide itself in a sort of back square. They got the best places at a price which ought to have been mortifyingly cheap, and found themselves, with a thousand other harmless bourgeois folk, in a sort of spacious, agreeable barn, of a decoration by no means ugly, and of a certain artless comfort. Each seat fronted a shelf at the back of the seat before it, where the spectator could put his hat; there was a smaller shelf for his stein of the beer passed constantly throughout the evening; and there was a buffet where he could stay himself with cold ham and other robust German refreshments.

It was “The Wedding Journey to Nuremberg” upon which they had oddly chanced, and they accepted as a national tribute the character of an American girl in it. She was an American girl of the advanced pattern, and she came and went at a picnic on the arm of a head waiter. She seemed to have no office in the drama except to illustrate a German conception of American girlhood, but even in this simple function she seemed rather to

puzzle the German audience; perhaps because of the occasional English words which she used.

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To the astonishment of her compatriots, when they came out of the theatre it was not raining; the night was as brilliantly starlit as a night could be in Germany, and they sauntered home richly content through the narrow streets and through the beautiful old Damenthor, beyond which their hotel lay. How pretty, they said, to call that charming port the Ladies' Gate! They promised each other to find out why, and they never did so, but satisfied themselves by assigning it to the exclusive use of the slim maidens and massive matrons of the old Nuremberg patriciate, whom they imagined trailing their silken splendors under its arch in perpetual procession.

XLV.

The life of the Nuremberg patriciate, now extinct in the control of the city which it builded so strenuously and maintained so heroically, is still insistent in all its art. This expresses their pride at once and their simplicity with a childish literality. At its best it is never so good as the good Italian art, whose influence is always present in its best. The coloring of the great canvases is Venetian, but there is no such democracy of greatness as in the painting at Venice; in decoration the art of Nuremberg is at best quaint, and at the worst puerile. Wherever it had obeyed an academic intention it seemed to March poor and coarse, as in the bronze fountain beside the Church of St. Lawrence. The water spins from the pouted breasts of the beautiful figures in streams that cross and interlace after a fancy trivial and gross; but in the base of the church there is a time-worn Gethsemane, exquisitely affecting in its simple-hearted truth. The long ages have made it even more affecting than the sculptor imagined it; they have blurred the faces and figures in passing till their features are scarcely distinguishable; and the sleeping apostles seem to have dreamed themselves back into the mother-marble. It is of the same tradition and impulse with that supreme glory of the native sculpture, the ineffable tabernacle of Adam Krafft, which climbs a column of the church within, a miracle of richly carven story; and no doubt if there were a Nuremberg sculptor doing great things today, his work would be of kindred inspiration.

The descendants of the old patrician who ordered the tabernacle at rather a hard bargain from the artist still worship on the floor below, and the descendants of his neighbor patricians have their seats in the pews about, and their names cut in the proprietary plates on the pew-tops. The vergeress who showed the Marches through the church was devout in the praise of these aristocratic fellow-citizens of hers. "So simple, and yet so noble!" she said. She was a very romantic vergeress, and she told them at unsparing length the legend of the tabernacle, how the artist fell asleep in despair of winning his patron's daughter, and saw in a vision the master-work with the lily-like droop at top, which gained him her hand. They did not realize till too late that it was all out of a novel of Georg Ebers's, but added to the regular fee for the church a gift worthy of an inedited legend.

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Even then they had a pleasure in her enthusiasm rarely imparted by the Nuremberg manner. They missed there the constant, sweet civility of Carlsbad, and found themselves falling flat in their endeavors for a little cordiality. They indeed inspired with some kindness the old woman who showed them through that cemetery where Albert Durer and Hans Sachs and many other illustrious citizens lie buried under monumental brasses of such beauty:

> "That kings to have the like, might wish to die."

But this must have been because they abandoned themselves so willingly to the fascination of the bronze skull on the tomb of a fourteenth-century patrician, which had the uncommon advantage of a lower jaw hinged to the upper. She proudly clapped it up and down for their astonishment, and waited, with a toothless smile, to let them discover the bead of a nail artfully figured in the skull; then she gave a shrill cackle of joy, and gleefully explained that the wife of this patrician had killed him by driving a nail into his temple, and had been fitly beheaded for the murder.

She cared so much for nothing else in the cemetery, but she consented to let them wonder at the richness of the sculpture in the level tombs, with their escutcheons and memorial tablets, overrun by the long grass and the matted ivy; she even consented to share their indignation at the destruction of some of the brasses and the theft of others. She suffered more reluctantly their tenderness for the old, old crucifixion figured in sculpture at one corner of the cemetery, where the anguish of the Christ had long since faded into the stone from which it had been evoked, and the thieves were no longer distinguishable in their penitence or impenitence; but she parted friends with them when she saw how much they seemed taken with the votive chapel of the noble Holzschuh family, where a line of wooden shoes puns upon the name in the frieze, like the line of dogs which chase one another, with bones in their mouths, around the Canossa palace at Verona. A sense of the beautiful house by the Adige was part of the pleasing confusion which possessed them in Nuremberg whenever they came upon the expression of the gothic spirit common both to the German and northern Italian art. They knew that it was an effect which had passed from Germany into Italy, but in the liberal air of the older land it had come to so much more beauty that now, when they found it in its home, it seemed something fetched from over the Alps and coarsened in the attempt to naturalize it to an alien air.

In the Germanic Museum they fled to the Italian painters from the German pictures they had inspired; in the great hall of the Rathhaus the noble Processional of Durer was the more precious, because his Triumph of Maximilian somehow suggested Mantegna's Triumph of Caesar. There was to be a banquet in the hall, under the mighty fresco, to welcome the German Emperor, coming the next week, and the Rathhaus was full of

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work-people furbishing it up against his arrival, and making it difficult for the custodian who had it in charge to show it properly to strangers. She was of the same enthusiastic sisterhood as the vergeress of St. Lawrence and the guardian of the old cemetery, and by a mighty effort she prevailed over the workmen so far as to lead her charges out through the corridor where the literal conscience of the brothers Kuhn has wrought in the roof to an exact image of a tournament as it was in Nuremberg four hundred years ago. In this relief, thronged with men and horses, the gala-life of the past survives in unexampled fulness; and March blamed himself after enjoying it for having felt in it that toy-figure quality which seems the final effect of the German gothicism in sculpture.

XLVI.

On Sunday Mrs. March partially conformed to an earlier New England ideal of the day by ceasing from sight-seeing. She could not have understood the sermon if she had gone to church, but she appeased the lingering conscience she had on this point by not going out till afternoon. Then she found nothing of the gayety which Sunday afternoon wears in Catholic lands. The people were resting from their week-day labors, but they were not playing; and the old churches, long since converted to Lutheran uses, were locked against tourist curiosity.

It was as it should be; it was as it would be at home; and yet in this ancient city, where the past was so much alive in the perpetual picturesqueness, the Marches felt an incongruity in it; and they were fain to escape from the Protestant silence and seriousness of the streets to the shade of the public garden they had involuntarily visited the evening of their arrival.

On a bench sat a quiet, rather dejected man, whom March asked some question of their way. He answered in English, and in the parley that followed they discovered that they were all Americans. The stranger proved to be an American of the sort commonest in Germany, and he said he had returned to his native country to get rid of the ague which he had taken on Staten Island. He had been seventeen years in New York, and now a talk of Tammany and its chances in the next election, of pulls and deals, of bosses and heelers, grew up between the civic step-brothers, and joined them is a common interest. The German-American said he was bookkeeper in some glass-works which had been closed by our tariff, and he confessed that he did not mean to return to us, though he spoke of German affairs with the impartiality of an outsider. He said that the Socialist party was increasing faster than any other, and that this tacitly meant the suppression of rank and the abolition of monarchy. He warned March against the appearance of industrial prosperity in Germany; beggary was severely repressed, and if poverty was better clad than with us, it was as hungry and as hopeless in Nuremberg as

in New York. The working classes were kindly and peaceable; they only knifed each other quietly on Sunday evenings after having too much beer.

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Presently the stranger rose and bowed to the Marches for good-by; and as he walked down the aisle of trees in which they had been fitting together, he seemed to be retreating farther and farther from such Americanism as they had in common. He had reverted to an entirely German effect of dress and figure; his walk was slow and Teutonic; he must be a type of thousands who have returned to the fatherland without wishing to own themselves its children again, and yet out of heart with the only country left them.

“He was rather pathetic, my dear,” said March, in the discomfort he knew his wife must be feeling as well as himself. “How odd to have the lid lifted here, and see the same old problems seething and bubbling in the witch’s caldron we call civilization as we left simmering away at home! And how hard to have our tariff reach out and snatch the bread from the mouths of those poor glass-workers!”

“I thought that was hard,” she sighed. “It must have been his bread, too.”

“Let’s hope it was not his cake, anyway. I suppose,” he added, dreamily, “that what we used to like in Italy was the absence of all the modern activities. The Italians didn’t repel us by assuming to be of our epoch in the presence of their monuments; they knew how to behave as pensive memories. I wonder if they’re still as charming.”

“Oh, no,” she returned, “nothing is as charming as it used to be. And now we need the charm more than ever.”

He laughed at her despair, in the tacit understanding they had lived into that only one of them was to be desperate at a time, and that they were to take turns in cheering each other up. “Well, perhaps we don’t deserve it. And I’m not sure that we need it so much as we did when we were young. We’ve got tougher; we can stand the cold facts better now. They made me shiver once, but now they give me a sort of agreeable thrill. Besides, if, life kept up its pretty illusions, if it insisted upon being as charming as it used to be, how could we ever bear to die? We’ve got that to consider.” He yielded to the temptation of his paradox, but he did not fail altogether of the purpose with which he began, and they took the trolley back to their hotel cheerful in the intrepid fancy that they had confronted fate when they had only had the hardihood to face a phrase.

They agreed that now he ought really to find out something about the contemporary life of Nuremberg, and the next morning he went out before breakfast, and strolled through some of the simpler streets, in the hope of intimate impressions. The peasant women, serving portions of milk from house to house out of the cans in the little wagons which they drew themselves, were a touch of pleasing domestic comedy; a certain effect of tragedy imparted itself from the lamentations of the sucking-pigs jolted over the pavements in handcarts; a certain majesty from the long procession of yellow mail-wagons, with drivers in the royal Bavarian blue,

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trooping by in the cold small rain, impassibly dripping from their glazed hat-brims upon their uniforms. But he could not feel that these things were any of them very poignantly significant; and he covered his retreat from the actualities of Nuremberg by visiting the chief book-store and buying more photographs of the architecture than he wanted, and more local histories than he should ever read. He made a last effort for the contemporaneous life by asking the English-speaking clerk if there were any literary men of distinction living in Nuremberg, and the clerk said there was not one.

He went home to breakfast wondering if he should be able to make his meagre facts serve with his wife; but he found her far from any wish to listen to them. She was intent upon a pair of young lovers, at a table near her own, who were so absorbed in each other that they were proof against an interest that must otherwise have pierced them through. The bridegroom, as he would have called himself, was a pretty little Bavarian lieutenant, very dark and regular, and the bride was as pretty and as little, but delicately blond. Nature had admirably mated them, and if art had helped to bring them together through the genius of the bride's mother, who was breakfasting with them, it had wrought almost as fitly. Mrs. March queried impartially who they were, where they met, and how, and just when they were going to be married; and March consented, in his personal immunity from their romance, to let it go on under his eyes without protest. But later, when they met the lovers in the street, walking arm in arm, with the bride's mother behind them gloating upon their bliss, he said the woman ought, at her time of life, to be ashamed of such folly. She must know that this affair, by nine chances out of ten, could not fail to eventuate at the best in a marriage as tiresome as most other marriages, and yet she was abandoning herself with those ignorant young people to the illusion that it was the finest and sweetest thing in life.

"Well, isn't it?" his wife asked.

"Yes, that's the worst of it. It shows how poverty-stricken life really is. We want somehow to believe that each pair of lovers will find the good we have missed, and be as happy as we expected to be."

"I think we have been happy enough, and that we've had as much good as was wholesome for us," she returned, hurt.

"You're always so concrete! I meant us in the abstract. But if you will be personal, I'll say that you've been as happy as you deserve, and got more good than you had any right to."

She laughed with him, and then they laughed again to perceive that they were walking arm in arm too, like the lovers, whom they were insensibly following.

He proposed that while they were in the mood they should go again to the old cemetery, and see the hinged jaw of the murdered Paumgartner, wagging in eternal accusation of his murderess. “It’s rather hard on her, that he should be having the last word, that way,” he said. “She was a woman, no matter what mistakes she had committed.”

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“That’s what I call ’banale’,” said Mrs. March.

“It is, rather,” he confessed. “It makes me feel as if I must go to see the house of Durer, after all.”

“Well, I knew we should have to, sooner or later.”

It was the thing that they had said would not do, in Nuremberg, because everybody did it; but now they hailed a fiacre, and ordered it driven to Durer’s house, which they found in a remote part of the town near a stretch of the city wall, varied in its picturesqueness by the interposition of a dripping grove; it was raining again by the time they reached it. The quarter had lapsed from earlier dignity, and without being squalid, it looked worn and hard worked; otherwise it could hardly have been different in Durer’s time. His dwelling, in no way impressive outside, amidst the environing quaintness, stood at the corner of a narrow side-hill street that sloped cityward; and within it was stripped bare of all the furniture of life below-stairs, and above was none the cozier for the stiff appointment of a show-house. It was cavernous and cold; but if there had been a fire in the kitchen, and a table laid in the dining-room, and beds equipped for nightmare, after the German fashion, in the empty chambers, one could have imagined a kindly, simple, neighborly existence there. It in no wise suggested the calling of an artist, perhaps because artists had not begun in Durer’s time to take themselves so objectively as they do now, but it implied the life of a prosperous citizen, and it expressed the period.

The Marches wrote their names in the visitors’ book, and paid the visitor’s fee, which also bought them tickets in an annual lottery for a reproduction of one of Durer’s pictures; and then they came away, by no means dissatisfied with his house. By its association with his sojourns in Italy it recalled visits to other shrines, and they had to own that it was really no worse than Ariosto’s house at Ferrara, or Petrarch’s at Arqua, or Michelangelo’s at Florence. “But what I admire,” he said, “is our futility in going to see it. We expected to surprise some quality of the man left lying about in the house because he lived and died in it; and because his wife kept him up so close there, and worked him so hard to save his widow from coming to want.”

“Who said she did that?”

“A friend of his who hated her. But he had to allow that she was a God-fearing woman, and had a New England conscience.”

“Well, I dare say Durer was easy-going.”

“Yes; but I don’t like her laying her plans to survive him; though women always do that.”

They were going away the next day, and they sat down that evening to a final supper in such good-humor with themselves that they were willing to include a young couple who

came to take places at their table, though they would rather have been alone. They lifted their eyes for their expected salutation, and recognized Mr. and Mrs. Leffers, of the Norumbia.

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The ladies fell upon each other as if they had been mother and daughter; March and the young man shook hands, in the feeling of passengers mutually endeared by the memories of a pleasant voyage. They arrived at the fact that Mr. Leffers had received letters in England from his partners which allowed him to prolong his wedding journey in a tour of the continent, while their wives were still exclaiming at their encounter in the same hotel at Nuremberg; and then they all sat down to have, as the bride said, a real Norumbia time.

She was one of those young wives who talk always with their eyes submissively on their husbands, no matter whom they are speaking to; but she was already unconsciously ruling him in her abeyance. No doubt she was ruling him for his good; she had a livelier, mind than he, and she knew more, as the American wives of young American business men always do, and she was planning wisely for their travels. She recognized her merit in this devotion with an artless candor, which was typical rather than personal. March was glad to go out with Leffers for a little stroll, and to leave Mrs. March to listen to Mrs. Leffers, who did not let them go without making her husband promise to wrap up well, and not get his feet wet. She made March promise not to take him far, and to bring him back early, which he found himself very willing to do, after an exchange of ideas with Mr. Leffers. The young man began to talk about his wife, in her providential, her almost miraculous adaptation to the sort of man he was, and when he had once begun to explain what sort of man he was, there was no end to it, till they rejoined the ladies in the reading-room.

XLVII.

The young couple came to the station to see the Marches off after dinner the next day; and the wife left a bank of flowers on the seat beside Mrs. March, who said, as soon as they were gone, “I believe I would rather meet people of our own age after this. I used to think that you could keep young by being with young people; but I don’t, now. There world is very different from ours. Our world doesn’t really exist any more, but as long as we keep away from theirs we needn’t realize it. Young people,” she went on, “are more practical-minded than we used to be; they’re quite as sentimental; but I don’t think they care so much for the higher things. They’re not so much brought up on poetry as we were,” she pursued. “That little Mrs. Leffers would have read Longfellow in our time; but now she didn’t know of his poem on Nuremberg; she was intelligent enough about the place, but you could see that its quaintness was not so precious as it was to us; not so sacred.” Her tone entreated him to find more meaning in her words than she had put into them. “They couldn’t have felt as we did about that old ivied wall and that grassy, flowery moat under it; and the beautiful Damenthor and that pile-up of the roofs from the Burg; and those winding streets with their Gothic facades all, cobwebbed with trolley wires; and that yellow, aguish-looking river drowsing through the town under the windows of those overhanging houses; and the market-place, and the squares before the churches, with their queer shops in the nooks and corners round them!”

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“I see what you mean. But do you think it’s as sacred to us as it would have been twenty-five years ago? I had an irreverent feeling now and then that Nuremberg was overdoing Nuremberg.”

“Oh, yes; so had I. We’re that modern, if we’re not so young as we were.”

“We were very simple, in those days.”

“Well, if we were simple, we knew it!”

“Yes; we used to like taking our unconsciousness to pieces and looking at it.”

“We had a good time.”

“Too good. Sometimes it seems as if it would have lasted longer if it had not been so good. We might have our cake now if we hadn’t eaten it.”

“It would be mouldy, though.”

“I wonder,” he said, recurring to the Lefferses; “how we really struck them.”

“Well, I don’t believe they thought we ought to be travelling about alone, quite, at our age.”

“Oh, not so bad as that!” After a moment he said, “I dare say they don’t go round quarrelling on their wedding journey, as we did.”

“Indeed they do! They had an awful quarrel just before they got to Nuremberg: about his wanting to send some of the baggage to Liverpool by express that she wanted to keep with them. But she said it had been a lesson, and they were never going to quarrel again.” The elders looked at each other in the light of experience, and laughed. “Well,” she ended, “that’s one thing we’re through with. I suppose we’ve come to feel more alike than we used to.”

“Or not to feel at all. How did they settle it about the baggage?”

“Oh! He insisted on her keeping it with her.” March laughed again, but this time he laughed alone, and after a while she said: “Well, they gave just the right relief to Nuremberg, with their good, clean American philistinism. I don’t mind their thinking us queer; they must have thought Nuremberg was queer.”

“Yes. We oldsters are always queer to the young. We’re either ridiculously lively and chirpy, or we’re ridiculously stiff and grim; they never expect to be like us, and wouldn’t, for the world. The worst of it is, we elderly people are absurd to one another; we don’t,

at the bottom of our hearts, believe we're like that, when we meet. I suppose that arrogant old ass of a Triscoe looks upon me as a grinning dotard."

"I wonder," said Mrs. March, "if she's told him yet," and March perceived that she was now suddenly far from the mood of philosophic introspection; but he had no difficulty in following her.

"She's had time enough. But it was an awkward task Burnamy left to her."

"Yes, when I think of that, I can hardly forgive him for coming back in that way. I know she is dead in love with him; but she could only have accepted him conditionally."

"Conditionally to his making it all right with Stoller?"

"Stoller? No! To her father's liking it."

"Ah, that's quite as hard. What makes you think she accepted him at all?"

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“What do you think she was crying about?”

“Well, I have supposed that ladies occasionally shed tears of pity. If she accepted him conditionally she would have to tell her father about it.” Mrs. March gave him a glance of silent contempt, and he hastened to atone for his stupidity. “Perhaps she’s told him on the instalment plan. She may have begun by confessing that Burnamy had been in Carlsbad. Poor old fellow, I wish we were going to find him in Ansbach! He could make things very smooth for us.”

“Well, you needn’t flatter yourself that you’ll find him in Ansbach. I’m sure I don’t know where he is.”

“You might write to Miss Triscoe and ask.”

“I think I shall wait for Miss Triscoe to write to me,” she said, with dignity.

“Yes, she certainly owes you that much, after all your suffering for her. I’ve asked the banker in Nuremberg to forward our letters to the poste restante in Ansbach. Isn’t it good to see the crows again, after those ravens around Carlsbad?”

She joined him in looking at the mild autumnal landscape through the open window. The afternoon was fair and warm, and in the level fields bodies of soldiers were at work with picks and spades, getting the ground ready for the military manoeuvres; they disturbed among the stubble foraging parties of crows, which rose from time to time with cries of indignant protest. She said, with a smile for the crows, “Yes. And I’m thankful that I’ve got nothing on my conscience, whatever happens,” she added in dismissal of the subject of Burnamy.

“I’m thankful too, my dear. I’d much rather have things on my own. I’m more used to that, and I believe I feel less remorse than when you’re to blame.”

They might have been carried near this point by those telepathic influences which have as yet been so imperfectly studied. It was only that morning, after the lapse of a week since Burnamy’s furtive reappearance in Carlsbad, that Miss Triscoe spoke to her father about it, and she had at that moment a longing for support and counsel that might well have made its mystical appeal to Mrs. March.

She spoke at last because she could put it off no longer, rather than because the right time had come. She began as they sat at breakfast. “Papa, there is something that I have got to tell you. It is something that you ought to know; but I have put off telling you because—”

She hesitated for the reason, and “Well!” said her father, looking up at her from his second cup of coffee. “What is it?”

Then she answered, “Mr. Burnamy has been here.”

“In Carlsbad? When was he here?”

“The night of the Emperor’s birthday. He came into the box when you were behind the scenes with Mr. March; afterwards I met him in the crowd.”

“Well?”

“I thought you ought to know. Mrs. March said I ought to tell you.”

“Did she say you ought to wait a week?” He gave way to an irascibility which he tried to check, and to ask with indifference, “Why did he come back?”

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“He was going to write about it for that paper in Paris.” The girl had the effect of gathering her courage up for a bold plunge. She looked steadily at her father, and added: “He said he came back because he couldn’t help it. He—wished to speak with me, He said he knew he had no right to suppose I cared anything about what had happened with him and Mr. Stoller. He wanted to come back and tell me—that.”

Her father waited for her to go on, but apparently she was going to leave the word to him, now. He hesitated to take it, but he asked at last with a mildness that seemed to surprise her, “Have you heard anything from him since?”

“No.”

“Where is he?”

“I don’t know. I told him I could not say what he wished; that I must tell you about it.”

The case was less simple than it would once have been for General Triscoe. There was still his affection for his daughter, his wish for her happiness, but this had always been subordinate to his sense of his own interest and comfort, and a question had recently arisen which put his paternal love and duty in a new light. He was no more explicit with himself than other men are, and the most which could ever be said of him without injustice was that in his dependence upon her he would rather have kept his daughter to himself if she could not have been very prosperously married. On the other hand, if he disliked the man for whom she now hardly hid her liking, he was not just then ready to go to extremes concerning him.

“He was very anxious,” she went on, “that you should know just how it was. He thinks everything of your judgment and—and—opinion.” The general made a consenting noise in his throat. “He said that he did not wish me to ‘whitewash’ him to you. He didn’t think he had done right; he didn’t excuse himself, or ask you to excuse him unless you could from the stand-point of a gentleman.”

The general made a less consenting noise in his throat, and asked, “How do you look at it, yourself, Agatha?”

“I don’t believe I quite understand it; but Mrs. March—”

“Oh, Mrs. March!” the general snorted.

“—says that Mr. March does not think so badly of it as Mr. Burnamy does.”

“I doubt it. At any rate, I understood March quite differently.”

“She says that he thinks he behaved very nobly afterwards when Mr. Stoller wanted him to help him put a false complexion on it; that it was all the more difficult for him to do

right then, because of his remorse for what he had done before." As she spoke on she had become more eager.

"There's something in that," the general admitted, with a candor that he made the most of both to himself and to her. "But I should like to know what Stoller had to say of it all. Is there anything," he inquired, "any reason why I need be more explicit about it, just now?"

"N—no. Only, I thought—He thinks so much of your opinion that—if—"

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“Oh, he can very well afford to wait. If he values my opinion so highly he can give me time to make up my mind.”

“Of course—”

“And I’m not responsible,” the general continued, significantly, “for the delay altogether. If you had told me this before—Now, I don’t know whether Stoller is still in town.”

He was not behaving openly with her; but she had not behaved openly with him. She owned that to herself, and she got what comfort she could from his making the affair a question of what Burnamy had done to Stoller rather than of what Burnamy had said to her, and what she had answered him. If she was not perfectly clear as to what she wanted to do, or wished to have happen, there was now time and place in which she could delay and make sure. The accepted theory of such matters is that people know their minds from the beginning, and that they do not change them. But experience seems to contradict this theory, or else people often act contrary to their convictions and impulses. If the statistics were accessible, it might be found that many potential engagements hovered in a doubtful air, and before they touched the earth in actual promise were dissipated by the play of meteorological chances.

When General Triscoe put down his napkin in rising he said that he would step round to Pupp’s and see if Stoller were still there. But on the way he stepped up to Mrs. Adding’s hotel on the hill, and he came back, after an interval which he seemed not to have found long, to report rather casually that Stoller had left Carlsbad the day before. By this time the fact seemed not to concern Agatha herself very vitally.

He asked if the Marches had left any address with her, and she answered that they had not. They were going to spend a few days in Nuremberg, and then push on to Holland for Mr. March’s after-cure. There was no relevance in his question unless it intimated his belief that she was in confidential correspondence with Mrs. March, and she met this by saying that she was going to write her in care of their bankers; she asked whether he wished to send any word.

“No. I understand,” he intimated, “that there is nothing at all in the nature of a—a—an understanding, then, with—”

“No, nothing.”

“Hm!” The general waited a moment. Then he ventured, “Do you care to say—do you wish me to know—how he took it?”

The tears came into the girl’s eyes, but she governed herself to say, “He—he was disappointed.”

“He had no right to be disappointed.”

It was a question, and she answered: “He thought he had. He said—that he wouldn’t—trouble me any more.”

The general did not ask at once, “And you don’t know where he is now—you haven’t heard anything from him since?”

Agatha flashed through her tears, “Papa!”

“Oh! I beg your pardon. I think you told me.”

PG EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS:

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Americans are hungrier for royalty than anybody else
Effort to get on common ground with an inferior
He buys my poverty and not my will
Honest selfishness
Intrepid fancy that they had confronted fate
Less intrusive than if he had not been there
Monologue to which the wives of absent-minded men resign
Only one of them was to be desperate at a time
Reconciliation with death which nature brings to life at last
Voting-cattle whom they bought and sold
We don't seem so much our own property
We get too much into the hands of other people

THEIR SILVER WEDDING JOURNEY

PART III.

XLVIII.

At the first station where the train stopped, a young German bowed himself into the compartment with the Marches, and so visibly resisted an impulse to smoke that March begged him to light his cigarette. In the talk which this friendly overture led to between them he explained that he was a railway architect, employed by the government on that line of road, and was travelling officially. March spoke of Nuremberg; he owned the sort of surfeit he had suffered from its excessive mediaevalism, and the young man said it was part of the new imperial patriotism to cherish the Gothic throughout Germany; no other sort of architecture was permitted in Nuremberg. But they would find enough classicism at Ansbach, he promised them, and he entered with sympathetic intelligence into their wish to see this former capital when March told him they were going to stop there, in hopes of something typical of the old disjointed Germany of the petty principalities, the little paternal despotisms now extinct.

As they talked on, partly in German and partly in English, their purpose in visiting Ansbach appeared to the Marches more meditated than it was. In fact it was somewhat accidental; Ansbach was near Nuremberg; it was not much out of the way to Holland. They took more and more credit to themselves for a reasoned and definite motive, in the light of their companion's enthusiasm for the place, and its charm began for them with the drive from the station through streets whose sentiment was both Italian and French, and where there was a yellowish cast in the gray of the architecture which was almost Mantuan. They rested their sensibilities, so bruised and fretted by Gothic angles and points, against the smooth surfaces of the prevailing classicistic facades of the houses as they passed, and when they arrived at their hotel, an old mansion of

Versailles type, fronting on a long irregular square planted with pollard sycamores, they said that it might as well have been Lucca.

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The archway and stairway of the hotel were draped with the Bavarian colors, and they were obscurely flattered to learn that Prince Leopold, the brother of the Prince-Regent of the kingdom, had taken rooms there, on his way to the manoeuvres at Nuremberg, and was momently expected with his suite. They realized that they were not of the princely party, however, when they were told that he had sole possession of the dining-room, and they went out to another hotel, and had their supper in keeping delightfully native. People seemed to come there to write their letters and make up their accounts, as well as to eat their suppers; they called for stationery like characters in old comedy, and the clatter of crockery and the scratching of pens went on together; and fortune offered the Marches a delicate reparation for their exclusion from their own hotel in the cold popular reception of the prince which they got back just in time to witness. A very small group of people, mostly women and boys, had gathered to see him arrive, but there was no cheering or any sign of public interest. Perhaps he personally merited none; he looked a dull, sad man, with his plain, stubbed features; and after he had mounted to his apartment, the officers of his staff stood quite across the landing, and barred the passage of the Americans, ignoring even Mrs. March's presence, as they talked together.

"Well, my dear," said her husband, "here you have it at last. This is what you've been living for, ever since we came to Germany. It's a great moment."

"Yes. What are you going to do?"

"Who? I? Oh, nothing! This is your affair; it's for you to act."

If she had been young, she might have withered them with a glance; she doubted now if her dim eyes would have any such power; but she advanced steadily upon them, and then the officers seemed aware of her, and stood aside.

March always insisted that they stood aside apologetically, but she held as firmly that they stood aside impertinently, or at least indifferently, and that the insult to her American womanhood was perfectly ideal. It is true that nothing of the kind happened again during their stay at the hotel; the prince's officers were afterwards about in the corridors and on the stairs, but they offered no shadow of obstruction to her going and coming, and the landlord himself was not so preoccupied with his highhotes but he had time to express his grief that she had been obliged to go out for supper.

They satisfied the passion for the little obsolete capital which had been growing upon them by strolling past the old Resident at an hour so favorable for a first impression. It loomed in the gathering dusk even vaster than it was, and it was really vast enough for the pride of a King of France, much more a Margrave of Ansbach. Time had blackened and blotched its coarse limestone walls to one complexion with the statues swelling and strutting in the figure

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of Roman legionaries before it, and standing out against the evening sky along its balustraded roof, and had softened to the right tint the stretch of half a dozen houses with mansard roofs and renaissance facades obsequiously in keeping with the Versailles ideal of a Resident. In the rear, and elsewhere at fit distance from its courts, a native architecture prevailed; and at no great remove the Marches found themselves in a simple German town again. There they stumbled upon a little bookseller's shop blinking in a quiet corner, and bought three or four guides and small histories of Ansbach, which they carried home, and studied between drowsing and waking. The wonderful German syntax seems at its most enigmatical in this sort of literature, and sometimes they lost themselves in its labyrinths completely, and only made their way perilously out with the help of cumulative declensions, past articles and adjectives blindly seeking their nouns, to long-procrastinated verbs dancing like swamp-fires in the distance. They emerged a little less ignorant than they went in, and better qualified than they would otherwise have been for their second visit to the Schloss, which they paid early the next morning.

They were so early, indeed, that when they mounted from the great inner court, much too big for Ansbach, if not for the building, and rung the custodian's bell, a smiling maid who let them into an ante-room, where she kept on picking over vegetables for her dinner, said the custodian was busy, and could not be seen till ten o'clock. She seemed, in her nook of the pretentious pile, as innocently unconscious of its history as any hen-sparrow who had built her nest in some coign of its architecture; and her friendly, peaceful domesticity remained a wholesome human background to the tragedies and comedies of the past, and held them in a picturesque relief in which they were alike tolerable and even charming.

The history of Ansbach strikes its roots in the soil of fable, and above ground is a gnarled and twisted growth of good and bad from the time of the Great Charles to the time of the Great Frederick. Between these times she had her various rulers, ecclesiastical and secular, in various forms of vassalage to the empire; but for nearly four centuries her sovereignty was in the hands of the margraves, who reigned in a constantly increasing splendor till the last sold her outright to the King of Prussia in 1791, and went to live in England on the proceeds. She had taken her part in the miseries and glories of the wars that desolated Germany, but after the Reformation, when she turned from the ancient faith to which she owed her cloistered origin under St. Gumpertus, her people had peace except when their last prince sold them to fight the battles of others. It is in this last transaction that her history, almost in the moment when she ceased to have a history of her own, links to that of the modern world, and that it came home to the Marches in their national character; for two thousand of those poor Ansbach mercenaries were bought up by England and sent to put down a rebellion in her American colonies.

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Humanly, they were more concerned for the Last Margrave, because of certain qualities which made him the Best Margrave, in spite of the defects of his qualities. He was the son of the Wild Margrave, equally known in the Ansbach annals, who may not have been the Worst Margrave, but who had certainly a bad trick of putting his subjects to death without trial, and in cases where there was special haste, with his own hand. He sent his son to the university at Utrecht because he believed that the republican influences in Holland would be wholesome for him, and then he sent him to travel in Italy; but when the boy came home looking frail and sick, the Wild Margrave charged his official travelling companion with neglect, and had the unhappy Hofrath Meyer hanged without process for this crime. One of the gentlemen of his realm, for a pasquinade on the Margrave, was brought to the scaffold; he had, at various times, twenty-two of his soldiers shot with arrows and bullets or hanged for desertion, besides many whose penalties his clemency commuted to the loss of an ear or a nose; a Hungarian who killed his hunting-dog, he had broken alive on the wheel. A soldier's wife was hanged for complicity in a case of desertion; a young soldier who eloped with the girl he loved was brought to Ansbach from a neighboring town, and hanged with her on the same gallows. A sentry at the door of one of the Margrave's castles amiably complied with the Margrave's request to let him take his gun for a moment, on the pretence of wishing to look at it. For this breach of discipline the prince covered him with abuse and gave him over to his hussars, who bound him to a horse's tail and dragged him through the streets; he died of his injuries. The kennel-master who had charge of the Margrave's dogs was accused of neglecting them: without further inquiry the Margrave rode to the man's house and shot him down on his own threshold. A shepherd who met the Margrave on a shying horse did not get his flock out of the way quickly enough; the Margrave demanded the pistols of a gentleman in his company, but he answered that they were not loaded, and the shepherd's life was saved. As they returned home the gentleman fired them off. "What does that mean?" cried the Margrave, furiously. "It means, gracious lord, that you will sleep sweeter tonight, for not having heard my pistols an hour sooner."

From this it appears that the gracious lord had his moments of regret; but perhaps it is not altogether strange that when he died, the whole population "stormed through the streets to meet his funeral train, not in awe-stricken silence to meditate on the fall of human grandeur, but to unite in an eager tumult of rejoicing, as if some cruel brigand who had long held the city in terror were delivered over to them bound and in chains." For nearly thirty years this blood-stained miscreant had reigned over his hapless people in a sovereign plenitude of power, which by the theory of German imperialism in our day is still a divine right.

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They called him the Wild Margrave, in their instinctive revolt from the belief that any man not untamably savage could be guilty of his atrocities; and they called his son the Last Margrave, with a touch of the poetry which perhaps records a regret for their extinction as a state. He did not harry them as his father had done; his mild rule was the effect partly of the indifference and distaste for his country bred, by his long sojourns abroad; but doubtless also it was the effect of a kindly nature. Even in the matter of selling a few thousands of them to fight the battles of a bad cause on the other side of the world, he had the best of motives, and faithfully applied the proceeds to the payment of the state debt and the embellishment of the capital.

His mother was a younger sister of Frederick the Great, and was so constantly at war with her husband that probably she had nothing to do with the marriage which the Wild Margrave forced upon their son. Love certainly had nothing to do with it, and the Last Margrave early escaped from it to the society of *Mlle*. Clairon, the great French tragedienne, whom he met in Paris, and whom he persuaded to come and make her home with him in Ansbach. She lived there seventeen years, and though always an alien, she bore herself with kindness to all classes, and is still remembered there by the roll of butter which calls itself a Klarungswecke in its imperfect French.

No roll of butter records in faltering accents the name of the brilliant and disdainful English lady who replaced this poor tragic muse in the Margrave's heart, though the lady herself lived to be the last Margravine of Ansbach, where everybody seems to have hated her with a passion which she doubtless knew how to return. She was the daughter of the Earl of Berkeley, and the wife of Lord Craven, a sufficiently unfaithful and unworthy nobleman by her account, from whom she was living apart when the Margrave asked her to his capital. There she set herself to oust *Mlle*. Clairon with sneers and jests for the theatrical style which the actress could not outlive. Lady Craven said she was sure Clairon's nightcap must be a crown of gilt paper; and when Clairon threatened to kill herself, and the Margrave was alarmed, "You forget," said Lady Craven, "that actresses only stab themselves under their sleeves."

She drove Clairon from Ansbach, and the great tragedienne returned to Paris, where she remained true to her false friend, and from time to time wrote him letters full of magnanimous counsel and generous tenderness. But she could not have been so good company as Lady Craven, who was a very gifted person, and knew how to compose songs and sing them, and write comedies and play them, and who could keep the Margrave amused in many ways. When his loveless and childless wife died he married the English woman, but he grew more and more weary of his dull little court and his dull little country, and after a while, considering the uncertain tenure sovereigns had of their heads since the French King had lost his, and the fact that he had no heirs to follow him in his principality, he resolved to cede it for a certain sum to Prussia. To this end his new wife's urgence was perhaps not wanting. They went to England, where she outlived him ten years, and wrote her memoirs.

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The custodian of the Schloss came at last, and the Marches saw instantly that he was worth waiting for. He was as vainglorious of the palace as any grand-monarching margrave of them all. He could not have been more personally superb in showing their different effigies if they had been his own family portraits, and he would not spare the strangers a single splendor of the twenty vast, handsome, tiresome, Versailles-like rooms he led them through. The rooms were fatiguing physically, but so poignantly interesting that Mrs. March would not have missed, though she perished of her pleasure, one of the things she saw. She had for once a surfeit of highhoting in the pictures, the porcelains, the thrones and canopies, the tapestries, the historical associations with the margraves and their marriages, with the Great Frederick and the Great Napoleon. The Great Napoleon's man Bernadotte made the Schloss his headquarters when he occupied Ansbach after Austerlitz, and here he completed his arrangements for taking her bargain from Prussia and handing it over to Bavaria, with whom it still remains. Twice the Great Frederick had sojourned in the palace; visiting his sister Louise, the wife of the Wild Margrave, and more than once it had welcomed her next neighbor and sister Wilhelmina, the Margravine of Baireuth, whose autobiographic voice, piercingly plaintive and reproachful, seemed to quiver in the air. Here, oddly enough, the spell of the Wild Margrave weakened in the presence of his portrait, which signally failed to justify his fame of furious tyrant. That seems, indeed, to have been rather the popular and historical conception of him than the impression he made upon his exalted contemporaries. The Margravine of Baireuth at any rate could so far excuse her poor blood-stained brother-in-law as to say: "The Margrave of Ansbach . . . was a young prince who had been very badly educated. He continually ill-treated my sister; they led the life of cat and dog. My sister, it is true, was sometimes in fault . . . . Her education had been very bad. . . She was married at fourteen."

At parting, the custodian told the Marches that he would easily have known them for Americans by the handsome fee they gave him; they came away flown with his praise; and their national vanity was again flattered when they got out into the principal square of Ansbach. There, in a bookseller's window, they found among the pamphlets teaching different languages without a master, one devoted to the Amerikanische Sprache as distinguished from the Englische Sprache. That there could be no mistake, the cover was printed with colors in a German ideal of the star-spangled banner; and March said he always knew that we had a language of our own, and that now he was going in to buy that pamphlet and find out what it was like. He asked the young shop-woman how it differed from English, which she spoke fairly well from having lived eight years in Chicago. She said that it differed from the English mainly in emphasis and pronunciation. "For instance, the English say '*half* past', and the Americans 'Half *past*'; the English say 'laht' and the Americans say 'late'."

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The weather had now been clear quite long enough, and it was raining again, a fine, bitter, piercing drizzle. They asked the girl if it always rained in Ansbach; and she owned that it nearly always did. She said that sometimes she longed for a little American summer; that it was never quite warm in Ansbach; and when they had got out into the rain, March said: "It was very nice to stumble on Chicago in an Ansbach book-store. You ought to have told her you had a married daughter in Chicago. Don't miss another such chance."

"We shall need another bag if we keep on buying books at this rate," said his wife with tranquil irrelevance; and not to give him time for protest; she pushed him into a shop where the valises in the window perhaps suggested her thought. March made haste to forestall her there by saying they were Americans, but the mistress of the shop seemed to have her misgivings, and "Born Americans, perhaps?" she ventured. She had probably never met any but the naturalized sort, and supposed these were the only sort. March re-assured her, and then she said she had a son living in Jersey City, and she made March take his address that he might tell him he had seen his mother; she had apparently no conception what a great way Jersey City is from New York.

Mrs. March would not take his arm when they came out. "Now, that is what I never can get used to in you, Basil, and I've tried to palliate it for twenty-seven years. You know you won't look up that poor woman's son! Why did you let her think you would?"

"How could I tell her I wouldn't? Perhaps I shall."

"No, no! You never will. I know you're good and kind, and that's why I can't understand your being so cruel. When we get back, how will you ever find time to go over to Jersey City?"

He could not tell, but at last he said: "I'll tell you what! You must keep me up to it. You know how much you enjoy making me do my duty, and this will be such a pleasure!"

She laughed forlornly, but after a moment she took his arm; and he began, from the example of this good mother, to philosophize the continuous simplicity and sanity of the people of Ansbach under all their civic changes. Saints and soldiers, knights and barons, margraves, princes, kings, emperors, had come and gone, and left their single-hearted, friendly subjectfolk pretty much what they found them. The people had suffered and survived through a thousand wars, and apparently prospered on under all governments and misgovernments. When the court was most French, most artificial, most vicious, the citizen life must have remained immutably German, dull, and kind. After all, he said, humanity seemed everywhere to be pretty safe, and pretty much the same.

"Yes, that is all very well," she returned, "and you can theorize interestingly enough; but I'm afraid that poor mother, there, had no more reality for you than those people in the

past. You appreciate her as a type, and you don't care for her as a human being. You're nothing but a dreamer, after all. I don't blame you," she went on. "It's your temperament, and you can't change, now."

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“I may change for the worse,” he threatened. “I think I have, already. I don’t believe I could stand up to Dryfoos, now, as I did for poor old Lindau, when I risked your bread and butter for his. I look back in wonder and admiration at myself. I’ve steadily lost touch with life since then. I’m a trifler, a dilettante, and an amateur of the right and the good as I used to be when I was young. Oh, I have the grace to be troubled at times, now, and once I never was. It never occurred to me then that the world wasn’t made to interest me, or at the best to instruct me, but it does, now, at times.”

She always came to his defence when he accused himself; it was the best ground he could take with her. “I think you behaved very well with Burnamy. You did your duty then.”

“Did I? I’m not so sure. At any rate, it’s the last time I shall do it. I’ve served my term. I think I should tell him that he was all right in that business with Stoller, if I were to meet him, now.”

“Isn’t it strange,” she said, provisionally, “that we don’t come upon a trace of him anywhere in Ansbach?”

“Ah, you’ve been hoping he would turn up!”

“Yes. I don’t deny it. I feel very unhappy about him.”

“I don’t. He’s too much like me. He would have been quite capable of promising that poor woman to look up her son in Jersey City. When I think of that, I have no patience with Burnamy.”

“I am going to ask the landlord about him, now he’s got rid of his highhotes,” said Mrs. March.

XLIX.

They went home to their hotel for their midday dinner, and to the comfort of having it nearly all to themselves. Prince Leopold had risen early, like all the hard-working potentates of the continent, and got away to the manoeuvres somewhere at six o’clock; the decorations had been removed, and the court-yard where the hired coach and pair of the prince had rolled in the evening before had only a few majestic ducks waddling about in it and quacking together, indifferent to the presence of a yellow mail-wagon, on which the driver had been apparently dozing till the hour of noon should sound. He sat there immovable, but at the last stroke of the clock he woke up and drove vigorously away to the station.

The dining-room which they had been kept out of by the prince the night before was not such as to embitter the sense of their wrong by its splendor. After all, the tastes of

royalty must be simple, if the prince might have gone to the Schloss and had chosen rather to stay at this modest hotel; but perhaps the Schloss was reserved for more immediate royalty than the brothers of prince-regents; and in that case he could not have done better than dine at the Golden Star. If he paid no more than two marks, he dined as cheaply as a prince could wish, and as abundantly. The wine at Ansbach was rather thin and sour, but the bread, March declared, was the best bread in the whole world, not excepting the bread of Carlsbad.

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After dinner the Marches had some of the local pastry, not so incomparable as the bread, with their coffee, which they had served them in a pavilion of the beautiful garden remaining to the hotel from the time when it was a patrician mansion. The garden had roses in it and several sorts of late summer flowers, as well as ripe cherries, currants, grapes, and a Virginia-creeper red with autumn, all harmoniously contemporaneous, as they might easily be in a climate where no one of the seasons can very well know itself from the others. It had not been raining for half an hour, and the sun was scalding hot, so that the shelter of their roof was very grateful, and the puddles of the paths were drying up with the haste which puddles have to make in Germany, between rains, if they are ever going to dry up at all.

The landlord came out to see if they were well served, and he was sincerely obliging in the English he had learned as a waiter in London. Mrs. March made haste to ask him if a young American of the name of Burnamy had been staying with him a few weeks before; and she described Burnamy's beauty and amiability so vividly that the landlord, if he had been a woman, could not have failed to remember him. But he failed, with a real grief, apparently, and certainly a real politeness, to recall either his name or his person. The landlord was an intelligent, good-looking young fellow; he told them that he was lately married, and they liked him so much that they were sorry to see him afterwards privately boxing the ears of the piccolo, the waiter's little understudy. Perhaps the piccolo deserved it, but they would rather not have witnessed his punishment; his being in a dress-coat seemed to make it also an indignity.

In the late afternoon they went to the cafe in the old Orangery of the Schloss for a cup of tea, and found themselves in the company of several Ansbach ladies who had brought their work, in the evident habit of coming there every afternoon for their coffee and for a dish of gossip. They were kind, uncomely, motherly-looking bodies; one of them combed her hair at the table; and they all sat outside of the cafe with their feet on the borders of the puddles which had not dried up there in the shade of the building.

A deep lawn, darkened at its farther edge by the long shadows of trees, stretched before them with the sunset light on it, and it was all very quiet and friendly. The tea brought to the Marches was brewed from some herb apparently of native growth, with bits of what looked like willow leaves in it, but it was flavored with a clove in each cup, and they sat contentedly over it and tried to make out what the Ansbach ladies were, talking about. These had recognized the strangers for Americans, and one of them explained that Americans spoke the same language as the English and yet were not quite the same people.

"She differs from the girl in the book-store," said March, translating to his wife. "Let us get away before she says that we are not so nice as the English," and they made off toward the avenue of trees beyond the lawn.

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There were a few people walking up and down in the alley, making the most of the moment of dry weather. They saluted one another like acquaintances, and three clean-shaven, walnut-faced old peasants bowed in response to March's stare, with a self-respectful civility. They were yeomen of the region of Ansbach, where the country round about is dotted with their cottages, and not held in vast homeless tracts by the nobles as in North Germany.

The Bavarian who had imparted this fact to March at breakfast, not without a certain tacit pride in it to the disadvantage of the Prussians, was at the supper table, and was disposed to more talk, which he managed in a stout, slow English of his own. He said he had never really spoken English with an English-speaking person before, or at all since he studied it in school at Munich.

"I should be afraid to put my school-boy German against your English," March said, and, when he had understood, the other laughed for pleasure, and reported the compliment to his wife in their own parlance. "You Germans certainly beat us in languages."

"Oh, well," he retaliated, "the Americans beat us in some other things," and Mrs. March felt that this was but just; she would have liked to mention a few, but not ungraciously; she and the German lady kept smiling across the table, and trying detached vocables of their respective tongues upon each other.

The Bavarian said he lived in Munich still, but was in Ansbach on an affair of business; he asked March if he were not going to see the manoeuvres somewhere. Till now the manoeuvres had merely been the interesting background of their travel; but now, hearing that the Emperor of Germany, the King of Saxony, the Regent of Bavaria, and the King of Wurtemberg, the Grand-Dukes of Weimar and Baden, with visiting potentates of all sorts, and innumerable lesser highhotes, foreign and domestic, were to be present, Mrs. March resolved that they must go to at least one of the reviews.

"If you go to Frankfort, you can see the King of Italy too," said the Bavarian, but he owned that they probably could not get into a hotel there, and he asked why they should not go to Wurzburg, where they could see all the sovereigns except the King of Italy.

"Wurzburg? Wurzburg?" March queried of his wife. "Where did we hear of that place?"

"Isn't it where Burnamy said Mr. Stoller had left his daughters at school?"

"So it is! And is that on the way to the Rhine?" he asked the Bavarian.

"No, no! Wurzburg is on the Main, about five hours from Ansbach. And it is a very interesting place. It is where the good wine comes from."

"Oh, yes," said March, and in their rooms his wife got out all their guides and maps and began to inform herself and to inform him about Wurzburg. But first she said it was very

cold and he must order some fire made in the tall German stove in their parlor. The maid who came said “Gleich,” but she did not come back, and about the time they were getting furious at her neglect, they began getting warm. He put his hand on the stove and found it hot; then he looked down for a door in the stove where he might shut a damper; there was no door.

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“Good heavens!” he shouted. “It’s like something in a dream,” and he ran to pull the bell for help.

“No, no! Don’t ring! It will make us ridiculous. They’ll think Americans don’t know anything. There must be some way of dampening the stove; and if there isn’t, I’d rather suffocate than give myself away.” Mrs. March ran and opened the window, while her husband carefully examined the stove at every point, and explored the pipe for the damper in vain. “Can’t you find it?” The night wind came in raw and damp, and threatened to blow their lamp out, and she was obliged to shut the window.

“Not a sign of it. I will go down and ask the landlord in strict confidence how they dampen their stoves in Ansbach.”

“Well, if you must. It’s getting hotter every moment.” She followed him timorously into the corridor, lit by a hanging lamp, turned low for the night.

He looked at his watch; it was eleven o’clock. “I’m afraid they’re all in bed.”

“Yes; you mustn’t go! We must try to find out for ourselves. What can that door be for?”

It was a low iron door, half the height of a man, in the wall near their room, and it yielded to his pull. “Get a candle,” he whispered, and when she brought it, he stooped to enter the doorway.

“Oh, do you think you’d better?” she hesitated.

“You can come, too, if you’re afraid. You’ve always said you wanted to die with me.”

“Well. But you go first.”

He disappeared within, and then came back to the doorway. “Just come in here, a moment.” She found herself in a sort of antechamber, half the height of her own room, and following his gesture she looked down where in one corner some crouching monster seemed showing its fiery teeth in a grin of derision. This grin was the damper of their stove, and this was where the maid had kindled the fire which had been roasting them alive, and was still joyously chuckling to itself. “I think that Munich man was wrong. I don’t believe we beat the Germans in anything. There isn’t a hotel in the United States where the stoves have no front doors, and every one of them has the space of a good-sized flat given up to the convenience of kindling a fire in it.”

L.

After a red sunset of shameless duplicity March was awakened to a rainy morning by the clinking of cavalry hoofs on the pavement of the long-irregular square before the

hotel, and he hurried out to see the passing of the soldiers on their way to the manoeuvres. They were troops of all arms, but mainly infantry, and as they stumped heavily through the groups of apathetic citizens in their mud-splashed boots, they took the steady downpour on their dripping helmets. Some of them were smoking, but none smiling, except one gay fellow who made a joke to a serving-maid on the sidewalk. An old officer halted his staff to scold a citizen who had given him a mistaken direction. The shame of the erring man was great, and the pride of a fellow-citizen who corrected him was not less, though the arrogant brute before whom they both cringed used them with equal scorn; the younger officers listened indifferently round on horseback behind the glitter of their eyeglasses, and one of them amused himself by turning the silver bangles on his wrist.

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Then the files of soldier slaves passed on, and March crossed the bridge spanning the gardens in what had been the city moat, and found his way to the market-place, under the walls of the old Gothic church of St. Gumpertus. The market, which spread pretty well over the square, seemed to be also a fair, with peasants' clothes and local pottery for sale, as well as fruits and vegetables, and large baskets of flowers, with old women squatting before them. It was all as picturesque as the markets used to be in Montreal and Quebec, and in a cloudy memory of his wedding journey long before, he bought so lavishly of the flowers to carry back to his wife that a little girl, who saw his arm-load from her window as he returned, laughed at him, and then drew shyly back. Her laugh reminded him how many happy children he had seen in Germany, and how freely they seemed to play everywhere, with no one to make them afraid. When they grow up the women laugh as little as the men, whose rude toil the soldiering leaves them to.

He got home with his flowers, and his wife took them absently, and made him join her in watching the sight which had fascinated her in the street under their windows. A slender girl, with a waist as slim as a corseted officer's, from time to time came out of the house across the way to the firewood which had been thrown from a wagon upon the sidewalk there. Each time she embraced several of the heavy four-foot logs and disappeared with them in-doors. Once she paused from her work to joke with a well-dressed man who came by; and seemed to find nothing odd in her work; some gentlemen lounging at the window over head watched her with no apparent sense of anomaly.

"What do you think of that?" asked Mrs. March. "I think it's good exercise for the girl, and I should like to recommend it to those fat fellows at the window. I suppose she'll saw the wood in the cellar, and then lug it up stairs, and pile it up in the stoves' dressing-rooms."

"Don't laugh! It's too disgraceful."

"Well, I don't know! If you like, I'll offer these gentlemen across the way your opinion of it in the language of Goethe and Schiller."

"I wish you'd offer my opinion of them. They've been staring in here with an opera-glass."

"Ah, that's a different affair. There isn't much going on in Ansbach, and they have to make the most of it."

The lower casements of the houses were furnished with mirrors set at right angles with them, and nothing which went on in the streets was lost. Some of the streets were long and straight, and at rare moments they lay full of sun. At such times the Marches were puzzled by the sight of citizens carrying open umbrellas, and they wondered if they had forgotten to put them down, or thought it not worth while in the brief respites from the

rain, or were profiting by such rare occasions to dry them; and some other sights remained baffling to the last. Once a man

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with his hands pinioned before him, and a gendarme marching stolidly after him with his musket on his shoulder, passed under their windows; but who he was, or what he, had done, or was to suffer, they never knew. Another time a pair went by on the way to the railway station: a young man carrying an umbrella under his arm, and a very decent-looking old woman lugging a heavy carpet bag, who left them to the lasting question whether she was the young man's servant in her best clothes, or merely his mother.

Women do not do everything in Ansbach, however, the sacristans being men, as the Marches found when they went to complete their impression of the courtly past of the city by visiting the funeral chapel of the margraves in the crypt of St. Johannis Church. In the little ex-margravely capital there was something of the neighborly interest in the curiosity of strangers which endears Italian witness. The white-haired street-sweeper of Ansbach, who willingly left his broom to guide them to the house of the sacristan, might have been a street-sweeper in Vicenza; and the old sacristan, when he put his velvet skull-cap out of an upper window and professed his willingness to show them the chapel, disappointed them by saying "Gleich!" instead of "Subito!" The architecture of the houses was a party to the illusion. St. Johannis, like the older church of St. Gumpertus, is Gothic, with the two unequal towers which seem distinctive of Ansbach; at the St. Gumpertus end of the place where they both stand the dwellings are Gothic too, and might be in Hamburg; but at the St. Johannis end they seem to have felt the exotic spirit of the court, and are of a sort of Teutonized renaissance.

The rococo margraves and margravines used of course to worship in St. Johannis Church. Now they all, such as did not marry abroad, lie in the crypt of the church, in caskets of bronze and copper and marble, with draperies of black samite, more and more funereally vainglorious to the last. Their courtly coffins are ranged in a kind of hemicycle, with the little coffins of the children that died before they came to the knowledge of their greatness. On one of these a kneeling figurine in bronze holds up the effigy of the child within; on another the epitaph plays tenderly with the fate of a little princess, who died in her first year.

> In the Rose-month was this sweet Rose taken.
> For the Rose-kind hath she earth forsaken.
> The Princess is the Rose, that here no longer blows.
> From the stem by death's hand rudely shaken.
> Then rest in the Rose-house.
> Little Princess-Rosebud dear!
> There life's Rose shall bloom again
> In Heaven's sunshine clear.

While March struggled to get this into English words, two German ladies, who had made themselves of his party, passed reverently away and left him to pay the sacristan alone.

“That is all right,” he said, when he came out. “I think we got the most value; and they didn’t look as if they could afford it so well; though you never can tell, here. These ladies may be the highest kind of highhotes practising a praiseworthy economy. I hope the lesson won’t be lost on us. They have saved enough by us for their coffee at the Orangery. Let us go and have a little willow-leaf tea!”

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The Orangery perpetually lured them by what it had kept of the days when an Orangery was essential to the self-respect of every sovereign prince, and of so many private gentlemen. On their way they always passed the statue of Count Platen, the dull poet whom Heine's hate would have delivered so cruelly over to an immortality of contempt, but who stands there near the Schloss in a grass-plot prettily planted with flowers, and ignores his brilliant enemy in the comfortable durability of bronze; and there always awaited them in the old pleasaunce the pathos of Kaspar Hauser's fate; which his murder affixes to it with a red stain.

After their cups of willow leaves at the cafe they went up into that nook of the plantation where the simple shaft of church-warden's Gothic commemorates the assassination on the spot where it befell. Here the hapless youth, whose mystery will never be fathomed on earth, used to come for a little respite from his harsh guardian in Ansbach, homesick for the kindness of his Nuremberg friends; and here his murderer found him and dealt him the mortal blow.

March lingered upon the last sad circumstance of the tragedy in which the wounded boy dragged himself home, to suffer the suspicion and neglect of his guardian till death attested his good faith beyond cavil. He said this was the hardest thing to bear in all his story, and that he would like to have a look into the soul of the dull, unkind wretch who had so misread his charge. He was going on with an inquiry that pleased him much, when his wife pulled him abruptly away.

"Now, I see, you are yielding to the fascination of it, and you are wanting to take the material from Burnamy!"

"Oh, well, let him have the material; he will spoil it. And I can always reject it, if he offers it to 'Every Other Week'."

"I could believe, after your behavior to that poor woman about her son in Jersey City, you're really capable of it."

"What comprehensive inculpation! I had forgotten about that poor woman."

LI.

The letters which March had asked his Nuremberg banker to send them came just as they were leaving Ansbach. The landlord sent them down to the station, and Mrs. March opened them in the train, and read them first so that she could prepare him if there were anything annoying in them, as well as indulge her livelier curiosity.

"They're from both the children," she said, without waiting for him to ask. "You can look at them later. There's a very nice letter from Mrs. Adding to me, and one from dear little Rose for you." Then she hesitated, with her hand on a letter faced down in her lap.

“And there’s one from Agatha Triscoe, which I wonder what you’ll think of.” She delayed again, and then flashed it open before him, and waited with a sort of impassioned patience while he read it.

He read it, and gave it back to her. “There doesn’t seem to be very much in it.”

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“That’s it! Don’t you think I had a right to there being something in it, after all I did for her?”

“I always hoped you hadn’t done anything for her, but if you have, why should she give herself away on paper? It’s a very proper letter.”

“It’s a little too proper, and it’s the last I shall have to do with her. She knew that I should be on pins and needles till I heard how her father had taken Burnamy’s being there, that night, and she doesn’t say a word about it.”

“The general may have had a tantrum that she couldn’t describe. Perhaps she hasn’t told him, yet.”

“She would tell him instantly!” cried Mrs. March who began to find reason in the supposition, as well as comfort for the hurt which the girl’s reticence had given her. “Or if she wouldn’t, it would be because she was waiting for the best chance.”

“That would be like the wise daughter of a difficult father. She may be waiting for the best chance to say how he took it. No, I’m all for Miss Triscoe, and I hope that now, if she’s taken herself off our hands, she’ll keep off.”

“It’s altogether likely that he’s made her promise not to tell me anything about it,” Mrs. March mused aloud.

“That would be unjust to a person who had behaved so discreetly as you have,” said her husband.

They were on their way to Wurzburg, and at the first station, which was a junction, a lady mounted to their compartment just before the train began to move. She was stout and middle-aged, and had never been pretty, but she bore herself with a kind of authority in spite of her thread gloves, her dowdy gray travelling-dress, and a hat of lower middle-class English tastelessness. She took the only seat vacant, a backward-riding place beside a sleeping passenger who looked like a commercial traveller, but she seemed ill at ease in it, and March offered her his seat. She accepted it very promptly, and thanked him for it in the English of a German, and Mrs. March now classed her as a governess who had been teaching in England and had acquired the national feeling for dress. But in this character she found her interesting, and even a little pathetic, and she made her some overtures of talk which the other met eagerly enough. They were now running among low hills, not so picturesque as those between Eger and Nuremberg, but of much the same toylike quaintness in the villages dropped here and there in their valleys. One small town, completely walled, with its gray houses and red roofs, showed through the green of its trees and gardens so like a colored print in a child’s story-book that Mrs. March cried out for joy in it, and then accounted for her rapture by explaining to the stranger that they were Americans and had never been in

Germany before. The lady was not visibly affected by the fact, she said casually that she had often been in that little town, which she named; her uncle had a castle in the country back of it, and

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she came with her husband for the shooting in the autumn. By a natural transition she spoke of her children, for whom she had an English governess; she said she had never been in England, but had learnt the language from a governess in her own childhood; and through it all Mrs. March perceived that she was trying to impress them with her consequence. To humor her pose, she said they had been looking up the scene of Kaspar Hauser's death at Ansbach; and at this the stranger launched into such intimate particulars concerning him, and was so familiar at first hands with the facts of his life, that Mrs. March let her run on, too much amused with her pretensions to betray any doubt of her. She wondered if March were enjoying it all as much, and from time to time she tried to catch his eye, while the lady talked constantly and rather loudly, helping herself out with words from them both when her English failed her. In the safety of her perfect understanding of the case, Mrs. March now submitted farther, and even suffered some patronage from her, which in another mood she would have met with a decided snub.

As they drew in among the broad vine-webbed slopes of the Wurzburg, hills, the stranger said she was going to change there, and take a train on to Berlin. Mrs. March wondered whether she would be able to keep up the comedy to the last; and she had to own that she carried it off very easily when the friends whom she was expecting did not meet her on the arrival of their train. She refused March's offers of help, and remained quietly seated while he got out their wraps and bags. She returned with a hardy smile the cold leave Mrs. March took of her; and when a porter came to the door, and forced his way by the Marches, to ask with anxious servility if she, were the Baroness von-----, she bade the man get them. a 'traeger', and then come back for her. She waved them a complacent adieu before they mixed with the crowd and lost sight of her.

"Well, my dear," said March, addressing the snobbishness in his wife which he knew to be so wholly impersonal, "you've mingled with one highhote, anyway. I must say she didn't look it, any more than the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, and yet she's only a baroness. Think of our being three hours in the same compartment, and she doing all she could to impress us and our getting no good of it! I hoped you were feeling her quality, so that we should have it in the family, anyway, and always know what it was like. But so far, the highhotes have all been terribly disappointing."

He teased on as they followed the traeger with their baggage out of the station; and in the omnibus on the way to their hotel, he recurred to the loss they had suffered in the baroness's failure to dramatize her nobility effectually. "After all, perhaps she was as much disappointed in us. I don't suppose we looked any more like democrats than she looked like an aristocrat."

"But there's a great difference," Mrs. March returned at last. "It isn't at all a parallel case. We were not real democrats, and she was a real aristocrat."

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“To be sure. There is that way of looking at it. That’s rather novel; I wish I had thought of that myself. She was certainly more to blame than we were.”

LII.

The square in front of the station was planted with flag-poles wreathed in evergreens; a triumphal arch was nearly finished, and a colossal allegory in imitation bronze was well on the way to completion, in honor of the majesties who were coming for the manoeuvres. The streets which the omnibus passed through to the Swan Inn were draped with the imperial German and the royal Bavarian colors; and the standards of the visiting nationalities decked the fronts of the houses where their military attaches were lodged; but the Marches failed to see our own banner, and were spared for the moment the ignominy of finding it over an apothecary shop in a retired avenue. The sun had come out, the sky overhead was of a smiling blue; and they felt the gala-day glow and thrill in the depths of their inextinguishable youth.

The Swan Inn sits on one of the long quays bordering the Main, and its windows look down upon the bridges and shipping of the river; but the traveller reaches it by a door in the rear, through an archway into a back street, where an odor dating back to the foundation of the city is waiting to welcome him.

The landlord was there, too, and he greeted the Marches so cordially that they fully partook his grief in being able to offer them rooms on the front of the house for two nights only. They reconciled themselves to the necessity of then turning out for the staff of the King of Saxony, the more readily because they knew that there was no hope of better things at any other hotel.

The rooms which they could have for the time were charming, and they came down to supper in a glazed gallery looking out on the river picturesque with craft of all fashions: with row-boats, sail-boats, and little steamers, but mainly with long black barges built up into houses in the middle, and defended each by a little nervous German dog. Long rafts of logs weltered in the sunset red which painted the swift current, and mantled the immeasurable vineyards of the hills around like the color of their ripening grapes. Directly in face rose a castled steep, which kept the ranging walls and the bastions and battlements of the time when such a stronghold could have defended the city from foes without or from tumult within. The arches of a stately bridge spanned the river sunsetward, and lifted a succession of colossal figures against the crimson sky.

“I guess we have been wasting our time, my dear,” said March, as they, turned from this beauty to the question of supper. “I wish we had always been here!”

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Their waiter had put them at a table in a division of the gallery beyond that which they entered, where some groups of officers were noisily supping. There was no one in their room but a man whose face was indistinguishable against the light, and two young girls who glanced at them with looks at once quelled and defiant, and then after a stare at the officers in the gallery beyond, whispered together with suppressed giggling. The man fed on without noticing them, except now and then to utter a growl that silenced the whispering and giggling for a moment. The Marches, from no positive evidence of any sense, decided that they were Americans.

“I don’t know that I feel responsible for them as their fellow-countryman; I should, once,” he said.

“It isn’t that. It’s the worry of trying to make out why they are just what they are,” his wife returned.

The girls drew the man’s attention to them and he looked at them for the first time; then after a sort of hesitation he went on with his supper. They had only begun theirs when he rose with the two girls, whom Mrs. March now saw to be of the same size and dressed alike, and came heavily toward them.

“I thought you was in Carlsbad,” he said bluntly to March, with a nod at Mrs. March. He added, with a twist of his head toward the two girls, “My daughters,” and then left them to her, while he talked on with her husband. “Come to see this foolery, I suppose. I’m on my way to the woods for my after-cure; but I thought I might as well stop and give the girls a chance; they got a week’s vacation, anyway.” Stoller glanced at them with a sort of troubled tenderness in his strong dull face.

“Oh, yes. I understood they were at school here,” said March, and he heard one of them saying, in a sweet, high pipe to his wife:

“Ain’t it just splendid? I ha’n’t seen anything equal to it since the Worrld’s Fairr.” She spoke with a strong contortion of the Western r, and her sister hastened to put in:

“I don’t think it’s to be compared with the Worrld’s Fairr. But these German girls, here, just think it’s great. It just does me good to laff at ’em, about it. I like to tell ’em about the electric fountain and the Courrt of Iionorr when they get to talkin’ about the illuminations they’re goun’ to have. You goun’ out to the parade? You better engage your carriage right away if you arre. The carrs’ll be a perfect jam. Father’s engaged ourrs; he had to pay sixty marrks forr it.”

They chattered on without shyness and on as easy terms with a woman of three times their years as if she had been a girl of their own age; they willingly took the whole talk to themselves, and had left her quite outside of it before Stoller turned to her.

“I been telling Mr. March here that you better both come to the parade with us. I guess my twospanner will hold five; or if it won’t, we’ll make it. I don’t believe there’s a carriage left in Wurzburg; and if you go in the cars, you’ll have to walk three or four miles before you get to the parade-ground. You think it over,” he said to March. “Nobody else is going to have the places, anyway, and you can say yes at the last minute just as well as now.”

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He moved off with his girls, who looked over their shoulders at the officers as they passed on through the adjoining room.

“My dear!” cried Mrs. March. “Didn’t you suppose he classed us with Burnamy in that business? Why should he be polite to us?”

“Perhaps he wants you to chaperon his daughters. He’s probably heard of your performance at the Kurhaus ball. But he knows that I thought Burnamy in the wrong. This may be Stoller’s way of wiping out an obligation. Wouldn’t you like to go with him?”

“The mere thought of his being in the same town is prostrating. I’d far rather he hated us; then he would avoid us.”

“Well, he doesn’t own the town, and if it comes to the worst, perhaps we can avoid him. Let us go out, anyway, and see if we can’t.”

“No, no; I’m too tired; but you go. And get all the maps and guides you can; there’s so very little in Baedeker, and almost nothing in that great hulking Bradshaw of yours; and I’m sure there must be the most interesting history of Wurzburg. Isn’t it strange that we haven’t the slightest association with the name?”

“I’ve been rummaging in my mind, and I’ve got hold of an association at last,” said March. “It’s beer; a sign in a Sixth Avenue saloon window Wurzburger Hof-Brau.”

“No matter if it is beer. Find some sketch of the history, and we’ll try to get away from the Stollers in it. I pitied those wild girls, too. What crazy images of the world must fill their empty minds! How their ignorant thoughts must go whirling out into the unknown! I don’t envy their father. Do hurry back! I shall be thinking about them every instant till you come.”

She said this, but in their own rooms it was so soothing to sit looking through the long twilight at the lovely landscape that the sort of bruise given by their encounter with the Stollers had left her consciousness before March returned. She made him admire first the convent church on a hill further up the river which exactly balanced the fortress in front of them, and then she seized upon the little books he had brought, and set him to exploring the labyrinths of their German, with a mounting exultation in his discoveries. There was a general guide to the city, and a special guide, with plans and personal details of the approaching manoeuvres and the princes who were to figure in them; and there was a sketch of the local history: a kind of thing that the Germans know how to write particularly, well, with little gleams of pleasant humor blinking through it. For the study of this, Mrs. March realized, more and more passionately, that they were in the very most central and convenient point, for the history of Wurzburg might be said to have begun with her prince-bishops, whose rule had begun in the twelfth century, and who had built, on a forgotten Roman work, the fortress of the Marienburg on that

vineyarded hill over against the Swan Inn. There had of course been history before that, but

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’nothing so clear, nothing so peculiarly swell, nothing that so united the glory of this world and the next as that of the prince-bishops. They had made the Marienburg their home, and kept it against foreign and domestic foes for five hundred years. Shut within its well-armed walls they had awed the often-turbulent city across the Main; they had held it against the embattled farmers in the Peasants’ War, and had splendidly lost it to Gustavus Adolphus, and then got it back again and held it till Napoleon took it from them. He gave it with their flock to the Bavarians, who in turn briefly yielded it to the Prussians in 1866, and were now in apparently final possession of it.

Before the prince-bishops, Charlemagne and Barbarossa had come and gone, and since the prince-bishops there had been visiting thrones and kingdoms enough in the ancient city, which was soon to be illustrated by the presence of imperial Germany, royal, Wirtemberg and Saxony, grand-ducal Baden and Weimar, and a surfeit of all the minor potentates among those who speak the beautiful language of the Ja.

But none of these could dislodge the prince-bishops from that supreme place which they had at once taken in Mrs. March’s fancy. The potentates were all going to be housed in the vast palace which the prince-bishops had built themselves in Wurzburg as soon as they found it safe to come down from their stronghold of Marienburg, and begin to adorn their city, and to confirm it in its intense fidelity to the Church. Tiepolo had come up out of Italy to fresco their palace, where he wrought year after year, in that worldly taste which has somehow come to express the most sovereign moment of ecclesiasticism. It prevailed so universally in Wurzburg that it left her with the name of the Rococo City, intrenched in a period of time equally remote from early Christianity and modern Protestantism. Out of her sixty thousand souls, only ten thousand are now of the reformed religion, and these bear about the same relation to the Catholic spirit of the place that the Gothic architecture bears to the baroque.

As long as the prince-bishops lasted the Wurzburgers got on very well with but one newspaper, and perhaps the smallest amount of merrymaking known outside of the colony of Massachusetts Bay at the same epoch. The prince-bishops had their finger in everybody’s pie, and they portioned out the cakes and ale, which were made according to formulas of their own. The distractions were all of a religious character; churches, convents, monasteries, abounded; ecclesiastical processions and solemnities were the spectacles that edified if they did not amuse the devout population.

It seemed to March an ironical outcome of all this spiritual severity that one of the greatest modern scientific discoveries should have been made in Wurzburg, and that the Roentgen rays should now be giving her name a splendor destined to eclipse the glories of her past.

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Mrs. March could not allow that they would do so; or at least that the name of Roentgen would ever lend more lustre to his city than that of Longfellow's Walther von der Vogelweide. She was no less surprised than pleased to realize that this friend of the birds was a Wurzburger, and she said that their first pilgrimage in the morning should be to the church where he lies buried.

LIII.

March went down to breakfast not quite so early as his wife had planned, and left her to have her coffee in her room. He got a pleasant table in the gallery overlooking the river, and he decided that the landscape, though it now seemed to be rather too much studied from a drop-certain, had certainly lost nothing of its charm in the clear morning light. The waiter brought his breakfast, and after a little delay came back with a card which he insisted was for March. It was not till he put on his glasses and read the name of Mr. R. M. Kenby that he was able at all to agree with the waiter, who stood passive at his elbow.

"Well," he said, "why wasn't this card sent up last night?"

The waiter explained that the gentleman had just, given him his card, after asking March's nationality, and was then breakfasting in the next room. March caught up his napkin and ran round the partition wall, and Kenby rose with his napkin and hurried to meet him.

"I thought it must be you," he called out, joyfully, as they struck their extended hands together, "but so many people look alike, nowadays, that I don't trust my eyes any more."

Kenby said he had spent the time since they last met partly in Leipsic and partly in Gotha, where he had amused himself in rubbing up his rusty German. As soon as he realized that Wurzburg was so near he had slipped down from Gotha for a glimpse of the manoeuvres. He added that he supposed March was there to see them, and he asked with a quite unembarrassed smile if they had met Mr. Adding in Carlsbad, and without heeding March's answer, he laughed and added: "Of course, I know she must have told Mrs. March all about it."

March could not deny this; he laughed, too; though in his wife's absence he felt bound to forbid himself anything more explicit.

"I don't give it up, you know," Kenby went on, with perfect ease. "I'm not a young fellow, if you call thirty-nine old."

"At my age I don't," March put in, and they roared together, in men's security from the encroachments of time.

“But she happens to be the only woman I’ve ever really wanted to marry, for more than a few days at a stretch. You know how it is with us.”

“Oh, yes, I know,” said March, and they shouted again.

“We’re in love, and we’re out of love, twenty times. But this isn’t a mere fancy; it’s a conviction. And there’s no reason why she shouldn’t marry me.”

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March smiled gravely, and his smile was not lost upon Kenby. "You mean the boy," he said. "Well, I like Rose," and now March really felt swept from his feet. "She doesn't deny that she likes me, but she seems to think that her marrying again will take her from him; the fact is, it will only give me to him. As for devoting her whole life to him, she couldn't do a worse thing for him. What the boy needs is a man's care, and a man's will—Good heavens! You don't think I could ever be unkind to the little soul?" Kenby threw himself forward over the table.

"My dear fellow!" March protested.

"I'd rather cut off my right hand!" Kenby pursued, excitedly, and then he said, with a humorous drop: "The fact is, I don't believe I should want her so much if I couldn't have Rose too. I want to have them both. So far, I've only got no for an answer; but I'm not going to keep it. I had a letter from Rose at Carlsbad, the other day; and—"

The waiter came forward with a folded scrap of paper on his salver, which March knew must be from his wife. "What is keeping you so?" she wrote. "I am all ready." "It's from Mrs. March," he explained to Kenby. "I am going out with her on some errands. I'm awfully glad to see you again. We must talk it all over, and you must—you mustn't—-Mrs. March will want to see you later—I—Are you in the hotel?"

"Oh yes. I'll see you at the one-o'clock table d'hote, I suppose."

March went away with his head whirling in the question whether he should tell his wife at once of Kenby's presence, or leave her free for the pleasures of Wurzburg, till he could shape the fact into some safe and acceptable form. She met him at the door with her guide-books, wraps and umbrellas, and would hardly give him time to get on his hat and coat.

"Now, I want you to avoid the Stollers as far as you can see them. This is to be a real wedding-journey day, with no extraneous acquaintance to bother; the more strangers the better. Wurzburg is richer than anything I imagined. I've looked it all up; I've got the plan of the city, so that we can easily find the way. We'll walk first, and take carriages whenever we get tired. We'll go to the cathedral at once; I want a good gulp of rococo to begin with; there wasn't half enough of it at Ansbach. Isn't it strange how we've come round to it?"

She referred to that passion for the Gothic which they had obediently imbibed from Ruskin in the days of their early Italian travel and courtship, when all the English-speaking world bowed down to him in devout aversion from the renaissance, and pious abhorrence of the rococo.

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“What biddable little things we were!” she went on, while March was struggling to keep Kenby in the background of his consciousness. “The rococo must have always had a sneaking charm for us, when we were pinning our faith to pointed arches; and yet I suppose we were perfectly sincere. Oh, look at that divinely ridiculous Madonna!” They were now making their way out of the crooked footway behind their hotel toward the street leading to the cathedral, and she pointed to the Blessed Virgin over the door of some religious house, her drapery billowing about her feet; her body twisting to show the sculptor’s mastery of anatomy, and the halo held on her tossing head with the help of stout gilt rays. In fact, the Virgin’s whole figure was gilded, and so was that of the child in her arms. “Isn’t she delightful?”

“I see what you mean,” said March, with a dubious glance at the statue, “but I’m not sure, now, that I wouldn’t like something quieter in my Madonnas.”

The thoroughfare which they emerged upon, with the cathedral ending the prospective, was full of the holiday so near at hand. The narrow sidewalks were thronged with people, both soldiers and civilians, and up the middle of the street detachments of military came and went, halting the little horse-cars and the huge beer-wagons which otherwise seemed to have the sole right to the streets of Wurzburg; they came jingling or thundering out of the aide streets and hurled themselves round the corners reckless of the passers, who escaped alive by flattening themselves like posters against the house walls. There were peasants, men and women, in the costume which the unbroken course of their country life had kept as quaint as it was a hundred years before; there were citizens in the misfits of the latest German fashions; there were soldiers of all arms in their vivid uniforms, and from time to time there were pretty young girls in white dresses with low necks, and bare arms gloved to the elbows, who were following a holiday custom of the place in going about the streets in ball costume. The shop windows were filled with portraits of the Emperor and the Empress, and the Prince-Regent and the ladies of his family; the German and Bavarian colors draped the facades of the houses and festooned the fantastic Madonnas posing above so many portals. The modern patriotism included the ancient piety without disturbing it; the rococo city remained ecclesiastical through its new imperialism, and kept the stamp given it by the long rule of the prince-bishops under the sovereignty of its King and the suzerainty of its Kaiser.

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The Marches escaped from the present, when they entered the cathedral, as wholly as if they had taken hold of the horns of the altar, though they were far from literally doing this in an interior so grandiose. There area few rococo churches in Italy, and perhaps more in Spain, which approach the perfection achieved by the Wurzburg cathedral in the baroque style. For once one sees what that style can do in architecture and sculpture, and whatever one may say of the details, one cannot deny that there is a prodigiously effective keeping in it all. This interior came together, as the decorators say, with a harmony that the travellers had felt nowhere in their earlier experience of the rococo. It was, unimpeachably perfect in its way, "Just," March murmured to his wife, "as the social and political and scientific scheme of the eighteenth century was perfected in certain times and places. But the odd thing is to find the apotheosis of the rococo away up here in Germany. I wonder how much the prince-bishops really liked it. But they had become rococo, too! Look at that row of their statues on both sides of the nave! What magnificent swell! How they abash this poor plain Christ, here; he would like to get behind the pillar; he knows that he could never lend himself to the baroque style. It expresses the eighteenth century, though. But how you long for some little hint of the thirteenth, or even the nineteenth."

"I don't," she whispered back. "I'm perfectly wild with Wurzburg. I like to have a thing go as far as it can. At Nuremberg I wanted all the Gothic I could get, and in Wurzburg I want all the baroque I can get. I am consistent."

She kept on praising herself to his disadvantage, as women do, all the way to the Neumunster Church, where they were going to revere the tomb of Walther von der Vogelweide, not so much for his own sake as for Longfellow's. The older poet lies buried within, but his monument is outside the church, perhaps for the greater convenience of the sparrows, which now represent the birds he loved. The cenotaph is surmounted by a broad vase, and around this are thickly perched the effigies of the Meistersinger's feathered friends, from whom the canons of the church, as Mrs. March read aloud from her Baedeker, long ago directed his bequest to themselves. In revenge for their lawless greed the defrauded beneficiaries choose to burlesque the affair by looking like the four-and-twenty blackbirds when the pie was opened.

She consented to go for a moment to the Gothic Marienkapelle with her husband in the revival of his mediaeval taste, and she was rewarded amidst its thirteenth-century sincerity by his recantation. "You are right! Baroque is the thing for Wurzburg; one can't enjoy Gothic here any more than one could enjoy baroque in Nuremberg."

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Reconciled in the rococo, they now called a carriage, and went to visit the palace of the prince-bishops who had so well known how to make the heavenly take the image and superscription of the worldly; and they were jointly indignant to find it shut against the public in preparation for the imperialities and royalties coming to occupy it. They were in time for the noon guard-mounting, however, and Mrs. March said that the way the retiring squad kicked their legs out in the high martial step of the German soldiers was a perfect expression of the insolent militarism of their empire, and was of itself enough to make one thank Heaven that one was an American and a republican. She softened a little toward their system when it proved that the garden of the palace was still open, and yet more when she sank down upon a bench between two marble groups representing the Rape of Proserpine and the Rape of Europa. They stood each in a gravelled plot, thickly overrun by a growth of ivy, and the vine climbed the white naked limbs of the nymphs, who were present on a pretence of gathering flowers, but really to pose at the spectators, and clad them to the waist and shoulders with an effect of modesty never meant by the sculptor, but not displeasing. There was an old fountain near, its stone rim and centre of rock-work green with immemorial mould, and its basin quivering between its water-plants under the soft fall of spray. At a waft of fitful breeze some leaves of early autumn fell from the trees overhead upon the elderly pair where they sat, and a little company of sparrows came and hopped about their feet. Though the square without was so all astir with festive expectation, there were few people in the garden; three or four peasant women in densely fluted white skirts and red aprons and shawls wandered by and stared at the Europa and at the Proserpine.

It was a precious moment in which the charm of the city's past seemed to culminate, and they were loath to break it by speech.

"Why didn't we have something like all this on our first wedding journey?" she sighed at last. "To think of our battening from Boston to Niagara and back! And how hard we tried to make something of Rochester and Buffalo, of Montreal and Quebec!"

"Niagara wasn't so bad," he said, "and I will never go back on Quebec."

"Ah, but if we could have had Hamburg and Leipsic, and Carlsbad and Nuremberg, and Ansbach and Wurzburg! Perhaps this is meant as a compensation for our lost youth. But I can't enjoy it as I could when I was young. It's wasted on my sere and yellow leaf. I wish Burnamy and Miss Triscoe were here; I should like to try this garden on them."

"They wouldn't care for it," he replied, and upon a daring impulse he added, "Kenby and Mrs. Adding might." If she took this suggestion in good part, he could tell her that Kenby was in Wurzburg.

"Don't speak of them! They're in just that besotted early middle-age when life has settled into a self-satisfied present, with no past and no future; the most philistine, the most bourgeois, moment of existence. Better be elderly at once, as far as appreciation

of all this goes." She rose and put her hand on his arm, and pushed him away in the impulsive fashion of her youth, across alleys of old trees toward a balustraded terrace in the background which had tempted her.

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“It isn’t so bad, being elderly,” he said. “By that time we have accumulated enough past to sit down and really enjoy its associations. We have got all sorts of perspectives and points of view. We know where we are at.”

“I don’t mind being elderly. The world’s just as amusing as ever, and lots of disagreeable things have dropped out. It’s the getting more than elderly; it’s the getting old; and then—”

They shrank a little closer together, and walked on in silence till he said, “Perhaps there’s something else, something better—somewhere.”

They had reached the balustraded terrace, and were pausing for pleasure in the garden tops below, with the flowery spaces, and the statued fountains all coming together. She put her hand on one of the fat little urchin-groups on the stone coping. “I don’t want cherubs, when I can have these putti. And those old prince-bishops didn’t, either!”

“I don’t suppose they kept a New England conscience,” he said, with a vague smile. “It would be difficult in the presence of the rococo.”

They left the garden through the beautiful gate which the old court ironsmith Oegg hammered out in lovely forms of leaves and flowers, and shaped laterally upward, as lightly as if with a waft of his hand, in gracious Louis Quinze curves; and they looked back at it in the kind of despair which any perfection inspires. They said how feminine it was, how exotic, how expressive of a luxurious ideal of life which art had purified and left eternally charming. They remembered their Ruskinian youth, and the confidence with which they would once have condemned it; and they had a sense of recreance in now admiring it; but they certainly admired it, and it remained for them the supreme expression of that time-soul, mundane, courtly, aristocratic, flattering, which once influenced the art of the whole world, and which had here so curiously found its apotheosis in a city remote from its native place and under a rule sacerdotally vowed to austerity. The vast superb palace of the prince bishops, which was now to house a whole troop of sovereigns, imperial, royal, grand ducal and ducal, swelled aloft in superb amplitude; but it did not realize their historic pride so effectively as this exquisite work of the court ironsmith. It related itself in its aerial beauty to that of the Tiepolo frescoes which the travellers knew were swimming and soaring on the ceilings within, and from which it seemed to accent their exclusion with a delicate irony, March said. “Or iron-mongery,” he corrected himself upon reflection.

LIV.

He had forgotten Kenby in these aesthetic interests, but he remembered him again when he called a carriage, and ordered it driven to their hotel. It was the hour of the German mid-day table d’hote, and they would be sure to meet him there. The question

now was how March should own his presence in time to prevent his wife from showing her ignorance of it to Kenby himself, and he was still turning the question hopelessly over in his mind when the sight of the hotel seemed to remind her of a fact which she announced.

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“Now, my dear, I am tired to death, and I am not going to sit through a long table d’hote. I want you to send me up a simple beefsteak and a cup of tea to our rooms; and I don’t want you to come near for hours; because I intend to take a whole afternoon nap. You can keep all the maps and plans, and guides, and you had better go and see what the Volksfest is like; it will give you some notion of the part the people are really taking in all this official celebration, and you know I don’t care. Don’t come up after dinner to see how I am getting along; I shall get along; and if you should happen to wake me after I had dropped off—”

Kenby had seen them arrive from where he sat at the reading-room window, waiting for the dinner hour, and had meant to rush out and greet Mrs. March as they passed up the corridor. But she looked so tired that he had decided to spare her till she came down to dinner; and as he sat with March at their soup, he asked if she were not well.

March explained, and he provisionally invented some regrets from her that she should not see Kenby till supper.

Kenby ordered a bottle of one of the famous Wurzburg wines for their mutual consolation in her absence, and in the friendliness which its promoted they agreed to spend the afternoon together. No man is so inveterate a husband as not to take kindly an occasional release to bachelor companionship, and before the dinner was over they agreed that they would go to the Volksfest, and get some notion of the popular life and amusements of Wurzburg, which was one of the few places where Kenby had never been before; and they agreed that they would walk.

Their way was partly up the quay of the Main, past a barrack full of soldiers. They met detachments of soldiers everywhere, infantry, artillery, cavalry.

“This is going to be a great show,” Kenby said, meaning the manoeuvres, and he added, as if now he had kept away from the subject long enough and had a right to recur to it, at least indirectly, “I should like to have Rose see it, and get his impressions.”

“I’ve an idea he wouldn’t approve of it. His mother says his mind is turning more and more to philanthropy.”

Kenby could not forego such a chance to speak of Mrs. Adding. “It’s one of the prettiest things to see how she understands Rose. It’s charming to see them together. She wouldn’t have half the attraction without him.”

“Oh, yes,” March assented. He had often wondered how a man wishing to marry a widow managed with the idea of her children by another marriage; but if Kenby was honest; it was much simpler than he had supposed. He could not say this to him, however, and in a certain embarrassment he had with the conjecture in his presence he attempted a diversion. “We’re promised something at the Volksfest which will be a great

novelty to us as Americans. Our driver told us this morning that one of the houses there was built entirely of wood."

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When they reached the grounds of the Volksfest, this civil feature of the great military event at hand, which the Marches had found largely set forth in the programme of the parade, did not fully keep the glowing promises made for it; in fact it could not easily have done so. It was in a pleasant neighborhood of new villas such as form the modern quarter of every German city, and the Volksfest was even more unfinished than its environment. It was not yet enclosed by the fence which was to hide its wonders from the non-paying public, but March and Kenby went in through an archway where the gate-money was as effectually collected from them as if they were barred every other entrance.

The wooden building was easily distinguishable from the other edifices because these were tents and booths still less substantial. They did not make out its function, but of the others four sheltered merry-go-rounds, four were beer-gardens, four were restaurants, and the rest were devoted to amusements of the usual country-fair type. Apparently they had little attraction for country people. The Americans met few peasants in the grounds, and neither at the Edison kinematograph, where they refreshed their patriotism with some scenes of their native life, nor at the little theatre where they saw the sports of the arena revived, in the wrestle of a woman with a bear, did any of the people except tradesmen and artisans seem to be taking part in the festival expression of the popular pleasure.

The woman, who finally threw the bear, whether by slight, or by main strength, or by a previous understanding with him, was a slender creature, pathetically small and not altogether plain; and March as they walked away lapsed into a pensive muse upon her strange employ. He wondered how she came to take it up, and whether she began with the bear when they were both very young, and she could easily throw him.

“Well, women have a great deal more strength than we suppose,” Kenby began with a philosophical air that gave March the hope of some rational conversation. Then his eye glazed with a far-off look, and a doting smile came into his face. “When we went through the Dresden gallery together, Rose and I were perfectly used up at the end of an hour, but his mother kept on as long as there was anything to see, and came away as fresh as a peach.”

Then March saw that it was useless to expect anything different from him, and he let him talk on about Mrs. Adding all the rest of the way back to the hotel. Kenby seemed only to have begun when they reached the door, and wanted to continue the subject in the reading-room.

March pleaded his wish to find how his wife had got through the afternoon, and he escaped to her. He would have told her now that Kenby was in the house, but he was really so sick of the fact himself that he could not speak of it at once, and he let her go on celebrating all she had seen from the window since she had waked from her long

nap. She said she could never be glad enough that they had come just at that time. Soldiers had been going by the whole afternoon, and that made it so feudal.

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"Yes," he assented. "But aren't you coming up to the station with me to see the Prince-Regent arrive? He's due at seven, you know."

"I declare I had forgotten all about it. No, I'm not equal to it. You must go; you can tell me everything; be sure to notice how the Princess Maria looks; the last of the Stuarts, you know; and some people consider her the rightful Queen of England; and I'll have the supper ordered, and we can go down as soon as you've got back."

LV.

March felt rather shabby stealing away without Kenby; but he had really had as much of Mrs. Adding as he could stand, for one day, and he was even beginning to get sick of Rose. Besides, he had not sent back a line for 'Every Other Week' yet, and he had made up his mind to write a sketch of the manoeuvres. To this end he wished to receive an impression of the Prince-Regent's arrival which should not be blurred or clouded by other interests. His wife knew the kind of thing he liked to see, and would have helped him out with his observations, but Kenby would have got in the way, and would have clogged the movement of his fancy in assigning the facts to the parts he would like them to play in the sketch.

At least he made some such excuses to himself as he hurried along toward the Kaiserstrasse. The draught of universal interest in that direction had left the other streets almost deserted, but as he approached the thoroughfare he found all the ways blocked, and the horse-cars, ordinarily so furiously headlong, arrested by the multiple ranks of spectators on the sidewalks. The avenue leading from the railway station to the palace was decorated with flags and garlands, and planted with the stems of young firs and birches. The doorways were crowded, and the windows dense with eager faces peering out of the draped bunting. The carriageway was kept clear by mild policemen who now and then allowed one of the crowd to cross it.

The crowd was made up mostly of women and boys, and when March joined them, they had already been waiting an hour for the sight of the princes who were to bless them with a vision of the faery race which kings always are to common men. He thought the people looked dull, and therefore able to bear the strain of expectation with patience better than a livelier race. They relieved it by no attempt at joking; here and there a dim smile dawned on a weary face, but it seemed an effect of amiability rather than humor. There was so little of this, or else it was so well bridled by the solemnity of the occasion, that not a man, woman, or child laughed when a bareheaded maid-servant broke through the lines and ran down between them with a life-size plaster bust of the Emperor William in her arms: she carried it like an overgrown infant, and in alarm at her conspicuous part she cast frightened looks from side to side without arousing any sort of notice. Undeterred by her failure, a young

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dog, parted from his owner, and seeking him in the crowd, pursued his search in a wild flight down the guarded roadway with an air of anxiety that in America would have won him thunders of applause, and all sorts of kindly encouragements to greater speed. But this German crowd witnessed his progress apparently without interest, and without a sign of pleasure. They were there to see the Prince-Regent arrive, and they did not suffer themselves to be distracted by any preliminary excitement. Suddenly the indefinable emotion which expresses the fulfilment of expectation in a waiting crowd passed through the multitude, and before he realized it March was looking into the friendly gray-bearded face of the Prince-Regent, for the moment that his carriage allowed in passing. This came first preceded by four outriders, and followed by other simple equipages of Bavarian blue, full of highnesses of all grades. Beside the Regent sat his daughter-in-law, the Princess Maria, her silvered hair framing a face as plain and good as the Regent's, if not so intelligent.

He, in virtue of having been born in Wurzburg, is officially supposed to be specially beloved by his fellow townsmen; and they now testified their affection as he whirled through their ranks, bowing right and left, by what passes in Germany for a cheer. It is the word Hoch, groaned forth from abdominal depths, and dismally prolonged in a hollow roar like that which the mob makes behind the scenes at the theatre before bursting in visible tumult on the stage. Then the crowd dispersed, and March came away wondering why such a kindly-looking Prince-Regent should not have given them a little longer sight of himself; after they had waited so patiently for hours to see him. But doubtless in those countries, he concluded, the art of keeping the sovereign precious by suffering him to be rarely and briefly seen is wisely studied.

On his way home he resolved to confess Kenby's presence; and he did so as soon as he sat down to supper with his wife. "I ought to have told you the first thing after breakfast. But when I found you in that mood of having the place all to ourselves, I put it off."

"You took terrible chances, my dear," she said, gravely.

"And I have been terribly punished. You've no idea how much Kenby has talked to me about Mrs. Adding!"

She broke out laughing. "Well, perhaps you've suffered enough. But you can see now, can't you, that it would have been awful if I had met him, and let out that I didn't know he was here?"

"Terrible. But if I had told, it would have spoiled the whole morning for you; you couldn't have thought of anything else."

“Oh, I don’t know,” she said, airily. “What should you think if I told you I had known he was here ever since last night?” She went on in delight at the start he gave. “I saw him come into the hotel while you were gone for the guide-books, and I determined to keep it from you as long as I could; I knew it would worry you. We’ve both been very nice; and I forgive you,” she hurried on, “because I’ve really got something to tell you.”

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“Don’t tell me that Burnamy is here!”

“Don’t jump to conclusions! No, Burnamy isn’t here, poor fellow! And don’t suppose that I’m guilty of concealment because I haven’t told you before. I was just thinking whether I wouldn’t spare you till morning, but now I shall let you take the brunt of it. Mrs. Adding and Rose are here.” She gave the fact time to sink in, and then she added, “And Miss Triscoe and her father are here.”

“What is the matter with Major Eltwin and his wife being here, too? Are they in our hotel?”

“No, they are not. They came to look for rooms while you were off waiting for the Prince-Regent, and I saw them. They intended to go to Frankfort for the manoeuvres, but they heard that there was not even standing-room there, and so the general telegraphed to the Spanischer Hof, and they all came here. As it is, he will have to room with Rose, and Agatha and Mrs. Adding will room together. I didn’t think Agatha was looking very well; she looked unhappy; I don’t believe she’s heard, from Burnamy yet; I hadn’t a chance to ask her. And there’s something else that I’m afraid will fairly make you sick.”

“Oh, no; go on. I don’t think anything can do that, after an afternoon of Kenby’s confidences.”

“It’s worse than Kenby,” she said with a sigh. “You know I told you at Carlsbad I thought that ridiculous old thing was making up to Mrs. Adding.”

“Kenby? Why of co—”

“Don’t be stupid, my dear! No, not Kenby: General Triscoe. I wish you could have been here to see him paying her all sort; of silly attentions, and hear him making her compliments.”

“Thank you. I think I’m just as well without it. Did she pay him silly attentions and compliments, too?”

“That’s the only thing that can make me forgive her for his wanting her. She was keeping him at arm’s-length the whole time, and she was doing it so as not to make him contemptible before his daughter.”

“It must have been hard. And Rose?”

“Rose didn’t seem very well. He looks thin and pale; but he’s sweeter than ever. She’s certainly commoner clay than Rose. No, I won’t say that! It’s really nothing but General Triscoe’s being an old goose about her that makes her seem so, and it isn’t fair.”

March went down to his coffee in the morning with the delicate duty of telling Kenby that Mrs. Adding was in town. Kenby seemed to think it quite natural she should wish to see the manoeuvres, and not at all strange that she should come to them with General Triscoe and his daughter. He asked if March would not go with him to call upon her after breakfast, and as this was in the line of his own instructions from Mrs. March, he went.

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They found Mrs. Adding with the Triscoes, and March saw nothing that was not merely friendly, or at the most fatherly, in the general's behavior toward her. If Mrs. Adding or Miss Triscoe saw more, they hid it in a guise of sisterly affection for each other. At the most the general showed a gayety which one would not have expected of him under any conditions, and which the fact that he and Rose had kept each other awake a good deal the night before seemed so little adapted to call out. He joked with Rose about their room and their beds, and put on a comradery with him that was not a perfect fit, and that suffered by contrast with the pleasure of the boy and Kenby in meeting. There was a certain question in the attitude of Mrs. Adding till March helped Kenby to account for his presence; then she relaxed in an effect of security so tacit that words overstate it, and began to make fun of Rose.

March could not find that Miss Triscoe looked unhappy, as his wife had said; he thought simply that she had grown plainer; but when he reported this, she lost her patience with him. In a girl, she said, plainness was unhappiness; and she wished to know when he would ever learn to look an inch below the surface: She was sure that Agatha Triscoe had not heard from Burnamy since the Emperor's birthday; that she was at swords'-points with her father, and so desperate that she did not care what became of her.

He had left Kenby with the others, and now, after his wife had talked herself tired of them all, he proposed going out again to look about the city, where there was nothing for the moment to remind them of the presence of their friends or even of their existence. She answered that she was worrying about all those people, and trying to work out their problem for them. He asked why she did not let them work it out themselves as they would have to do, after all her worry, and she said that where her sympathy had been excited she could not stop worrying, whether it did any good or not, and she could not respect any one who could drop things so completely out of his mind as he could; she had never been able to respect that in him.

"I know, my dear," he assented. "But I don't think it's a question of moral responsibility; it's a question of mental structure, isn't it? Your consciousness isn't built in thought-tight compartments, and one emotion goes all through it, and sinks you; but I simply close the doors and shut the emotion in, and keep on."

The fancy pleased him so much that he worked it out in all its implications, and could not, after their long experience of each other, realize that she was not enjoying the joke too, till she said she saw that he merely wished to tease. Then, too late, he tried to share her worry; but she protested that she was not worrying at all; that she cared nothing about those people: that she was nervous, she was tired; and she wished he would leave her, and go out alone.

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He found himself in the street again, and he perceived that he must be walking fast when a voice called him by name, and asked him what his hurry was. The voice was Stoller's, who got into step with him and followed the first with a second question.

"Made up your mind to go to the manoeuvres with me?"

His bluntness made it easy for March to answer: "I'm afraid my wife couldn't stand the drive back and forth."

"Come without her."

"Thank you. It's very kind of you. I'm not certain that I shall go at all. If I do, I shall run out by train, and take my chances with the crowd."

Stoller insisted no further. He felt no offence at the refusal of his offer, or chose to show none. He said, with the same uncouth abruptness as before: "Heard anything of that fellow since he left Carlsbad?"

"Burnamy?"

"Mm."

"No."

"Know where he is?"

"I don't in the least."

Stoller let another silence elapse while they hurried on, before he said, "I got to thinking what he done afterwards. He wasn't bound to look out for me; he might suppose I knew what I was about."

March turned his face and stared in Stoller's, which he was letting hang forward as he stamped heavily on. Had the disaster proved less than he had feared, and did he still want Burnamy's help in patching up the broken pieces; or did he really wish to do Burnamy justice to his friend?

In any case March's duty was clear. "I think Burnamy was bound to look out for you; Mr. Stoller, and I am glad to know that he saw it in the same light."

"I know he did," said Stoker with a blaze as from a long-smouldering fury, "and damn him, I'm not going to have it. I'm not going to, plead the baby act with him, or with any man. You tell him so, when you get the chance. You tell him I don't hold him accountable for anything I made him do. That ain't business; I don't want him around me, any more; but if he wants to go back to the paper he can have his place. You tell

him I stand by what I done; and it's all right between him and me. I hain't done anything about it, the way I wanted him to help me to; I've let it lay, and I'm a-going to. I guess it ain't going to do me any harm, after all; our people hain't got very long memories; but if it is, let it. You tell him it's all right."

"I don't know where he is, Mr. Stoller, and I don't know that I care to be the bearer of your message," said March.

"Why not?"

"Why, for one thing, I don't agree with you that it's all right. Your choosing to stand by the consequences of Burnamy's wrong doesn't undo it. As I understand, you don't pardon it—"

Stoller gulped and did not answer at once. Then he said, "I stand by what I done. I'm not going to let him say I turned him down for doing what I told him to, because I hadn't the sense to know what I was about."

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“Ah, I don’t think it’s a thing he’ll like to speak of in any case,” said March.

Stoller left him, at the corner they had reached, as abruptly as he had joined him, and March hurried back to his wife, and told her what had just passed between him and Stoller.

She broke out, “Well, I am surprised at you, my dear! You have always accused me of suspecting people, and attributing bad motives; and here you’ve refused even to give the poor man the benefit of the doubt. He merely wanted to save his savage pride with you, and that’s all he wants to do with Burnamy. How could it hurt the poor boy to know that Stoller doesn’t blame him? Why should you refuse to give his message to Burnamy? I don’t want you to ridicule me for my conscience any more, Basil; you’re twice as bad as I ever was. Don’t you think that a person can ever expiate an offence? I’ve often heard you say that if any one owned his fault, he put it from him, and it was the same as if it hadn’t been; and hasn’t Burnamy owned up over and over again? I’m astonished at you, dearest.”

March was in fact somewhat astonished at himself in the light of her reasoning; but she went on with some sophistries that restored him to his self-righteousness.

“I suppose you think he has interfered with Stoller’s political ambition, and injured him in that way. Well, what if he has? Would it be a good thing to have a man like that succeed in politics? You’re always saying that the low character of our politicians is the ruin of the country; and I’m sure,” she added, with a prodigious leap over all the sequences, “that Mr. Stoller is acting nobly; and it’s your duty to help him relieve Burnamy’s mind.” At the laugh he broke into she hastened to say, “Or if you won’t, I hope you’ll not object to my doing so, for I shall, anyway!”

She rose as if she were going to begin at once, in spite of his laughing; and in fact she had already a plan for coming to Stoller’s assistance by getting at Burnamy through Miss Triscoe, whom she suspected of knowing where he was. There had been no chance for them to speak of him either that morning or the evening before, and after a great deal of controversy with herself in her husband’s presence she decided to wait till they came naturally together the next morning for the walk to the Capuchin Church on the hill beyond the river, which they had agreed to take. She could not keep from writing a note to Miss Triscoe begging her to be sure to come, and hinting that she had something very important to speak of.

She was not sure but she had been rather silly to do this, but when they met the girl confessed that she had thought of giving up the walk, and might not have come except for Mrs. March’s note. She had come with Rose, and had left him below with March; Mrs. Adding was coming later with Kenby and General Triscoe.

Mrs. March lost no time in telling her the great news; and if she had been in doubt before of the girl's feeling for Burnamy she was now in none. She had the pleasure of seeing her flush with hope, and then the pain which was also a pleasure, of seeing her blanch with dismay.

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“I don’t know where he is, Mrs. March. I haven’t heard a word from him since that night in Carlsbad. I expected—I didn’t know but you—”

Mrs. March shook her head. She treated the fact skillfully as something to be regretted simply because it would be such a relief to Burnamy to know how Mr. Stoller now felt. Of course they could reach him somehow; you could always get letters to people in Europe, in the end; and, in fact, it was altogether probable that he was that very instant in Wurzburg; for if the New York-Paris Chronicle had wanted him to write up the Wagner operas, it would certainly want him to write up the manoeuvres. She established his presence in Wurzburg by such an irrefragable chain of reasoning that, at a knock outside, she was just able to kelp back a scream, while she ran to open the door. It was not Burnamy, as in compliance with every nerve it ought to have been, but her husband, who tried to justify his presence by saying that they were all waiting for her and Miss Triscoe, and asked when they were coming.

She frowned him silent, and then shut herself outside with him long enough to whisper, “Say she’s got a headache, or anything you please; but don’t stop talking here with me, or I shall go wild.” She then shut herself in again, with the effect of holding him accountable for the whole affair.

LVI.

General Triscoe could not keep his irritation, at hearing that his daughter was not coming, out of the excuses he made to Mrs. Adding; he said again and again that it must seem like a discourtesy to her. She gayly disclaimed any such notion; she would not hear of putting off their excursion to another day; it had been raining just long enough to give them a reasonable hope of a few hours’ drought, and they might not have another dry spell for weeks. She slipped off her jacket after they started, and gave it to Kenby, but she let General Triscoe hold her umbrella over her, while he limped beside her. She seemed to March, as he followed with Rose, to be playing the two men off against each other, with an ease which he wished his wife could be there to see, and to judge aright.

They crossed by the Old Bridge, which is of the earliest years of the seventh century, between rows of saints whose statues surmount the piers. Some are bishops as well as saints; one must have been at Rome in his day, for he wore his long thick beard in the fashion of Michelangelo’s Moses. He stretched out toward the passers two fingers of blessing and was unaware of the sparrow which had lighted on them and was giving him the effect of offering it to the public admiration. Squads of soldiers tramping by turned to look and smile, and the dull faces of citizens lighted up at the quaint sight. Some children stopped and remained very quiet, not to scare away the bird; and a cold-faced, spiritual-looking priest paused among them as if doubting whether to rescue the

absent-minded bishop from a situation derogatory to his dignity; but he passed on, and then the sparrow suddenly flew off.

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Rose Adding had lingered for the incident with March, but they now pushed on, and came up with the others at the end of the bridge, where they found them in question whether they had not better take a carriage and drive to the foot of the hill before they began their climb. March thanked them, but said he was keeping up the terms of his cure, and was getting in all the walking he could. Rose begged his mother not to include him in the driving party; he protested that he was feeling so well, and the walk was doing him good. His mother consented, if he would promise not to get tired, and then she mounted into the two-spanner which had driven instinctively up to their party when their parley began, and General Triscoe took the place beside her, while Kenby, with smiling patience, seated himself in front.

Rose kept on talking with March about Wurzburg and its history, which it seemed he had been reading the night before when he could not sleep. He explained, “We get little histories of the places wherever we go. That’s what Mr. Kenby does, you know.”

“Oh, yes,” said March.

“I don’t suppose I shall get a chance to read much here,” Rose continued, “with General Triscoe in the room. He doesn’t like the light.”

“Well, well. He’s rather old, you know. And you musn’t read too much, Rose. It isn’t good for you.”

“I know, but if I don’t read, I think, and that keeps me awake worse. Of course, I respect General Triscoe for being in the war, and getting wounded,” the boy suggested.

“A good many did it,” March was tempted to say.

The boy did not notice his insinuation. “I suppose there were some things they did in the army, and then they couldn’t get over the habit. But General Grant says in his ‘Life’ that he never used a profane expletive.”

“Does General Triscoe?”

Rose answered reluctantly, “If anything wakes him in the night, or if he can’t make these German beds over to suit him—”

“I see.” March turned his face to hide the smile which he would not have let the boy detect. He thought best not to let Rose resume his impressions of the general; and in talk of weightier matters they found themselves at that point of the climb where the carriage was waiting for them. From this point they followed an alley through ivied, garden walls, till they reached the first of the balustraded terraces which ascend to the crest of the hill where the church stands. Each terrace is planted with sycamores, and the face of the terrace wall supports a bass-relief commemorating with the drama of its lifesize figures the stations of the cross.

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Monks and priests were coming and going, and dropped on the steps leading from terrace to terrace were women and children on their knees in prayer. It was all richly reminiscent of pilgrim scenes in other Catholic lands; but here there was a touch of earnest in the Northern face of the worshipers which the South had never imparted. Even in the beautiful rococo interior of the church at the top of the hill there was a sense of something deeper and truer than mere ecclesiasticism; and March came out of it in a serious muse while the boy at his side did nothing to interrupt. A vague regret filled his heart as he gazed silently out over the prospect of river and city and vineyard, purpling together below the top where he stood, and mixed with this regret was a vague resentment of his wife's absence. She ought to have been there to share his pang and his pleasure; they had so long enjoyed everything together that without her he felt unable to get out of either emotion all there was in it.

The forgotten boy stole silently down the terraces after the rest of the party who had left him behind with March. At the last terrace they stopped and waited; and after a delay that began to be long to Mrs. Adding, she wondered aloud what could have become of them.

Kenby promptly offered to go back and see, and she consented in seeming to refuse: "It isn't worth while. Rose has probably got Mr. March into some deep discussion, and they've forgotten all about us. But if you will go, Mr. Kenby, you might just remind Rose of my existence." She let him lay her jacket on her shoulders before he left her, and then she sat down on one of the steps, which General Triscoe kept striking with the point of her umbrella as he stood before her.

"I really shall have to take it from you if you do that any more," she said, laughing up in his face. "I'm serious."

He stopped. "I wish I could believe you were serious, for a moment."

"You may, if you think it will do you any good. But I don't see why."

The general smiled, but with a kind of tremulous eagerness which might have been pathetic to any one who liked him. "Do you know this is almost the first time I have spoken alone with you?"

"Really, I hadn't noticed," said Mrs. Adding.

General Triscoe laughed in rather a ghastly way. "Well, that's encouraging, at least, to a man who's had his doubts whether it wasn't intended."

"Intended? By whom? What do you mean, General Triscoe? Why in the world shouldn't you have spoken alone with me before?"

He was not, with all his eagerness, ready to say, and while she smiled pleasantly she had the look in her eyes of being brought to bay and being prepared, if it must come to that, to have the worst over, then and there. She was not half his age, but he was aware of her having no respect for his years; compared with her average American past as he understood it, his social place was much higher, but, she was not in the least awed by it; in spite of his war record she was making him behave like a coward. He was in a false position, and if he had any one but himself to blame he had not her. He read her equal knowledge of these facts in the clear eyes that made him flush and turn his own away.

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Then he started with a quick “Hello!” and stood staring up at the steps from the terrace above, where Rose Adding was staying himself weakly by a clutch of Kenby on one side and March on the other.

His mother looked round and caught herself up from where she sat and ran toward him. “Oh, Rose!”

“It’s nothing, mother,” he called to her, and as she dropped on her knees before him he sank limply against her. “It was like what I had in Carlsbad; that’s all. Don’t worry about me, please!”

“I’m not worrying, Rose,” she said with courage of the same texture as his own. “You’ve been walking too much. You must go back in the carriage with us. Can’t you have it come here?” she asked Kenby.

“There’s no road, Mrs. Adding. But if Rose would let me carry him—”

“I can walk,” the boy protested, trying to lift himself from her neck.

“No, no! you mustn’t.” She drew away and let him fall into the arms that Kenby put round him. He raised the frail burden lightly to his shoulder, and moved strongly away, followed by the eyes of the spectators who had gathered about the little group, but who dispersed now, and went back to their devotions.

March hurried after Kenby with Mrs. Adding, whom he told he had just missed Rose and was looking about for him, when Kenby came with her message for them. They made sure that he was nowhere about the church, and then started together down the terraces. At the second or third station below they found the boy clinging to the barrier that protected the bass-relief from the zeal of the devotees. He looked white and sick, though he insisted that he was well, and when he turned to come away with them he reeled and would have fallen if Kenby had not caught him. Kenby wanted to carry him, but Rose would not let him, and had made his way down between them.

“Yea, he has such a spirit,” she said, “and I’ve no doubt he’s suffering now more from Mr. Kenby’s kindness than from his own sickness he had one of these giddy turns in Carlsbad, though, and I shall certainly have a doctor to see him.”

“I think I should, Mrs. Adding,” said March, not too gravely, for it seemed to him that it was not quite his business to alarm her further, if she was herself taking the affair with that seriousness. He questioned whether she was taking it quite seriously enough, when she turned with a laugh, and called to General Triscoe, who was limping down the steps of the last terrace behind them:

“Oh, poor General Triscoe! I thought you had gone on ahead.”

General Triscoe could not enter into the joke of being forgotten, apparently. He assisted with gravity at the disposition of the party for the return, when they all reached the carriage. Rose had the place beside his mother, and Kenby wished March to take his with the general and let him sit with the driver; but he insisted that he would rather walk home, and he did walk till they had driven out of eight. Then he called a passing one-spanner, and drove to his hotel in comfort and silence.

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LVII.

Kenby did not come to the Swan before supper; then he reported that the doctor had said Rose was on the verge of a nervous collapse. He had overworked at school, but the immediate trouble was the high, thin air, which the doctor said he must be got out of at once, into a quiet place at the sea-shore somewhere. He had suggested Ostend; or some point on the French coast; Kenby had thought of Schevleningen, and the doctor had said that would do admirably.

“I understood from Mrs. Adding,” he concluded, “that you were going. there for your after-cure, Mr. March, and I didn’t know but you might be going soon.”

At the mention of Schevleningen the Marches had looked at each other with a guilty alarm, which they both tried to give the cast of affectionate sympathy but she dismissed her fear that he might be going to let his compassion prevail with him to his hurt when he said: “Why, we ought to have been there before this, but I’ve been taking my life in my hands in trying to see a little of Germany, and I’m afraid now that Mrs. March has her mind too firmly fixed on Berlin to let me think of going to Schevleningen till we’ve been there.”

“It’s too bad!” said Mrs. March, with real regret. “I wish we were going.” But she had not the least notion of gratifying her wish; and they were all silent till Kenby broke out:

“Look here! You know how I feel about Mrs Adding! I’ve been pretty frank with Mr. March myself, and I’ve had my suspicions that she’s been frank with you, Mrs. March. There isn’t any doubt about my wanting to marry her, and up to this time there hasn’t been any doubt about her not wanting to marry me. But it isn’t a question of her or of me, now. It’s a question of Rose. I love the boy,” and Kenby’s voice shook, and he faltered a moment. “Pshaw! You understand.”

“Indeed I do, Mr. Kenby,” said Mrs. March. “I perfectly understand you.”

“Well, I don’t think Mrs. Adding is fit to make the journey with him alone, or to place herself in the best way after she gets to Schevleningen. She’s been badly shaken up; she broke down before the doctor; she said she didn’t know what to do; I suppose she’s frightened—”

Kenby stopped again, and March asked, “When is she going?”

“To-morrow,” said Kenby, and he added, “And now the question is, why shouldn’t I go with her?”

Mrs. March gave a little start, and looked at her husband, but he said nothing, and Kenby seemed not to have supposed that he would say anything.

“I know it would be very American, and all that, but I happen to be an American, and it wouldn’t be out of character for me. I suppose,” he appealed to Mrs. March, “that it’s something I might offer to do if it were from New York to Florida—and I happened to be going there? And I did happen to be going to Holland.”

“Why, of course, Mr. Kenby,” she responded, with such solemnity that March gave way in an outrageous laugh.

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Kenby laughed, and Mrs. March laughed too, but with an inner note of protest.

“Well,” Kenby continued, still addressing her, “what I want you to do is to stand by me when I propose it.”

Mrs. March gathered strength to say, “No, Mr. Kenby, it’s your own affair, and you must take the responsibility.”

“Do you disapprove?”

“It isn’t the same as it would be at home. You see that yourself.”

“Well,” said Kenby, rising, “I have to arrange about their getting away to-morrow. It won’t be easy in this hurly-burly that’s coming off.”

“Give Rose our love; and tell Mrs. Adding that I’ll come round and see her to-morrow before she starts.”

“Oh! I’m afraid you can’t, Mrs. March. They’re to start at six in the morning.”

“They are! Then we must go and see them tonight. We’ll be there almost as soon as you are.”

March went up to their rooms with, his wife, and she began on the stairs:

“Well, my dear, I hope you realize that your laughing so gave us completely away. And what was there to keep grinning about, all through?”

“Nothing but the disingenuous, hypocritical passion of love. It’s always the most amusing thing in the world; but to see it trying to pass itself off in poor old Kenby as duty and humanity, and disinterested affection for Rose, was more than I could stand. I don’t apologize for laughing; I wanted to yell.”

His effrontery and his philosophy both helped to save him; and she said from the point where he had side-tracked her mind: “I don’t call it disingenuous. He was brutally frank. He’s made it impossible to treat the affair with dignity. I want you to leave the whole thing to me, from this out. Now, will you?”

On their way to the Spanischer Hof she arranged in her own mind for Mrs. Adding to get a maid, and for the doctor to send an assistant with her on the journey, but she was in such despair with her scheme that she had not the courage to right herself when Mrs. Adding met her with the appeal:

“Oh, Mrs. March, I’m so glad you approve of Mr. Kenby’s plan. It does seem the only thing to do. I can’t trust myself alone with Rose, and Mr. Kenby’s intending to go to

Schevleningen a few days later anyway. Though it's too bad to let him give up the manoeuvres."

"I'm sure he won't mind that," Mrs. March's voice said mechanically, while her thought was busy with the question whether this scandalous duplicity was altogether Kenby's, and whether Mrs. Adding was as guiltless of any share in it as she looked. She looked pitifully distracted; she might not have understood his report; or Kenby might really have mistaken Mrs. March's sympathy for favor.

"No, he only lives to do good," Mrs. Adding returned. "He's with Rose; won't you come in and see them?"

Rose was lying back on the pillows of a sofa, from which they would not let him get up. He was full of the trip to Holland, and had already pushed Kenby, as Kenby owned, beyond the bounds of his very general knowledge of the Dutch language, which Rose had plans for taking up after they were settled in Schevleningen. The boy scoffed at the notion that he was not perfectly well, and he wished to talk with March on the points where he had found Kenby wanting.

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“Kenby is an encyclopaedia compared with me, Rose,” the editor protested, and he amplified his ignorance for the boy’s good to an extent which Rose saw was a joke. He left Holland to talk about other things which his mother thought quite as bad for him. He wished to know if March did not think that the statue of the bishop with the sparrow on its finger was a subject for a poem; and March said gayly that if Rose would write it he would print it in ‘Every Other Week’.

The boy flushed with pleasure at his banter. “No, I couldn’t do it. But I wish Mr. Burnamy had seen it. He could. Will you tell him about it?” He wanted to know if March had heard from Burnamy lately, and in the midst of his vivid interest he gave a weary sigh.

His mother said that now he had talked enough, and bade him say good-by to the Marches, who were coming so soon to Holland, anyway. Mrs. March put her arms round him to kiss him, and when she let him sink back her eyes were dim.

“You see how frail he is?” said Mrs. Adding. “I shall not let him out of my sight, after this, till he’s well again.”

She had a kind of authority in sending Kenby away with them which was not lost upon the witnesses. He asked them to come into the reading-room a moment with him, and Mrs. March wondered if he were going to make some excuse to her for himself; but he said: “I don’t know how we’re to manage about the Triscoes. The general will have a room to himself, but if Mrs. Adding takes Rose in with her, it leaves Miss Triscoe out, and there isn’t a room to be had in this house for love or money. Do you think,” he appealed directly to Mrs. March, “that it would do to offer her my room at the Swan?”

“Why, yes,” she assented, with a reluctance rather for the complicity in which he had already involved her, and for which he was still unpunished, than for what he was now proposing. “Or she could come in with me, and Mr. March could take it.”

“Whichever you think,” said Kenby so submissively that she relented, to ask:

“And what will you do?”

He laughed. “Well, people have been known to sleep in a chair. I shall manage somehow.”

“You might offer to go in with the general,” March suggested, and the men apparently thought this was a joke. Mrs. March did not laugh in her feminine worry about ways and means.

“Where is Miss Triscoe?” she asked. “We haven’t seen them.”

“Didn’t Mrs. Adding tell you? They went to supper at a restaurant; the general doesn’t like the cooking here. They ought to have been back before this.”

He looked up at the clock on the wall, and she said, “I suppose you would like us to wait.”

“It would be very kind of you.”

“Oh, it’s quite essential,” she returned with an airy freshness which Kenby did not seem to feel as painfully as he ought.

They all sat down, and the Triscoes came in after a few minutes, and a cloud on the general’s face lifted at the proposition Kenby left Mrs. March to make.

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“I thought that child ought to be in his mother’s charge,” he said. With his own comfort provided for, he made no objections to Mrs. March’s plan; and Agatha went to take leave of Rose and his mother. “By-the-way,” the general turned to March, “I found Stoller at the restaurant where we supped. He offered me a place in his carriage for the manoeuvres. How are you going?”

“I think I shall go by train. I don’t fancy the long drive.”

“Well, I don’t know that it’s worse than the long walk after you leave the train,” said the general from the offence which any difference of taste was apt to give him. “Are you going by train, too?” he asked Kenby with indifference.

“I’m not going at all,” said Kenby. “I’m leaving Wurzburg in the morning.”

“Oh, indeed,” said the general.

Mrs. March could not make out whether he knew that Kenby was going with Rose and Mrs. Adding, but she felt that there must be a full and open recognition of the fact among them. “Yes,” she said, “isn’t it fortunate that Mr. Kenby should be going to Holland, too! I should have been so unhappy about them if Mrs. Adding had been obliged to make that long journey with poor little Rose alone.”

“Yes, yes; very fortunate, certainly,” said the general colorlessly.

Her husband gave her a glance of intelligent appreciation; but Kenby was too simply, too densely content with the situation to know the value of what she had done. She thought he must certainly explain, as he walked back with her to the Swan, whether he had misrepresented her to Mrs. Adding, or Mrs. Adding had misunderstood him. Somewhere there had been an error, or a duplicity which it was now useless to punish; and Kenby was so apparently unconscious of it that she had not the heart to be cross with him. She heard Miss Triscoe behind her with March laughing in the gayety which the escape from her father seemed to inspire in her. She was promising March to go with him in the morning to see the Emperor and Empress of Germany arrive at the station, and he was warning her that if she laughed there, like that, she would subject him to fine and imprisonment. She pretended that she would like to see him led off between two gendarmes, but consented to be a little careful when he asked her how she expected to get back to her hotel without him, if such a thing happened.

LVIII.

After all, Miss Triscoe did not go with March; she preferred to sleep. The imperial party was to arrive at half past seven, but at six the crowd was already dense before the station, and all along the street leading to the Residenz. It was a brilliant day, with the promise of sunshine, through which a chilly wind blew, for the manoeuvres. The colors

of all the German states flapped in this breeze from the poles wreathed with evergreen which encircled the square; the workmen putting the last touches on the bronzed allegory hurried madly to be done, and they had, scarcely finished their labors when two troops of dragoons rode into the place and formed before the station, and waited as motionlessly as their horses would allow.

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These animals were not so conscious as lions at the approach of princes; they tossed and stamped impatiently in the long interval before the Regent and his daughter-in-law came to welcome their guests. All the human beings, both those who were in charge and those who were under charge, were in a quiver of anxiety to play their parts well, as if there were some heavy penalty for failure in the least point. The policemen keeping the people, in line behind the ropes which restrained them trembled with eagerness; the faces of some of the troopers twitched. An involuntary sigh went up from the crowd as the Regent's carriage appeared, heralded by outriders, and followed by other plain carriages of Bavarian blue with liveries of blue and silver. Then the whistle of the Kaiser's train sounded; a trumpeter advanced and began to blow his trumpet as they do in the theatre; and exactly at the appointed moment the Emperor and Empress came out of the station through the brilliant human alley leading from it, mounted their carriages, with the stage trumpeter always blowing, and whirled swiftly round half the square and flashed into the corner toward the Residenz out of sight. The same hollow groans of Ho-o-o-ch greeted and followed them from the spectators as had welcomed the Regent when he first arrived among his fellow-townsmen, with the same effect of being the conventional cries of a stage mob behind the scenes.

The Emperor was like most of his innumerable pictures, with a swarthy face from which his blue eyes glanced pleasantly; he looked good-humored if not good-natured; the Empress smiled amiably beneath her deeply fringed white parasol, and they both bowed right and left in acknowledgment of those hollow groans; but again it seemed, to March that sovereignty, gave the popular curiosity, not to call it devotion, a scantier return than it merited. He had perhaps been insensibly working toward some such perception as now came to him that the great difference between Europe and America was that in Europe life is histrionic and dramatized, and that in America, except when it is trying to be European, it is direct and sincere. He wondered whether the innate conviction of equality, the deep, underlying sense of a common humanity transcending all social and civic pretences, was what gave their theatrical effect to the shows of deference from low to high, and of condescension from high to low. If in such encounters of sovereigns and subjects, the prince did not play his part so well as the people, it might be that he had a harder part to play, and that to support his dignity at all, to keep from being found out the sham that he essentially was, he had to hurry across the stage amidst the distracting thunders of the orchestra. If the star staid to be scrutinized by the soldiers, citizens, and so forth, even the poor supernumeraries and scene-shifters might see that he was a tallow candle like themselves.

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In the censorious mood induced by the reflection that he had waited an hour and a half for half a minute's glimpse of the imperial party, March now decided not to go to the manoeuvres, where he might be subjected to still greater humiliation and disappointment. He had certainly come to Wurzburg for the manoeuvres, but Wurzburg had been richly repaying in itself; and why should he stifle half an hour in an overcrowded train, and struggle for three miles on foot against that harsh wind, to see a multitude of men give proofs of their fitness to do manifold murder? He was, in fact, not the least curious for the sight, and the only thing that really troubled him was the question of how he should justify his recreance to his wife. This did alloy the pleasure with which he began, after an excellent breakfast at a neighboring cafe, to stroll about the streets, though he had them almost to himself, so many citizens had followed the soldiers to the manoeuvres.

It was not till the soldiers began returning from the manoeuvres, dusty-footed, and in white canvas overalls drawn over their trousers to save them, that he went back to Mrs. March and Miss Triscoe at the Swan. He had given them time enough to imagine him at the review, and to wonder whether he had seen General Triscoe and the Stollers there, and they met him with such confident inquiries that he would not undeceive them at once. He let them divine from his inventive answers that he had not gone to the manoeuvres, which put them in the best humor with themselves, and the girl said it was so cold and rough that she wished her father had not gone, either. The general appeared just before dinner and frankly avowed the same wish. He was rasping and wheezing from the dust which filled his lungs; he looked blown and red, and he was too angry with the company he had been in to have any comments on the manoeuvres. He referred to the military chiefly in relation to the Miss Stollers' ineffectual flirtations, which he declared had been outrageous. Their father had apparently no control over them whatever, or else was too ignorant to know that they were misbehaving. They were without respect or reverence for any one; they had talked to General Triscoe as if he were a boy of their own age, or a dotard whom nobody need mind; they had not only kept up their foolish babble before him, they had laughed and giggled, they had broken into snatches of American song, they had all but whistled and danced. They made loud comments in Illinois English—on the cuteness of the officers whom they admired, and they had at one time actually got out their handkerchiefs. He supposed they meant to wave them at the officers, but at the look he gave them they merely put their hats together and snickered in derision of him. They were American girls of the worst type; they conformed to no standard of behavior; their conduct was personal. They ought to be taken home.

Mrs. March said she saw what he meant, and she agreed with him that they were altogether unformed, and were the effect of their own ignorant caprices. Probably, however, it was too late to amend them by taking them away.

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“It would hide them, at any rate,” he answered. “They would sink back into the great mass of our vulgarity, and not be noticed. We behave like a parcel of peasants with our women. We think that if no harm is meant or thought, we may risk any sort of appearance, and we do things that are scandalously improper simply because they are innocent. That may be all very well at home, but people who prefer that sort of thing had better stay there, where our peasant manners won’t make them conspicuous.”

As their train ran northward out of Wurzburg that afternoon, Mrs. March recurred to the general’s closing words. “That was a slap at Mrs. Adding for letting Kenby go off with her.”

She took up the history of the past twenty-four hours, from the time March had left her with Miss Triscoe when he went with her father and the Addings and Kenby to see that church. She had had no chance to bring up these arrears until now, and she atoned to herself for the delay by making the history very full, and going back and adding touches at any point where she thought she had scanted it. After all, it consisted mainly of fragmentary intimations from Miss Triscoe and of half-uttered questions which her own art now built into a coherent statement.

March could not find that the general had much resented Burnamy’s clandestine visit to Carlsbad when his daughter told him of it, or that he had done more than make her promise that she would not keep up the acquaintance upon any terms unknown to him.

“Probably,” Mrs. March said, “as long as he had any hopes of Mrs. Adding, he was a little too self-conscious to be very up and down about Burnamy.”

“Then you think he was really serious about her?”

“Now my dear! He was so serious that I suppose he was never so completely taken aback in his life as when he met Kenby in Wurzburg and saw how she received him. Of course, that put an end to the fight.”

“The fight?”

“Yes—that Mrs. Adding and Agatha were keeping up to prevent his offering himself.”

“Oh! And how do you know that they were keeping up the fight together?”

“How do I? Didn’t you see yourself what friends they were? Did you tell him what Stoller had, said about Burnamy?”

“I had no chance. I don’t know that I should have done it, anyway. It wasn’t my affair.”

“Well, then, I think you might. It would have been everything for that poor child; it would have completely justified her in her own eyes.”

“Perhaps your telling her will serve the same purpose.”

“Yes, I did tell her, and I am glad of it. She had a right to know it.”

“Did she think Stoller’s willingness to overlook Burnamy’s performance had anything to do with its moral quality?”

Mrs. March was daunted for the moment, but she said, “I told her you thought that if a person owned to a fault they disowned it, and put it away from them just as if it had never been committed; and that if a person had taken their punishment for a wrong they had done, they had expiated it so far as anybody else was concerned. And hasn’t poor Burnamy done both?”

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As a moralist March was flattered to be hoist with his own petard, but as a husband he was not going to come down at once. “I thought probably you had told her that. You had it pat from having just been over it with me. When has she heard from him?”

“Why, that’s the strangest thing about it. She hasn’t heard at all. She doesn’t know where he is. She thought we must know. She was terribly broken up.”

“How did she show it?”

“She didn’t show it. Either you want to tease, or you’ve forgotten how such things are with young people—or at least girls.”

“Yes, it’s all a long time ago with me, and I never was a girl. Besides, the frank and direct behavior of Kenby and Mrs. Adding has been very obliterating to my early impressions of love-making.”

“It certainly hasn’t been ideal,” said Mrs. March with a sigh.

“Why hasn’t it been ideal?” he asked. “Kenby is tremendously in love with her; and I believe she’s had a fancy for him from the beginning. If it hadn’t been for Rose she would have accepted him at once; and now he’s essential to them both in their helplessness. As for Papa Triscoe and his Europeanized scruples, if they have any reality at all they’re the residuum of his personal resentment, and Kenby and Mrs. Adding have nothing to do with their unreality. His being in love with her is no reason why he shouldn’t be helpful to her when she needs him, and every reason why he should. I call it a poem, such as very few people have the luck to live out together.”

Mrs. March listened with mounting fervor, and when he stopped, she cried out, “Well, my dear, I do believe you are right! It is ideal, as you say; it’s a perfect poem. And I shall always say—”

She stopped at the mocking light which she caught in his look, and perceived that he had been amusing himself with her perennial enthusiasm for all sorts of love-affairs. But she averred that she did not care; what he had said was true, and she should always hold him to it.

They were again in the wedding-journey sentiment in which they had left Carlsbad, when they found themselves alone together after their escape from the pressure of others’ interests. The tide of travel was towards Frankfort, where the grand parade was to take place some days later. They were going to Weimar, which was so few hours out of their way that they simply must not miss it; and all the way to the old literary capital they were alone in their compartment, with not even a stranger, much less a friend to molest them. The flying landscape without was of their own early autumnal mood, and when the vineyards of Wurzburg ceased to purple it, the heavy after-math of hay and

clover, which men, women, and children were loading on heavy wains, and driving from the meadows everywhere, offered a pastoral and pleasing change. It was always the German landscape; sometimes flat and fertile, sometimes hilly and poor; often clothed with dense woods, but always charming, with castled tops in ruin or repair, and with levels where Gothic villages drowsed within their walls, and dreamed of the mediaeval past, silent, without apparent life, except for some little goose-girl driving her flock before her as she sallied out into the nineteenth century in search of fresh pasturage.

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As their train mounted among the Thuringian uplands they were aware of a finer, cooler air through their open window. The torrents foamed white out of the black forests of fir and pine, and brawled along the valleys, where the hamlets roused themselves in momentary curiosity as the train roared into them from the many tunnels. The afternoon sunshine had the glister of mountain sunshine everywhere, and the travellers had a pleasant bewilderment in which their memories of Switzerland and the White Mountains mixed with long-dormant emotions from Adirondack sojourns. They chose this place and that in the lovely region where they lamented that they had not come at once for the after-cure, and they appointed enough returns to it in future years to consume all the summers they had left to live.

LIX.

It was falling night when they reached Weimar, where they found at the station a provision of omnibuses far beyond the hotel accommodations. They drove first to the Crown-Prince, which was in a promising state of reparation, but which for the present could only welcome them to an apartment where a canvas curtain cut them off from a freshly plastered wall. The landlord deplored the fact, and sent hospitably out to try and place them at the Elephant. But the Elephant was full, and the Russian Court was full too. Then the landlord of the Crown-Prince bethought himself of a new hotel, of the second class, indeed, but very nice, where they might get rooms, and after the delay of an hour, they got a carriage and drove away from the Crown-Prince, where the landlord continued to the last as benevolent as if they had been a profit instead of a loss to him.

The streets of the town at nine o’clock were empty and quiet, and they instantly felt the academic quality of the place. Through the pale night they could see that the architecture was of the classic sentiment which they were destined to feel more and more; at one point they caught a fleeting glimpse of two figures with clasped hands and half embraced, which they knew for the statues of Goethe and Schiller; and when they mounted to their rooms at the Grand-Duke of Saxe-Weimar, they passed under a fresco representing Goethe and four other world-famous poets, Shakspere, Milton, Tasso, and Schiller. The poets all looked like Germans, as was just, and Goethe was naturally chief among them; he marshalled the immortals on their way, and Schiller brought up the rear and kept them from going astray in an Elysium where they did not speak the language. For the rest, the hotel was brand-new, of a quite American freshness, and was pervaded by a sweet smell as of straw matting, and provided with steam-radiators. In the sense of its homelikeness the Marches boasted that they were never going away from it.

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In the morning they discovered that their windows looked out on the grand-ducal museum, with a gardened space before and below its classicistic bulk, where, in a whim of the weather, the gay flowers were full of sun. In a pleasant illusion of taking it unawares, March strolled up through the town; but Weimar was as much awake at that hour as at any of the twenty-four, and the tranquillity of its streets, where he encountered a few passers several blocks apart, was their habitual mood. He came promptly upon two objects which he would willingly have shunned: a 'denkmal' of the Franco-German war, not so furiously bad as most German monuments, but antipathetic and uninteresting, as all patriotic monuments are; and a woman-and-dog team. In the shock from this he was sensible that he had not seen any woman-and-dog teams for some time, and he wondered by what civic or ethnic influences their distribution was so controlled that they should have abounded in Hamburg, Leipsic, and Carlsbad, and wholly ceased in Nuremberg, Ansbach, and Wurzburg, to reappear again in Weimar, though they seemed as characteristic of all Germany as the ugly denkmals to her victories over France.

The Goethe and Schiller monument which he had glimpsed the night before was characteristic too, but less offensively so. German statues at the best are conscious; and the poet-pair, as the inscription calls them, have the air of showily confronting posterity with their clasped hands, and of being only partially rapt from the spectators. But they were more unconscious than any other German statues that March had seen, and he quelled a desire to ask Goethe, as he stood with his hand on Schiller's shoulder, and looked serenely into space far above one of the typical equipages of his country, what he thought of that sort of thing. But upon reflection he did not know why Goethe should be held personally responsible for the existence of the woman-and-dog team. He felt that he might more reasonably attribute to his taste the prevalence of classic profiles which he began to note in the Weimar populace. This could be a sympathetic effect of that passion for the antique which the poet brought back with him from his sojourn in Italy; though many of the people, especially the children, were bow-legged. Perhaps the antique had: begun in their faces, and had not yet got down to their legs; in any case they were charming children, and as a test of their culture, he had a mind to ask a little girl if she could tell him where the statue of Herder was, which he thought he might as well take in on his ramble, and so be done with as many statues as he could. She answered with a pretty regret in her tender voice, "That I truly cannot," and he was more satisfied than if she could, for he thought it better to be a child and honest, than to know where any German statue was.

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He easily found it for himself in the place which is called the Herder Platz after it. He went into the Peter and Paul Church there; where Herder used to preach sermons, sometimes not at all liked by the nobility and gentry for their revolutionary tendency; the sovereign was shielded from the worst effects of his doctrine by worshipping apart from other sinners in a glazed gallery. Herder is buried in the church, and when you ask where, the sacristan lifts a wooden trap-door in the pavement, and you think you are going down into the crypt, but you are only to see Herder's monumental stone, which is kept covered so to save it from passing feet. Here also is the greatest picture of that great soul Luke Kranach, who had sincerity enough in his paining to atone for all the swelling German sculptures in the world. It is a crucifixion, and the cross is of a white birch log, such as might have been cut out of the Weimar woods, shaved smooth on the sides, with the bark showing at the edges. Kranach has put himself among the spectators, and a stream of blood from the side of the Savior falls in baptism upon the painter's head. He is in the company of John the Baptist and Martin Luther; Luther stands with his Bible open, and his finger on the line, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth us."

Partly because he felt guilty at doing all these things without his wife, and partly because he was now very hungry, March turned from them and got back to his hotel, where she was looking out for him from their open window. She had the air of being long domesticated there, as she laughed down at seeing him come; and the continued brilliancy of the weather added to the illusion of home.

It was like a day of late spring in Italy or America; the sun in that gardened hollow before the museum was already hot enough to make him glad of the shelter of the hotel. The summer seemed to have come back to oblige them, and when they learned that they were to see Weimar in a festive mood because this was Sedan Day, their curiosity, if not their sympathy, accepted the chance gratefully. But they were almost moved to wish that the war had gone otherwise when they learned that all the public carriages were engaged, and they must have one from a stable if they wished to drive after breakfast. Still it was offered them for such a modest number of marks, and their driver proved so friendly and conversable, that they assented to the course of history, and were more and more reconciled as they bowled along through the grand-ducal park beside the waters of the classic Ilm.

The waters of the classic Ilm are sluggish and slimy in places, and in places clear and brooklike, but always a dull dark green in color. They flow in the shadow of pensive trees, and by the brinks of sunny meadows, where the after-math wanders in heavy windrows, and the children sport joyously over the smooth-mown surfaces in all the freedom that there is in Germany. At last, after immemorial appropriation

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the owners of the earth are everywhere expropriated, and the people come into the pleasure if not the profit of it. At last, the prince, the knight, the noble finds, as in his turn the plutocrat will find, that his property is not for him, but for all; and that the nation is to enjoy what he takes from it and vainly thinks to keep from it. Parks, pleasaunces, gardens, set apart for kings, are the play-grounds of the landless poor in the Old World, and perhaps yield the sweetest joy of privilege to some state-sick ruler, some world-weary princess, some lonely child born to the solitude of sovereignty, as they each look down from their palace windows upon the leisure of overwork taking its little holiday amidst beauty vainly created for the perpetual festival of their empty lives.

March smiled to think that in this very Weimar, where sovereignty had graced and ennobled itself as nowhere else in the world by the companionship of letters and the arts, they still were not hurrying first to see the palace of a prince, but were involuntarily making it second to the cottage of a poet. But in fact it is Goethe who is forever the prince in Weimar. His greatness blots out its history, his name fills the city; the thought of him is its chiefest imitation and largest hospitality. The travellers remembered, above all other facts of the grand-ducal park, that it was there he first met Christiane Vulpius, beautiful and young, when he too was beautiful and young, and took her home to be his love, to the just and lasting displeasure of Fran von Stein, who was even less reconciled when, after eighteen years of due reflection, the love of Goethe and Christiane became their marriage. They, wondered just where it was he saw the young girl coming to meet him as the Grand-Duke's minister with an office-seeking petition from her brother, Goethe's brother author, long famed and long forgotten for his romantic tale of "Rinaldo Rinaldini."

They had indeed no great mind, in their American respectability, for that rather matter-of-fact and deliberate liaison, and little as their sympathy was for the passionless intellectual intrigue with the Frau von Stein, it cast no halo of sentiment about the Goethe cottage to suppose that there his love-life with Christiane began. Mrs. March even resented the fact, and when she learned later that it was not the fact at all, she removed it from her associations with the pretty place almost indignantly.

In spite of our facile and multiple divorces we Americans are worshipers of marriage, and if a great poet, the minister of a prince, is going to marry a poor girl, we think he had better not wait till their son is almost of age. Mrs. March would not accept as extenuating circumstances the Grand-Duke's godfatherhood, or Goethe's open constancy to Christiane, or the tardy consecration of their union after the French sack of, Weimar, when the girl's devotion had saved him from the rudeness of the marauding soldiers.

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For her New England soul there were no degrees in such guilt; and, perhaps there are really not so many as people have tried to think, in their deference to Goethe's greatness. But certainly the affair was not so simple for a grand-ducal minister of world-wide renown, and he might well have felt its difficulties, for he could not have been proof against the censorious public opinion of Weimar, or the yet more censorious private opinion of Fran von Stein.

On that lovely Italo-American morning no ghost of these old dead embarrassments lingered within or without the Goethe garden-house. The trees which the poet himself planted flung a sun-shot shadow upon it, and about its feet basked a garden of simple flowers, from which the sweet lame girl who limped through the rooms and showed them, gathered a parting nosegay for her visitors. The few small livingrooms were above the ground-floor, with kitchen and offices below in the Italian fashion; in one of the little chambers was the camp-bed which Goethe carried with him on his journeys through Italy; and in the larger room at the front stood the desk where he wrote, with the chair before it from which he might just have risen.

All was much more livingly conscious of the great man gone than the proud little palace in the town, which so abounds with relics and memorials of him. His library, his study, his study table, with everything on it just as he left it when

> "Cadde la stanca mana"

are there, and there is the death-chair facing the window, from which he gasped for "more light" at last. The handsome, well-arranged rooms are full of souvenirs of his travel, and of that passion for Italy which he did so much to impart to all German hearts, and whose modern waning leaves its records here of an interest pathetically, almost amusingly, faded. They intimate the classic temper to which his mind tended more and more, and amidst the multitude of sculptures, pictures, prints, drawings, gems, medals, autographs, there is the sense of the many-mindedness, the universal taste, for which he found room in little Weimar, but not in his contemporaneous Germany. But it is all less keenly personal, less intimate than the simple garden-house, or else, with the great troop of people going through it, and the custodians lecturing in various voices and languages to the attendant groups, the Marches had it less to themselves, and so imagined him less in it.

LX.

All palaces have a character of tiresome unlivableness which is common to them everywhere, and very probably if one could meet their proprietors in them one would as little remember them apart afterwards as the palaces themselves. It will not do to lift

either houses or men far out of the average; they become spectacles, ceremonies; they cease to have charm, to have character, which belong to the levels of life, where alone there are ease and comfort, and human nature may be itself, with all the little delightful differences repressed in those who represent and typify.

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As they followed the custodian through the grand-ducal Residenz at Weimar, March felt everywhere the strong wish of the prince who was Goethe's friend to ally himself with literature, and to be human at least in the humanities. He came honestly by his passion for poets; his mother had known it in her time, and Weimar was the home of Wieland and of Herder before the young Grand-Duke came back from his travels bringing Goethe with him, and afterwards attracting Schiller. The story of that great epoch is all there in the Residenz, told as articulately as a palace can.

There are certain Poets' Rooms, frescoed with illustrations of Goethe, Schiller, and Wieland; there is the room where Goethe and the Grand-Duke used to play chess together; there is the conservatory opening from it where they liked to sit and chat; everywhere in the pictures and sculptures, the engraving and intaglios, are the witnesses of the tastes they shared, the love they both had for Italy, and for beautiful Italian things. The prince was not so great a prince but that he could very nearly be a man; the court was perhaps the most human court that ever was; the Grand-Duke and the grand poet were first boon companions, and then monarch and minister working together for the good of the country; they were always friends, and yet, as the American saw in the light of the New World, which he carried with him, how far from friends! At best it was make-believe, the make-believe of superiority and inferiority, the make-believe of master and man, which could only be the more painful and ghastly for the endeavor of two generous spirits to reach and rescue each other through the asphyxiating unreality; but they kept up the show of equality faithfully to the end. Goethe was born citizen of a free republic, and his youth was nurtured in the traditions of liberty; he was one of the greatest souls of any time, and he must have known the impossibility of the thing they pretended; but he died and made no sign, and the poet's friendship with the prince has passed smoothly into history as one of the things that might really be. They worked and played together; they dined and danced, they picnicked and poetized, each on his own side of the impassable gulf; with an air of its not being there which probably did not deceive their contemporaries so much as posterity.

A part of the palace was of course undergoing repair; and in the gallery beyond the conservatory a company of workmen were sitting at a table where they had spread their luncheon. They were somewhat subdued by the consciousness of their august environment; but the sight of them was charming; they gave a kindly interest to the place which it had wanted before; and which the Marches felt again in another palace where the custodian showed them the little tin dishes and saucepans which the German Empress Augusta and her sisters played with when they were children. The sight of these was more affecting even than the withered wreaths which they had left on the death-bed of their mother, and which are still mouldering there.

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This was in the Belvedere, the country house on the height overlooking Weimar, where the grand-ducal family spend the month of May, and where the stranger finds himself amid overwhelming associations of Goethe, although the place is so full of relics and memorials of the owners. It seemed in fact to be a storehouse for the wedding-presents of the whole connection, which were on show in every room; Mrs. March hardly knew whether they heightened the domestic effect or took from it; but they enabled her to verify with the custodian's help certain royal intermarriages which she had been in doubt about before.

Her zeal for these made such favor with him that he did not spare them a portrait of all those which March hoped to escape; he passed them over, scarcely able to stand, to the gardener, who was to show them the open-air theatre where Goethe used to take part in the plays.

The Natur-Theater was of a classic ideal, realized in the trained vines and clipped trees which formed the coulisses. There was a grassy space for the chorus and the commoner audience, and then a few semicircular gradines cut in the turf, one alcove another, where the more honored spectators sat. Behind the seats were plinths bearing the busts of Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, and Herder. It was all very pretty, and if ever the weather in Weimar was dry enough to permit a performance, it must have been charming to see a play in that open day to which the drama is native, though in the late hours it now keeps in the thick air of modern theatres it has long forgotten the fact. It would be difficult to be Greek under a German sky, even when it was not actually raining, but March held that with Goethe's help it might have been done at Weimar, and his wife and he proved themselves such enthusiasts for the Natur-Theater that the walnut-faced old gardener who showed it put together a sheaf of the flowers that grew nearest it and gave them to Mrs. March for a souvenir.

They went for a cup of tea to the cafe which looks, as from another eyebrow of the hill, out over lovely little Weimar in the plain below. In a moment of sunshine the prospect was very smiling; but their spirits sank over their tea when it came; they were at least sorry they had not asked for coffee. Most of the people about them were taking beer, including the pretty girls of a young ladies' school, who were there with their books and needle-work, in the care of one of the teachers, apparently for the afternoon.

Mrs. March perceived that they were not so much engaged with their books or their needle-work but they had eyes for other things, and she followed the glances of the girls till they rested upon the people at a table somewhat obliquely to the left. These were apparently a mother and daughter, and they were listening to a young man who sat with his back to Mrs. March, and leaned low over the table talking to them. They were both smiling radiantly, and as the girl smiled she kept turning herself from the waist up, and slanting her face from this side to that, as if to make sure that every one saw her smiling.

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Mrs. March felt her husband's gaze following her own, and she had just time to press her finger firmly on his arm and reduce his cry of astonishment to the hoarse whisper in which he gasped, "Good gracious! It's the pivotal girl!"

At the same moment the girl rose with her mother, and with the young man, who had risen too, came directly toward the Marches on their way out of the place without noticing them, though Burnamy passed so near that Mrs. March could almost have touched him.

She had just strength to say, "Well, my dear! That was the cut direct."

She said this in order to have her husband reassure her. "Nonsense! He never saw us. Why didn't you speak to him?"

"Speak to him? I never shall speak to him again. No! This is the last of Mr. Burnamy for me. I shouldn't have minded his not recognizing us, for, as you say, I don't believe he saw us; but if he could go back to such a girl as that, and flirt with her, after Miss Triscoe, that's all I wish to know of him. Don't you try to look him up, Basil! I'm glad-yes, I'm glad he doesn't know how Stoller has come to feel about him; he deserves to suffer, and I hope he'll keep on suffering: You were quite right, my dear—and it shows how true your instinct is in such things (I don't call it more than instinct)—not to tell him what Stoller said, and I don't want you ever should."

She had risen in her excitement, and was making off in such haste that she would hardly give him time to pay for their tea, as she pulled him impatiently to their carriage.

At last he got a chance to say, "I don't think I can quite promise that; my mind's been veering round in the other direction. I think I shall tell him."

"What! After you've seen him flirting with that girl? Very well, then, you won't, my dear; that's all! He's behaving very basely to Agatha."

"What's his flirtation with all the girls in the universe to do with my duty to him? He has a right to know what Stoller thinks. And as to his behaving badly toward Miss Triscoe, how has he done it? So far as you know, there is nothing whatever between them. She either refused him outright, that last night in Carlsbad, or else she made impossible conditions with him. Burnamy is simply consoling himself, and I don't blame him."

"Consoling himself with a pivotal girl!" cried Mrs. March.

"Yes, with a pivotal girl. Her pivotality may be a nervous idiosyncrasy, or it may be the effect of tight lacing; perhaps she has to keep turning and twisting that way to get breath. But attribute the worst motive: say it is to make people look at her! Well, Burnamy has a right to look with the rest; and I am not going to renounce him because

he takes refuge with one pretty girl from another. It's what men have been doing from the beginning of time."

"Oh, I dare say!"

"Men," he went on, "are very delicately constituted; very peculiarly. They have been known to seek the society of girls in general, of any girl, because some girl has made them happy; and when some girl has made them unhappy, they are still more susceptible. Burnamy may be merely amusing himself, or he may be consoling himself; but in either case I think the pivotal girl has as much right to him as Miss Triscoe. She had him first; and I'm all for her."

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LXI.

Burnamy came away from seeing the pivotal girl and her mother off on the train which they were taking that evening for Frankfort and Hombourg, and strolled back through the Weimar streets little at ease with himself. While he was with the girl and near her he had felt the attraction by which youth impersonally draws youth, the charm which mere maid has for mere man; but once beyond the range of this he felt sick at heart and ashamed. He was aware of having used her folly as an anodyne for the pain which was always gnawing at him, and he had managed to forget it in her folly, but now it came back, and the sense that he had been reckless of her rights came with it. He had done his best to make her think him in love with her, by everything but words; he wondered how he could be such an ass, such a wicked ass, as to try making her promise to write to him from Frankfort; he wished never to see her again, and he wished still less to hear from her. It was some comfort to reflect that she had not promised, but it was not comfort enough to restore him to such fragmentary self-respect as he had been enjoying since he parted with Agatha Triscoe in Carlsbad; he could not even get back to the resentment with which he had been staying himself somewhat before the pivotal girl unexpectedly appeared with her mother in Weimar.

It was Sedan Day, but there was apparently no official observance of the holiday, perhaps because the Grand-Duke was away at the manoeuvres, with all the other German princes. Burnamy had hoped for some voluntary excitement among the people, at least enough to warrant him in making a paper about Sedan Day in Weimar, which he could sell somewhere; but the night was falling, and there was still no sign of popular rejoicing over the French humiliation twenty-eight years before, except in the multitude of Japanese lanterns which the children were everywhere carrying at the ends of sticks. Babies had them in their carriages, and the effect of the floating lights in the winding, up-and-down-hill streets was charming even to Burnamy's lack-lustre eyes. He went by his hotel and on to a cafe with a garden, where there was a patriotic, concert promised; he supped there, and then sat dreamily behind his beer, while the music banged and brayed round him unheeded.

Presently he heard a voice of friendly banter saying in English, "May I sit at your table?" and he saw an ironical face looking down on him. "There doesn't seem any other place."

"Why, Mr. March!" Burnamy sprang up and wrung the hand held out to him, but he choked with his words of recognition; it was so good to see this faithful friend again, though he saw him now as he had seen him last, just when he had so little reason to be proud of himself.

March settled his person in the chair facing Burnamy, and then glanced round at the joyful jam of people eating and drinking, under a firmament of lanterns. “This is pretty,” he said, “mighty pretty. I shall make Mrs. March sorry for not coming, when I go back.”

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“Is Mrs. March—she is—with you—in Weimar?” Burnamy asked stupidly.

March forbore to take advantage of him. “Oh, yes. We saw you out at Belvedere this afternoon. Mrs. March thought for a moment that you meant not to see us. A woman likes to exercise her imagination in those little flights.”

“I never dreamed of your being there—I never saw—” Burnamy began.

“Of course not. Neither did Mrs. Etkins, nor Miss Etkins; she was looking very pretty. Have you been here some time?”

“Not long. A week or so. I’ve been at the parade at Wurzburg.”

“At Wurzburg! Ah, how little the world is, or how large Wurzburg is! We were there nearly a week, and we pervaded the place. But there was a great crowd for you to hide in from us. What had I better take?” A waiter had come up, and was standing at March’s elbow. “I suppose I mustn’t sit here without ordering something?”

“White wine and selters,” said Burnamy vaguely.

“The very thing! Why didn’t I think of it? It’s a divine drink: it satisfies without filling. I had it a night or two before we left home, in the Madison Square Roof Garden. Have you seen ‘Every Other Week’ lately?”

“No,” said Burnamy, with more spirit than he had yet shown.

“We’ve just got our mail from Nuremberg. The last number has a poem in it that I rather like.” March laughed to see the young fellow’s face light up with joyful consciousness. “Come round to my hotel, after you’re tired here, and I’ll let you see it. There’s no hurry. Did you notice the little children with their lanterns, as you came along? It’s the gentlest effect that a warlike memory ever came to. The French themselves couldn’t have minded those innocents carrying those soft lights on the day of their disaster. You ought to get something out of that, and I’ve got a subject in trust for you from Rose Adding. He and his mother were at Wurzburg; I’m sorry to say the poor little chap didn’t seem very well. They’ve gone to Holland for the sea air.” March had been talking for quantity in compassion of the embarrassment in which Burnamy seemed bound; but he questioned how far he ought to bring comfort to the young fellow merely because he liked him. So far as he could make out, Burnamy had been doing rather less than nothing to retrieve himself since they had met; and it was by an impulse that he could not have logically defended to Mrs. March that he resumed. “We found another friend of yours in Wurzburg: Mr. Stoller.”

“Mr. Stoller?” Burnamy faintly echoed.

“Yes; he was there to give his daughters a holiday during the manoeuvres; and they made the most of it. He wanted us to go to the parade with his family but we declined. The twins were pretty nearly the death of General Triscoe.”

Again Burnamy echoed him. “General Triscoe?”

“Ah, yes: I didn’t tell you. General Triscoe and his daughter had come on with Mrs. Adding and Rose. Kenby—you remember Kenby, On the Norumbia?—Kenby happened to be there, too; we were quite a family party; and Stoller got the general to drive out to the manoeuvres with him and his girls.”

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Now that he was launched, March rather enjoyed letting himself go. He did not know what he should say to Mrs. March when he came to confess having told Burnamy everything before she got a chance at him; he pushed on recklessly, upon the principle, which probably will not hold in morals, that one may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. "I have a message for you from Mr. Stoller."

"For me?" Burnamy gasped.

"I've been wondering how I should put it, for I hadn't expected to see you. But it's simply this: he wants you to know—and he seemed to want me to know—that he doesn't hold you accountable in the way he did. He's thought it all over, and he's decided that he had no right to expect you to save him from his own ignorance where he was making a show of knowledge. As he said, he doesn't choose to plead the baby act. He says that you're all right, and your place on the paper is open to you."

Burnamy had not been very prompt before, but now he seemed braced for instant response. "I think he's wrong," he said, so harshly that the people at the next table looked round. "His feeling as he does has nothing to do with the fact, and it doesn't let me out."

March would have liked to take him in his arms; he merely said, "I think you're quite right, as to that. But there's such a thing as forgiveness, you know. It doesn't change the nature of what you've done; but as far as the sufferer from it is concerned, it annuls it."

"Yes, I understand that. But I can't accept his forgiveness if I hate him."

"But perhaps you won't always hate him. Some day you may have a chance to do him a good turn. It's rather banale; but there doesn't seem any other way. Well, I have given you his message. Are you going with me to get that poem?"

When March had given Burnamy the paper at his hotel, and Burnamy had put it in his pocket, the young man said he thought he would take some coffee, and he asked March to join him in the dining-room where they had stood talking.

"No, thank you," said the elder, "I don't propose sitting up all night, and you'll excuse me if I go to bed now. It's a little informal to leave a guest—"

"You're not leaving a guest! I'm at home here. I'm staying in this hotel too."

March said, "Oh!" and then he added abruptly, "Good-night," and went up stairs under the fresco of the five poets.

"Whom were you talking with below?" asked Mrs. March through the door opening into his room from hers.

“Burnamy,” he answered from within. “He’s staying in this house. He let me know just as I was going to turn him out for the night. It’s one of those little uncandors of his that throw suspicion on his honesty in great things.”

“Oh! Then you’ve been telling him,” she said, with a mental bound high above and far beyond the point.

“Everything.”

“About Stoller, too?”

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“About Stoller and his daughters, and Mrs. Adding and Rose and Kenby and General Triscoe—and Agatha.”

“Very well. That’s what I call shabby. Don’t ever talk to me again about the inconsistencies of women. But now there’s something perfectly fearful.”

“What is it?”

“A letter from Miss Triscoe came after you were gone, asking us to find rooms in some hotel for her and her father to-morrow. He isn’t well, and they’re coming. And I’ve telegraphed them to come here. Now what do you say?”

LXII.

They could see no way out of the trouble, and Mrs. March could not resign herself to it till her husband suggested that she should consider it providential. This touched the lingering superstition in which she had been ancestrally taught to regard herself as a means, when in a very tight place, and to leave the responsibility with the moral government of the universe. As she now perceived, it had been the same as ordered that they should see Burnamy under such conditions in the afternoon that they could not speak to him, and hear where he was staying; and in an inferior degree it had been the same as ordered that March should see him in the evening and tell him everything, so that she should know just how to act when she saw him in the morning. If he could plausibly account for the renewal of his flirtation with Miss Elkins, or if he seemed generally worthy apart from that, she could forgive him.

It was so pleasant when he came in at breakfast with his well-remembered smile, that she did not require from him any explicit defence. While they talked she was righting herself in an undercurrent of drama with Miss Triscoe, and explaining to her that they could not possibly wait over for her and her father in Weimar, but must be off that day for Berlin, as they had made all their plans. It was not easy, even in drama where one has everything one’s own way, to prove that she could not without impiety so far interfere with the course of Providence as to prevent Miss Triscoe’s coming with her father to the same hotel where Burnamy was staying. She contrived, indeed, to persuade her that she had not known he was staying there when she telegraphed them where to come, and that in the absence of any open confidence from Miss Triscoe she was not obliged to suppose that his presence would be embarrassing.

March proposed leaving her with Burnamy while he went up into the town and interviewed the house of Schiller, which he had not done yet; and as soon as he got himself away she came to business, breaking altogether from the inner drama with Miss Triscoe and devoting herself to Burnamy. They had already got so far as to have mentioned the meeting with the Triscoes in Wurzburg, and she said: “Did Mr. March tell

you they were coming here? Or, no! We hadn't heard then. Yes, they are coming to-morrow. They may be going to stay some time. She talked of Weimar when we first spoke of Germany on the ship." Burnamy said nothing, and she suddenly added, with a sharp glance, "They wanted us to get them rooms, and we advised their coming to this house." He started very satisfactorily, and "Do you think they would be comfortable, here?" she pursued.

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“Oh, yes, very. They can have my room; it’s southeast; I shall be going into other quarters.” She did not say anything; and “Mrs. March,” he began again, “what is the use of my beating about the bush? You must know what I went back to Carlsbad for, that night—”

“No one ever told—”

“Well, you must have made a pretty good guess. But it was a failure. I ought to have failed, and I did. She said that unless her father liked it—And apparently he hasn’t liked it.” Burnamy smiled ruefully.

“How do you know? She didn’t know where you were!”

“She could have got word to me if she had had good news for me. They’ve forwarded other letters from Pupp’s. But it’s all right; I had no business to go back to Carlsbad. Of course you didn’t know I was in this house when you told them to come; and I must clear out. I had better clear out of Weimar, too.”

“No, I don’t think so; I have no right to pry into your affairs, but—”

“Oh, they’re wide enough open!”

“And you may have changed your mind. I thought you might, when I saw you yesterday at Belvedere—”

“I was only trying to make bad worse.”

“Then I think the situation has changed entirely through what Mr. Stoller said to Mr. March.”

“I can’t see how it has. I committed an act of shabby treachery, and I’m as much to blame as if he still wanted to punish me for it.”

“Did Mr. March say that to you?”

“No; I said that to Mr. March; and he couldn’t answer it, and you can’t. You’re very good, and very kind, but you can’t answer it.”

“I can answer it very well,” she boasted, but she could find nothing better to say than, “It’s your duty to her to see her and let her know.”

“Doesn’t she know already?”

“She has a right to know it from you. I think you are morbid, Mr. Burnamy. You know very well I didn’t like your doing that to Mr. Stoller. I didn’t say so at the time, because

you seemed to feel it enough yourself. But I did like your owning up to it," and here Mrs. March thought it time to trot out her borrowed battle-horse again. "My husband always says that if a person owns up to an error, fully and faithfully, as you've always done, they make it the same in its consequences to them as if it had never been done."

"Does Mr. March say that?" asked Burnamy with a relenting smile.

"Indeed he does!"

Burnamy hesitated; then he asked, gloomily again:

"And what about the consequences to the, other fellow?"

"A woman," said Mrs. March, "has no concern with them. And besides, I think you've done all you could to save Mr. Stoller from the consequences."

"I haven't done anything."

"No matter. You would if you could. I wonder," she broke off, to prevent his persistence at a point where her nerves were beginning to give way, "what can be keeping Mr. March?"

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Nothing much more important, it appeared later, than the pleasure of sauntering through the streets on the way to the house of Schiller, and looking at the pretty children going to school, with books under their arms. It was the day for the schools to open after the long summer vacation, and there was a freshness of expectation in the shining faces which, if it could not light up his own graybeard visage, could at least touch his heart:

When he reached the Schiller house he found that it was really not the Schiller house, but the Schiller flat, of three or four rooms, one flight up, whose windows look out upon the street named after the poet. The whole place is bare and clean; in one corner of the large room fronting the street stands Schiller's writing-table, with his chair before it; with the foot extending toward this there stands, in another corner, the narrow bed on which he died; some withered wreaths on the pillow frame a picture of his deathmask, which at first glance is like his dead face lying there. It is all rather tasteless, and all rather touching, and the place with its meagre appointments, as compared with the rich Goethe house, suggests that personal competition with Goethe in which Schiller is always falling into the second place. Whether it will be finally so with him in literature it is too early to ask of time, and upon other points eternity will not be interrogated. "The great, Goethe and the good Schiller," they remain; and yet, March reasoned, there was something good in Goethe and something great, in Schiller.

He was so full of the pathos of their inequality before the world that he did not heed the warning on the door of the pastry-shop near the Schiller house, and on opening it he bedaubed his hand with the fresh paint on it. He was then in such a state, that he could not bring his mind to bear upon the question of which cakes his wife would probably prefer, and he stood helplessly holding up his hand till the good woman behind the counter discovered his plight, and uttered a loud cry of compassion. She ran and got a wet napkin, which she rubbed with soap, and then she instructed him by word and gesture to rub his hand upon it, and she did not leave him till his rescue was complete. He let her choose a variety of the cakes for him, and came away with a gay paper bag full of them, and with the feeling that he had been in more intimate relations with the life of Weimar than travellers are often privileged to be. He argued from the instant and intelligent sympathy of the pastry woman a high grade of culture in all classes; and he conceived the notion of pretending to Mrs. March that he had got these cakes from, a descendant of Schiller.

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His deceit availed with her for the brief moment in which she always, after so many years' experience of his duplicity, believed anything he told her. They dined merrily together at their hotel, and then Burnamy came down to the station with them and was very comfortable to March in helping him to get their tickets and their baggage registered. The train which was to take them to Halle, where they were to change for Berlin, was rather late, and they had but ten minutes after it came in before it would start again. Mrs. March was watching impatiently at the window of the waiting-room for the dismounting passengers to clear the platform and allow the doors to be opened; suddenly she gave a cry, and turned and ran into the passage by which the new arrivals were pouring out toward the superabundant omnibuses. March and Burnamy, who had been talking apart, mechanically rushed after her and found her kissing Miss Triscoe and shaking hands with the general amidst a tempest of questions and answers, from which it appeared that the Triscoes had got tired of staying in Wurzburg, and had simply come on to Weimar a day sooner than they had intended.

The, general was rather much bundled up for a day which was mild for a German summer day, and he coughed out an explanation that he had taken an abominable cold at that ridiculous parade, and had not shaken it off yet. He had a notion that change of air would be better for him; it could not be worse.

He seemed a little vague as to Burnamy, rather than inimical. While the ladies were still talking eagerly together in proffer and acceptance of Mrs. March's lamentations that she should be going away just as Miss Triscoe was coming, he asked if the omnibus for their hotel was there. He by no means resented Burnamy's assurance that it was, and he did not refuse to let him order their baggage, little and large, loaded upon it. By the time this was done, Mrs. March and Miss Triscoe had so far detached themselves from each other that they could separate after one more formal expression of regret and forgiveness. With a lament into which she poured a world of inarticulate emotions, Mrs. March wrenched herself from the place, and suffered herself, to be pushed toward her train. But with the last long look which she cast over her shoulder, before she vanished into the waiting-room, she saw Miss Triscoe and Burnamy transacting the elaborate politenesses of amiable strangers with regard to the very small bag which the girl had in her hand. He succeeded in relieving her of it; and then he led the way out of the station on the left of the general, while Miss Triscoe brought up the rear.

LXIII.

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From the window of the train as it drew out Mrs. March tried for a glimpse of the omnibus in which her proteges were now rolling away together. As they were quite out of sight in the omnibus, which was itself out of sight, she failed, but as she fell back against her seat she treated the recent incident with a complexity and simultaneity of which no report can give an idea. At the end one fatal conviction remained: that in everything she had said she had failed to explain to Miss Triscoe how Burnamy happened to be in Weimar and how he happened to be there with them in the station. She required March to say how she had overlooked the very things which she ought to have mentioned first, and which she had on the point of her tongue the whole time. She went over the entire ground again to see if she could discover the reason why she had made such an unaccountable break, and it appeared that she was led to it by his rushing after her with Burnamy before she had had a chance to say a word about him; of course she could not say anything in his presence. This gave her some comfort, and there was consolation in the fact that she had left them together without the least intention or connivance, and now, no matter what happened, she could not accuse herself, and he could not accuse her of match-making.

He said that his own sense of guilt was so great that he should not dream of accusing her of anything except of regret that now she could never claim the credit of bringing the lovers together under circumstances so favorable. As soon as they were engaged they could join in renouncing her with a good conscience, and they would probably make this the basis of their efforts to propitiate the general.

She said she did not care, and with the mere removal of the lovers in space, her interest in them began to abate. They began to be of a minor importance in the anxieties of the change of trains at Halle, and in the excitement of settling into the express from Frankfort there were moments when they were altogether forgotten. The car was of almost American length, and it ran with almost American smoothness; when the conductor came and collected an extra fare for their seats, the Marches felt that if the charge had been two dollars instead of two marks they would have had every advantage of American travel.

On the way to Berlin the country was now fertile and flat, and now sterile and flat; near the capital the level sandy waste spread almost to its gates. The train ran quickly through the narrow fringe of suburbs, and then they were in one of those vast Continental stations which put our outdated depots to shame. The good ‘traeger’ who took possession of them and their hand-bags, put their boxes on a baggage-bearing drosky, and then got them another drosky for their personal transportation. This was a drosky of the first-class, but they would not have thought it so, either from the vehicle itself, or from the appearance of the driver and his horses. The public carriages of Germany are the shabbiest in the world; at Berlin the horses look like old hair trunks and the drivers like their moth-eaten contents.

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The Marches got no splendor for the two prices they paid, and their approach to their hotel on Unter den Linden was as unimpressive as the ignoble avenue itself. It was a moist, cold evening, and the mean, tiresome street, slopped and splashed under its two rows of small trees, to which the thinning leaves clung like wet rags, between long lines of shops and hotels which had neither the grace of Paris nor the grandiosity of New York. March quoted in bitter derision:

> "Bees, bees, was it your hydromel,
> Under the Lindens?"

and his wife said that if Commonwealth Avenue in Boston could be imagined with its trees and without their beauty, flanked by the architecture of Sixth Avenue, with dashes of the west side of Union Square, that would be the famous Unter den Linden, where she had so resolutely decided that they would stay while in Berlin.

They had agreed upon the hotel, and neither could blame the other because it proved second-rate in everything but its charges. They ate a poorish table d'hote dinner in such low spirits that March had no heart to get a rise from his wife by calling her notice to the mouse which fed upon the crumbs about their feet while they dined. Their English-speaking waiter said that it was a very warm evening, and they never knew whether this was because he was a humorist, or because he was lonely and wished to talk, or because it really was a warm evening, for Berlin. When they had finished, they went out and drove about the greater part of the evening looking for another hotel, whose first requisite should be that it was not on Unter den Linden. What mainly determined Mrs. March in favor of the large, handsome, impersonal place they fixed upon was the fact that it was equipped for steam-heating; what determined March was the fact that it had a passenger-office where when he wished to leave, he could buy his railroad tickets and have his baggage checked without the maddening anxiety, of doing it at the station. But it was precisely in these points that the hotel which admirably fulfilled its other functions fell short. The weather made a succession of efforts throughout their stay to clear up cold; it merely grew colder without clearing up, but this seemed to offer no suggestion of steam for heating their bleak apartment and the chilly corridors to the management. With the help of a large lamp which they kept burning night and day they got the temperature of their rooms up to sixty; there was neither stove nor fireplace, the cold electric bulbs diffused a frosty glare; and in the vast, stately dining-room with its vaulted roof, there was nothing to warm them but their plates, and the handles of their knives and forks, which, by a mysterious inspiration, were always hot. When they were ready to go, March experienced from the apathy of the baggage clerk and the reluctance of the porters a more piercing distress than any he had known at the railroad stations; and one luckless valise which he ordered sent after him by express reached his bankers in Paris a fortnight overdue, with an accumulation of charges upon it outvaluing the books which it contained.

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But these were minor defects in an establishment which had many merits, and was mainly of the temperament and intention of the large English railroad hotels. They looked from their windows down into a gardened square, peopled with a full share of the superabounding statues of Berlin and frequented by babies and nurse maids who seemed not to mind the cold any more than the stone kings and generals. The aspect of this square, like the excellent cooking of the hotel and the architecture of the imperial capital, suggested the superior civilization of Paris. Even the rows of gray houses and private palaces of Berlin are in the French taste, which is the only taste there is in Berlin. The suggestion of Paris is constant, but it is of Paris in exile, and without the chic which the city wears in its native air. The crowd lacks this as much as the architecture and the sculpture; there is no distinction among the men except for now and then a military figure, and among the women no style such as relieves the commonplace rash of the New York streets. The Berliners are plain and ill dressed, both men and women, and even the little children are plain. Every one is ill dressed, but no one is ragged, and among the undersized homely folk of the lower classes there is no such poverty-stricken shabbiness as shocks and insults the sight in New York. That which distinctly recalls our metropolis is the lofty passage of the elevated trains intersecting the prospectives of many streets; but in Berlin the elevated road is carried on massive brick archways and not lifted upon gay, crazy iron ladders like ours.

When you look away from this, and regard Berlin on its aesthetic, side you are again in that banished Paris, whose captive art-soul is made to serve, so far as it may be enslaved to such an effect, in the celebration of the German triumph over France. Berlin has never the presence of a great capital, however, in spite of its perpetual monumental insistence. There is no streaming movement in broad vistas; the dull looking population moves sluggishly; there is no show of fine equipages. The prevailing tone of the city and the sky is gray; but under the cloudy heaven there is no responsive Gothic solemnity in the architecture. There are hints of the older German cities in some of the remote and observe streets, but otherwise all is as new as Boston, which in fact the actual Berlin hardly antedates.

There are easily more statues in Berlin than in any other city in the world, but they only unite in failing to give Berlin an artistic air. They stand in long rows on the cornices; they crowd the pediments; they poise on one leg above domes and arches; they shelter themselves in niches; they ride about on horseback; they sit or lounge on street corners or in garden walks; all with a mediocrity in the older sort which fails of any impression. If they were only furiously baroque they would be something, and it may be from a sense of this that there is a self-assertion in

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the recent sculptures, which are always patriotic, more noisy and bragging than anything else in perennial brass. This offensive art is the modern Prussian avatar of the old German romantic spirit, and bears the same relation to it that modern romanticism in literature bears to romance. It finds its apotheosis in the monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I., a vast incoherent group of swelling and swaggering bronze, commemorating the victory of the first Prussian Emperor in the war with the last French Emperor, and avenging the vanquished upon the victors by its ugliness. The ungainly and irrelevant assemblage of men and animals backs away from the imperial palace, and saves itself too soon from plunging over the border of a canal behind it, not far from Rauch's great statue of the great Frederic. To come to it from the simplicity and quiet of that noble work is like passing from some exquisite masterpiece of naturalistic acting to the rant and uproar of melodrama; and the Marches stood stunned and bewildered by its wild explosions.

When they could escape they found themselves so convenient to the imperial palace that they judged best to discharge at once the obligation to visit it which must otherwise weigh upon them. They entered the court without opposition from the sentinel, and joined other strangers straggling instinctively toward a waiting-room in one corner of the building, where after they had increased to some thirty, a custodian took charge of them, and led them up a series of inclined plains of brick to the state apartments. In the antechamber they found a provision of immense felt over-shoes which they were expected to put on for their passage over the waxed marquetry of the halls. These roomy slippers were designed for the accommodation of the native boots; and upon the mixed company of foreigners the effect was in the last degree humiliating. The women's skirts some what hid their disgrace, but the men were openly put to shame, and they shuffled forward with their bodies at a convenient incline like a company of snow-shoers. In the depths of his own abasement March heard a female voice behind him sighing in American accents, "To think I should be polishing up these imperial floors with my republican feet!"

The protest expressed the rebellion which he felt mounting in his own heart as they advanced through the heavily splendid rooms, in the historical order of the family portraits recording the rise of the Prussian sovereigns from Margraves to Emperors. He began to realize here the fact which grew open him more and more that imperial Germany is not the effect of a popular impulse but of a dynastic propensity. There is nothing original in the imperial palace, nothing national; it embodies and proclaims a powerful personal will, and in its adaptations of French art it appeals to no emotion in the German witness nobler than his pride in the German triumph over the French in war. March found it tiresome beyond the tiresome wont of palaces, and he gladly shook off the sense of it with his felt shoes. "Well," he confided to his wife when they were fairly out-of-doors, "if Prussia rose in the strength of silence, as Carlyle wants us to believe, she is taking it out in talk now, and tall talk."

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“Yes, isn’t she!” Mrs. March assented, and with a passionate desire for excess in a bad thing, which we all know at times, she looked eagerly about her for proofs of that odious militarism of the empire, which ought to have been conspicuous in the imperial capital; but possibly because the troops were nearly all away at the manoeuvres, there were hardly more in the streets than she had sometimes seen in Washington. Again the German officers signally failed to offer her any rudeness when she met them on the side-walks. There were scarcely any of them, and perhaps that might have been the reason why they were not more aggressive; but a whole company of soldiers marching carelessly up to the palace from the Brandenburg gate, without music, or so much style as our own militia often puts on, regarded her with inoffensive eyes so far as they looked at her. She declared that personally there was nothing against the Prussians; even when in uniform they were kindly and modest-looking men; it was when they got up on pedestals, in bronze or marble, that they, began to bully and to brag.

LXIV.

The dinner which the Marches got at a restaurant on Unter den Linden almost redeemed the avenue from the disgrace it had fallen into with them. It was, the best meal they had yet eaten in Europe, and as to fact and form was a sort of compromise between a French dinner and an English dinner which they did not hesitate to pronounce Prussian. The waiter who served it was a friendly spirit, very sensible of their intelligent appreciation of the dinner; and from him they formed a more respectful opinion of Berlin civilization than they had yet held. After the manner of strangers everywhere they judged the country they were visiting from such of its inhabitants as chance brought them in contact with; and it would really be a good thing for nations that wish to stand well with the world at large to look carefully to the behavior of its cabmen and car conductors, its hotel clerks and waiters, its theatre-ticket sellers and ushers, its policemen and sacristans, its landlords and salesmen; for by these rather than by its society women and its statesmen and divines, is it really judged in the books of travellers; some attention also should be paid to the weather, if the climate is to be praised. In the railroad cafe at Potsdam there was a waiter so rude to the Marches that if they had not been people of great strength of character he would have undone the favorable impression the soldiers and civilians of Berlin generally had been at such pains to produce in them; and throughout the week of early September which they passed there, it rained so much and so bitterly, it was so wet and so cold, that they might have come away thinking it’s the worst climate in the world, if it had not been for a man whom they saw in one of the public gardens pouring a heavy stream from his garden hose upon the shrubbery already soaked and shuddering in the cold.

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But this convinced them that they were suffering from weather and not from the climate, which must really be hot and dry; and they went home to their hotel and sat contentedly down in a temperature of sixty degrees. The weather, was not always so bad; one day it was dry cold instead of wet cold, with rough, rusty clouds breaking a blue sky; another day, up to eleven in the forenoon, it was like Indian summer; then it changed to a harsh November air; and then it relented and ended so mildly, that they hired chairs in the place before the imperial palace for five pfennigs each, and sat watching the life before them. Motherly women-folk were there knitting; two American girls in chairs near them chatted together; some fine equipages, the only ones they saw in Berlin, went by; a dog and a man (the wife who ought to have been in harness was probably sick, and the poor fellow was forced to take her place) passed dragging a cart; some schoolboys who had hung their satchels upon the low railing were playing about the base of the statue of King William III. in the joyous freedom of German childhood.

They seemed the gayer for the brief moments of sunshine, but to the Americans, who were Southern by virtue of their sky, the brightness had a sense of lurking winter in it, such as they remembered feeling on a sunny day in Quebec. The blue heaven looked sad; but they agreed that it fitly roofed the bit of old feudal Berlin which forms the most ancient wing of the Schloss. This was time-blackened and rude, but at least it did not try to be French, and it overhung the Spree which winds through the city and gives it the greatest charm it has. In fact Berlin, which is otherwise so grandiose without grandeur and so severe without impressiveness, is sympathetic wherever the Spree opens it to the sky. The stream is spanned by many bridges, and bridges cannot well be unpicturesque, especially if they have statues to help them out. The Spree abounds in bridges, and it has a charming habit of slow hay-laden barges; at the landings of the little passenger-steamers which ply upon it there are cafes and summer-gardens, and these even in the inclement air of September suggested a friendly gayety.

The Marches saw it best in the tour of the elevated road in Berlin which they made in an impassioned memory of the elevated road in New York. The brick viaducts which carry this arch the Spree again and again in their course through and around the city, but with never quite such spectacular effects as our spidery tressels, achieve. The stations are pleasant, sometimes with lunch-counters and news-stands, but have not the comic-opera-chalet prettiness of ours, and are not so frequent. The road is not so smooth, the cars not so smooth-running or so swift. On the other hand they are comfortably cushioned, and they are never overcrowded. The line is at times above, at times below the houses, and at times on a level with them, alike in city and in suburbs.

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The train whirled out of thickly built districts, past the backs of the old houses, into outskirts thinly populated, with new houses springing up without order or continuity among the meadows and vegetable-gardens, and along the ready-made, elm-planted avenues, where wooden fences divided the vacant lots. Everywhere the city was growing out over the country, in blocks and detached edifices of limestone, sandstone, red and yellow brick, larger or smaller, of no more uniformity than our suburban dwellings, but never of their ugliness or lawless offensiveness.

In an effort for the intimate life of the country March went two successive mornings for his breakfast to the Cafe Bauer, which has some admirable wall-printings, and is the chief cafe on Unter den Linden; but on both days there were more people in the paintings than out of them. The second morning the waiter who took his order recognized him and asked, “Wie gestern?” and from this he argued an affectionate constancy in the Berliners, and a hospitable observance of the tastes of strangers. At his bankers, on the other hand, the cashier scrutinized his signature and remarked that it did not look like the signature in his letter of credit, and then he inferred a suspicious mind in the moneyed classes of Prussia; as he had not been treated with such unkind doubt by Hebrew bankers anywhere, he made a mental note that the Jews were politer than the Christians in Germany. In starting for Potsdam he asked a traeger where the Potsdam train was and the man said, “Dat train dare,” and in coming back he helped a fat old lady out of the car, and she thanked him in English. From these incidents, both occurring the same day in the same place, the inference of a widespread knowledge of our language in all classes of the population was inevitable.

In this obvious and easy manner he studied contemporary civilization in the capital. He even carried his researches farther, and went one rainy afternoon to an exhibition of modern pictures in a pavilion of the Thiergarten, where from the small attendance he inferred an indifference to the arts which he would not ascribe to the weather. One evening at a summer theatre where they gave the pantomime of the ‘Puppenfee’ and the operetta of ‘Hansel and Gretel’, he observed that the greater part of the audience was composed of nice plain young girls and children, and he noted that there was no sort of evening dress; from the large number of Americans present he imagined a numerous colony in Berlin, where they mast have an instinctive sense of their co-nationality, since one of them in the stress of getting his hat and overcoat when they all came out, confidently addressed him in English. But he took stock of his impressions with his wife, and they seemed to him so few, after all, that he could not resist a painful sense of isolation in the midst of the environment.

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They made a Sunday excursion to the Zoological Gardens in the Thiergarten, with a large crowd of the lower classes, but though they had a great deal of trouble in getting there by the various kinds of horsecars and electric cars, they did not feel that they had got near to the popular life. They endeavored for some sense of Berlin society by driving home in a drosky, and on the way they passed rows of beautiful houses, in French and Italian taste, fronting the deep, damp green park from the Thiergartenstrasse, in which they were confident cultivated and delightful people lived; but they remained to the last with nothing but their unsupported conjecture.

LXV.

Their excursion to Potsdam was the cream of their sojourn in Berlin. They chose for it the first fair morning, and they ran out over the flat sandy plains surrounding the capital, and among the low hills surrounding Potsdam before it actually began to rain.

They wished immediately to see Sans Souci for the great Frederick's sake, and they drove through a lively shower to the palace, where they waited with a horde of twenty-five other tourists in a gusty colonnade before they were led through Voltaire's room and Frederick's death chamber.

The French philosopher comes before the Prussian prince at Sans Souci even in the palatial villa which expresses the wilful caprice of the great Frederick as few edifices have embodied the whims or tastes of their owners. The whole affair is eighteenth-century French, as the Germans conceived it. The gardened terrace from which the low, one-story building, thickly crusted with baroque sculptures, looks down into a many-colored parterre, was luxuriantly French, and sentimentally French the colonnaded front opening to a perspective of artificial ruins, with broken pillars lifting a conscious fragment of architrave against the sky. Within, all again was French in the design, the decoration and the furnishing. At that time there, was in fact no other taste, and Frederick, who despised and disused his native tongue, was resolved upon French taste even in his intimate companionship. The droll story of his coquetry with the terrible free spirit which he got from France to be his guest is vividly reanimated at Sans Souci, where one breathes the very air in which the strangely assorted companions lived, and in which they parted so soon to pursue each other with brutal annoyance on one side, and with merciless mockery on the other. Voltaire was long ago revenged upon his host for all the indignities he suffered from him in their comedy; he left deeply graven upon Frederick's fame the trace of those lacerating talons which he could strike to the quick; and it is the singular effect of this scene of their brief friendship that one feels there the pre-eminence of the wit in whatever was most important to mankind.

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The rain had lifted a little and the sun shone out on the bloom of the lovely parterre where the Marches profited by a smiling moment to wander among the statues and the roses heavy with the shower. Then they walked back to their carriage and drove to the New Palace, which expresses in differing architectural terms the same subjection to an alien ideal of beauty. It is thronged without by delightfully preposterous rococco statues, and within it is rich in all those curiosities and memorials of royalty with which palaces so well know how to fatigue the flesh and spirit of their visitors.

The Marches escaped from it all with sighs and groans of relief, and before they drove off to see the great fountain of the Orangeries, they dedicated a moment of pathos to the Temple of Friendship which Frederick built in memory of unhappy Wilhelmina of Beyreuth, the sister he loved in the common sorrow of their wretched home, and neglected when he came to his kingdom. It is beautiful in its rococco way, swept up to on its terrace by most noble staircases, and swaggered over by baroque allegories of all sorts: Everywhere the statues outnumbered the visitors, who may have been kept away by the rain; the statues naturally did not mind it.

Sometime in the midst of their sight-seeing the Marches had dinner in a mildewed restaurant, where a compatriotic accent caught their ear in a voice saying to the waiter, “We are in a hurry.” They looked round and saw that it proceeded from the pretty nose of a young American girl, who sat with a party of young American girls at a neighboring table. Then they perceived that all the people in that restaurant were Americans, mostly young girls, who all looked as if they were in a hurry. But neither their beauty nor their impatience had the least effect with the waiter, who prolonged the dinner at his pleasure, and alarmed the Marches with the misgiving that they should not have time for the final palace on their list.

This was the palace where the father of Frederick, the mad old Frederick William, brought up his children with that severity which Solomon urged but probably did not practise. It is a vast place, but they had time for it all, though the custodian made the most of them as the latest comers of the day, and led them through it with a prolixity as great as their waiter’s. He was a most friendly custodian, and when he found that they had some little notion of what they wanted to see, he mixed zeal with his patronage, and in a manner made them his honored guests. They saw everything but the doorway where the faithful royal father used to lie in wait for his children and beat them, princes and princesses alike, with his knobby cane as they came through. They might have seen this doorway without knowing it; but from the window overlooking the parade-ground where his family watched the manoeuvres of his gigantic grenadiers, they made sure of just such puddles as Frederick William

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forced his family to sit with their feet in, while they dined alfresco on pork and cabbage; and they visited the room of the Smoking Parliament where he ruled his convives with a rod of iron, and made them the victims of his bad jokes. The measuring-board against which he took the stature of his tall grenadiers is there, and one room is devoted to those masterpieces which he used to paint in the agonies of gout. His chef d'oeuvre contains a figure with two left feet, and there seemed no reason why it might not. have had three. In another room is a small statue of Carlyle, who did so much to rehabilitate the house which the daughter of it, Wilhelmina, did so much to demolish in the regard of men.

The palace is now mostly kept for guests, and there is a chamber where Napoleon slept, which is not likely to be occupied soon by any other self-invited guest of his nation. It is perhaps to keep the princes of Europe humble that hardly a palace on the Continent is without the chamber of this adventurer, who, till he stooped to be like them, was easily their master. Another democracy had here recorded its invasion in the American stoves which the custodian pointed out in the corridor when Mrs, March, with as little delay as possible, had proclaimed their country. The custodian professed an added respect for them from the fact, and if he did not feel it, no doubt he merited the drink money which they lavished on him at parting.

Their driver also was a congenial spirit, and when he let them out of his carriage at the station, he excused the rainy day to them. He was a merry fellow beyond the wont of his nation, and he-laughed at the bad weather, as if it had been a good joke on them.

His gayety, and the red sunset light, which shone on the stems of the pines on the way back to Berlin, contributed to the content in which they reviewed their visit to Potsdam. They agreed that the place was perfectly charming, and that it was incomparably expressive of kingly will and pride. These had done there on the grand scale what all the German princes and princelings had tried to do in imitation and emulation of French splendor. In Potsdam the grandeur, was not a historical growth as at Versailles, but was the effect of family genius, in which there was often the curious fascination of insanity.

They felt this strongly again amidst the futile monuments of the Hohenzollern Museum, in Berlin, where all the portraits, effigies, personal belongings and memorials of that gifted, eccentric race are gathered and historically disposed. The princes of the mighty line who stand out from the rest are Frederick the Great and his infuriate. father; and in the waxen likeness of the son, a small thin figure, terribly spry, and a face pitilessly alert, appears something of the madness which showed in the life of the sire.

They went through many rooms in which the memorials of the kings and queens, the emperors and empresses were carefully ordered, and felt no kindness except before the relics relating to the Emperor Frederick and his mother. In the presence of the greatest

of the dynasty they experienced a kind of terror which March expressed, when they were safely away, in the confession of his joy that those people were dead.

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LXVI.

The rough weather which made Berlin almost uninhabitable to Mrs. March had such an effect with General Triscoe at Weimar that under the orders of an English-speaking doctor he retreated from it altogether and went to bed. Here he escaped the bronchitis which had attacked him, and his convalesence left him so little to complain of that he could not always keep his temper. In the absence of actual offence, either from his daughter or from Burnamy, his sense of injury took a retroactive form; it centred first in Stoller and the twins; then it diverged toward Rose Adding, his mother and Kenby, and finally involved the Marches in the same measure of inculpation; for they had each and all had part, directly or indirectly, in the chances that brought on his cold.

He owed to Burnamy the comfort of the best room in the hotel, and he was constantly dependent upon his kindness; but he made it evident that he did not over-value Burnamy's sacrifice and devotion, and that it was not an unmixed pleasure, however great a convenience, to have him about. In giving up his room, Burnamy had proposed going out of the hotel altogether; but General Triscoe heard of this with almost as great vexation as he had accepted the room. He besought him not to go, but so ungraciously that his daughter was ashamed, and tried to atone for his manner by the kindness of her own.

Perhaps General Triscoe would not have been without excuse if he were not eager to have her share with destitute merit the fortune which she had hitherto shared only with him. He was old, and certain luxuries had become habits if not necessaries with him. Of course he did not say this to himself; and still less did he say it to her. But he let her see that he did not enjoy the chance which had thrown them again in such close relations with Burnamy, and he did pot hide his belief that the Marches were somehow to blame for it. This made it impossible for her to write at once to Mrs. March as she had promised; but she was determined that it should not make her unjust to Burnamy. She would not avoid him; she would not let anything that had happened keep her from showing that she felt his kindness and was glad of his help.

Of course they knew no one else in Weimar, and his presence merely as a fellow-countryman would have been precious. He got them a doctor, against General Triscoe's will; he went for his medicines; he lent him books and papers; he sat with him and tried to amuse him. But with the girl he attempted no return to the situation at Carlsbad; there is nothing like the delicate pride of a young man who resolves to forego unfair advantage in love.

The day after their arrival, when her father was making up for the sleep he had lost by night, she found herself alone in the little reading-room of the hotel with Burnamy for the first time, and she said: "I suppose you must have been all over Weimar by this time."

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“Well, I’ve been here, off and on, almost a month. It’s an interesting place. There’s a good deal of the old literary quality left.”

“And you enjoy that! I saw”—she added this with a little unnecessary flush—“your poem in the paper you lent papa.”

“I suppose I ought to have kept that back. But I couldn’t.” He laughed, and she said:

“You must find a great deal of inspiration in such a literary place.”

“It isn’t lying about loose, exactly.” Even in the serious and perplexing situation in which he found himself he could not help being amused with her unliterary notions of literature, her conventional and commonplace conceptions of it. They had their value with him as those of a more fashionable world than his own, which he believed was somehow a greater world. At the same time he believed that she was now interposing them between the present and the past, and forbidding with them any return to the mood of their last meeting in Carlsbad. He looked at her ladylike composure and unconsciousness, and wondered if she could be the same person and the same person as they who lost themselves in the crowd that night and heard and said words palpitant with fate. Perhaps there had been no such words; perhaps it was all a hallucination. He must leave her to recognize that it was reality; till she did so, he felt bitterly that there was nothing for him but submission and patience; if she never did so, there was nothing for him but acquiescence.

In this talk and in the talks they had afterwards she seemed willing enough to speak of what had happened since: of coming on to Wurzburg with the Addings and of finding the Marches there; of Rose’s collapse, and of his mother’s flight seaward with him in the care of Kenby, who was so fortunately going to Holland, too. He on his side told her of going to Wurzburg for the manoeuvres, and they agreed that it was very strange they had not met.

She did not try to keep their relations from taking the domestic character which was inevitable, and it seemed to him that this in itself was significant of a determination on her part that was fatal to his hopes. With a lover’s indefinite power of blinding himself to what is before his eyes, he believed that if she had been more diffident of him, more uneasy in his presence, he should have had more courage; but for her to breakfast unafraid with him, to meet him at lunch and dinner in the little dining-room where they were often the only guests, and always the only English-speaking guests, was nothing less than prohibitive.

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In the hotel service there was one of those men who are porters in this world, but will be angels in the next, unless the perfect goodness of their looks, the constant kindness of their acts, belies them. The Marches had known and loved the man in their brief stay, and he had been the fast friend of Burnamy from the moment they first saw each other at the station. He had tenderly taken possession of General Triscoe on his arrival, and had constituted himself the nurse and keeper of the irascible invalid, in the intervals of going to the trains, with a zeal that often relieved his daughter and Burnamy. The general in fact preferred him to either, and a tacit custom grew up by which when August knocked at his door, and offered himself in his few words of serviceable English, that one of them who happened to be sitting with the general gave way, and left him in charge. The retiring watcher was then apt to encounter the other watcher on the stairs, or in the reading-room, or in the tiny, white-pebbled door-yard at a little table in the shade of the wooden-tubbed evergreens. From the habit of doing this they one day suddenly formed the habit of going across the street to that gardened hollow before and below the Grand-Ducal Museum. There was here a bench in the shelter of some late-flowering bush which the few other frequenters of the place soon recognized as belonging to the young strangers, so that they would silently rise and leave it to them when they saw them coming. Apparently they yielded not only to their right, but to a certain authority which resides in lovers, and which all other men, and especially all other women, like to acknowledge and respect.

In the absence of any civic documents bearing upon the affair it is difficult to establish the fact that this was the character in which Agatha and Burnamy were commonly regarded by the inhabitants of Weimar. But whatever their own notion of their relation was, if it was not that of a Brant and a Brautigam, the people of Weimar would have been puzzled to say what it was. It was known that the gracious young lady's father, who would naturally have accompanied them, was sick, and in the fact that they were Americans much extenuation was found for whatever was phenomenal in their unencumbered enjoyment of each other's society.

If their free American association was indistinguishably like the peasant informality which General Triscoe despised in the relations of Kenby and Mrs. Adding, it is to be said in his excuse that he could not be fully cognizant of it, in the circumstances, and so could do nothing to prevent it. His pessimism extended to his health; from the first he believed himself worse than the doctor thought him, and he would have had some other physician if he had not found consolation in their difference of opinion and the consequent contempt which he was enabled to cherish for the doctor in view of the man's complete ignorance of the case. In proof of his own better understanding of it, he remained in bed some time after the doctor said he might get up.

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Nearly ten days had passed before he left his room, and it was not till then that he clearly saw how far affairs had gone with his daughter and Burnamy, though even then his observance seemed to have anticipated theirs. He found them in a quiet acceptance of the fortune which had brought them together, so contented that they appeared to ask nothing more of it. The divine patience and confidence of their youth might sometimes have had almost the effect of indifference to a witness who had seen its evolution from the moods of the first few days of their reunion in Weimar. To General Triscoe, however, it looked like an understanding which had been made without reference to his wishes, and had not been directly brought to his knowledge.

“Agatha,” he said, after due note of a gay contest between her and Burnamy over the pleasure and privilege of ordering his supper sent to his room when he had gone back to it from his first afternoon in the open air, “how long is that young man going to stay in Weimar?”

“Why, I don’t know!” she answered, startled from her work of beating the sofa pillows into shape, and pausing with one of them in her hand. “I never asked him.” She looked down candidly into his face where he sat in an easy-chair waiting for her arrangement of the sofa. “What makes you ask?”

He answered with another question. “Does he know that we had thought of staying here?”

“Why, we’ve always talked of that, haven’t we? Yes, he knows it. Didn’t you want him to know it, papa? You ought to have begun on the ship, then. Of course I’ve asked him what sort of place it was. I’m sorry if you didn’t want me to.”

“Have I said that? It’s perfectly easy to push on to Paris. Unless—”

“Unless what?” Agatha dropped the pillow, and listened respectfully. But in spite of her filial attitude she could not keep her youth and strength and courage from quelling the forces of the elderly man.

He said querulously, “I don’t see why you take that tone with me. You certainly know what I mean. But if you don’t care to deal openly with me, I won’t ask you.” He dropped his eyes from her face, and at the same time a deep blush began to tinge it, growing up from her neck to her forehead. “You must know—you’re not a child,” he continued, still with averted eyes, “that this sort of thing can’t go on... It must be something else, or it mustn’t be anything at all. I don’t ask you for your confidence, and you know that I’ve never sought to control you.”

This was not the least true, but Agatha answered, either absently or provisionally, “No.”

“And I don’t seek to do so now. If you have nothing that you wish to tell me—”

He waited, and after what seemed a long time, she asked as if she had not heard him, “Will you lie down a little before your supper, papa?”

“I will lie down when I feel like it,” he answered. “Send August with the supper; he can look after me.”

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His resentful tone, even more than his words, dismissed her, but she left him without apparent grievance, saying quietly, “I will send August.”

LXVII.

Agatha did not come down to supper with Burnamy. She asked August, when she gave him her father’s order, to have a cup of tea sent to her room, where, when it came, she remained thinking so long that it was rather tepid by the time she drank it.

Then she went to her window, and looked out, first above and next below. Above, the moon was hanging over the gardened hollow before the Museum with the airy lightness of an American moon. Below was Burnamy behind the tubbed evergreens, sitting tilted in his chair against the house wall, with the spark of his cigar fainting and flashing like an American firefly. Agatha went down to the door, after a little delay, and seemed surprised to find him there; at least she said, “Oh!” in a tone of surprise.

Burnamy stood up, and answered, “Nice night.”

“Beautiful!” she breathed. “I didn’t suppose the sky in Germany could ever be so clear.”

“It seems to be doing its best.”

“The flowers over there look like ghosts in the light,” she said dreamily.

“They’re not. Don’t you want to get your hat and wrap, and go over and expose the fraud?”

“Oh,” she answered, as if it were merely a question of the hat and wrap, “I have them.”

They sauntered through the garden walks for a while, long enough to have ascertained that there was not a veridical phantom among the flowers, if they had been looking, and then when they came to their accustomed seat, they sat down, and she said, “I don’t know that I’ve seen the moon so clear since we left Carlsbad.” At the last word his heart gave a jump that seemed to lodge it in his throat and kept him from speaking, so that she could resume without interruption, “I’ve got something of yours, that you left at the Posthof. The girl that broke the dishes found it, and Lili gave it to Mrs. March for you.” This did not account for Agatha’s having the thing, whatever it was; but when she took a handkerchief from her belt, and put out her hand with it toward him, he seemed to find that her having it had necessarily followed. He tried to take it from her, but his own hand trembled so that it clung to hers, and he gasped, “Can’t you say now, what you wouldn’t say then?”

The logical sequence was no more obvious than be fore; but she apparently felt it in her turn as he had felt it in his. She whispered back, “Yes,” and then she could not get out anything more till she entreated in a half-stifled voice, “Oh, don’t!”

“No, no!” he panted. “I won’t—I oughtn’t to have done it—I beg your pardon—I oughtn’t to have spoken,—even—I—”

She returned in a far less breathless and tremulous fashion, but still between laughing and crying, “I meant to make you. And now, if you’re ever sorry, or I’m ever too topping about anything, you can be perfectly free to say that you’d never have spoken if you hadn’t seen that I wanted you to.”

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“But I didn’t see any such thing,” he protested. “I spoke because I couldn’t help it any longer.”

She laughed triumphantly. “Of course you think so! And that shows that you are only a man after all; in spite of your finessing. But I am going to have the credit of it. I knew that you were holding back because you were too proud, or thought you hadn’t the right, or something. Weren’t you?” She startled him with the sudden vehemence of her challenge: “If you pretend, that you weren’t I shall never forgive you!”

“But I was! Of course I was. I was afraid—”

“Isn’t that what I said?” She triumphed over him with another laugh, and cowered a little closer to him, if that could be.

They were standing, without knowing how they had got to their feet; and now without any purpose of the kind, they began to stroll again among the garden paths, and to ask and to answer questions, which touched every point of their common history, and yet left it a mine of inexhaustible knowledge for all future time. Out of the sweet and dear delight of this encyclopedian reserve two or three facts appeared with a present distinctness. One of these was that Burnamy had regarded her refusal to be definite at Carlsbad as definite refusal, and had meant never to see her again, and certainly never to speak again of love to her. Another point was that she had not resented his coming back that last night, but had been proud and happy in it as proof of his love, and had always meant somehow to let him know that she was torched by his trusting her enough to come back while he was still under that cloud with Mr. Stoller. With further logic, purely of the heart, she acquitted him altogether of wrong in that affair, and alleged in proof, what Mr. Stoller had said of it to Mr. March. Burnamy owned that he knew what Stoller had said, but even in his present condition he could not accept fully her reading of that obscure passage of his life. He preferred to put the question by, and perhaps neither of them cared anything about it except as it related to the fact that they were now each other’s forever.

They agreed that they must write to Mr. and Mrs. March at once; or at least, Agatha said, as soon as she had spoken to her father. At her mention of her father she was aware of a doubt, a fear, in Burnamy which expressed itself by scarcely more than a spiritual consciousness from his arm to the hands which she had clasped within it. “He has always appreciated you,” she said courageously, “and I know he will see it in the right light.”

She probably meant no more than to affirm her faith in her own ability finally to bring her father to a just mind concerning it; but Burnamy accepted her assurance with buoyant hopefulness, and said he would see General Triscoe the first thing in the morning.

“No, I will see him,” she said, “I wish to see him first; he will expect it of me. We had better go in, now,” she added, but neither made any motion for the present to do so. On the contrary, they walked in the other direction, and it was an hour after Agatha declared their duty in the matter before they tried to fulfil it.

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Then, indeed, after they returned to the hotel, she lost no time in going to her father beyond that which must be given to a long hand-pressure under the fresco of the five poets on the stairs landing, where her ways and Burnamy's parted. She went into her own room, and softly opened the door into her father's and listened.

"Well?" he said in a sort of challenging voice.

"Have you been asleep?" she asked.

"I've just blown out my light. What has kept you?"

She did not reply categorically. Standing there in the sheltering dark, she said, "Papa, I wasn't very candid with you, this afternoon. I am engaged to Mr. Burnamy."

"Light the candle," said her father. "Or no," he added before she could do so. "Is it quite settled?"

"Quite," she answered in a voice that admitted of no doubt. "That is, as far as it can be, without you."

"Don't be a hypocrite, Agatha," said the general. "And let me try to get to sleep. You know I don't like it, and you know I can't help it."

"Yes," the girl assented.

"Then go to bed," said the general concisely.

Agatha did not obey her father. She thought she ought to kiss him, but she decided that she had better postpone this; so she merely gave him a tender goodnight, to which he made no response, and shut herself into her own room, where she remained sitting and staring out into the moonlight, with a smile that never left her lips.

When the moon sank below the horizon, the sky was pale with the coming day, but before it was fairly dawn, she saw something white, not much greater than some moths, moving before her window. She pulled the valves open and found it a bit of paper attached to a thread dangling from above. She broke it loose and in the morning twilight she read the great central truth of the universe:

"I love you. L. J. B."

She wrote under the tremendous inspiration:

"So do I. Don't be silly. A. T."

She fastened the paper to the thread again, and gave it a little twitch. She waited for the low note of laughter which did not fail to flutter down from above; then she threw herself upon the bed, and fell asleep.

It was not so late as she thought when she woke, and it seemed, at breakfast, that Burnamy had been up still earlier. Of the three involved in the anxiety of the night before General Triscoe was still respited from it by sleep, but he woke much more haggard than either of the young people. They, in fact, were not at all haggard; the worst was over, if bringing their engagement to his knowledge was the worst; the formality of asking his consent which Burnamy still had to go through was unpleasant, but after all it was a formality. Agatha told him everything that had passed between herself and her father, and if it had not that cordiality on his part which they could have wished it was certainly not hopelessly discouraging.

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They agreed at breakfast that Burnamy had better have it over as quickly as possible, and he waited only till August came down with the general's tray before going up to his room. The young fellow did not feel more at his ease than the elder meant he should in taking the chair to which the general waved him from where he lay in bed; and there was no talk wasted upon the weather between them.

"I suppose I know what you have come for, Mr. Burnamy," said General Triscoe in a tone which was rather judicial than otherwise, "and I suppose you know why you have come." The words certainly opened the way for Burnamy, but he hesitated so long to take it that the general had abundant time to add, "I don't pretend that this event is unexpected, but I should like to know what reason you have for thinking I should wish you to marry my daughter. I take it for granted that you are attached to each other, and we won't waste time on that point. Not to beat about the bush, on the next point, let me ask at once what your means of supporting her are. How much did you earn on that newspaper in Chicago?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars," Burnamy answered, promptly enough.

"Did you earn anything more, say within the last year?"

"I got three hundred dollars advance copyright for a book I sold to a publisher." The glory had not yet faded from the fact in Burnamy's mind.

"Eighteen hundred. What did you get for your poem in March's book?"

"That's a very trifling matter: fifteen dollars."

"And your salary as private secretary to that man Stoller?"

"Thirty dollars a week, and my expenses. But I wouldn't take that, General Triscoe," said Burnamy.

General Triscoe, from his 'lit de justice', passed this point in silence. "Have you any one dependent on you?"

"My mother; I take care of my mother," answered Burnamy, proudly.

"Since you have broken with Stoller, what are your prospects?"

"I have none."

"Then you don't expect to support my daughter; you expect to live upon her means."

“I expect to do nothing of the kind!” cried Burnamy. “I should be ashamed—I should feel disgraced—I should—I don’t ask you—I don’t ask her till I have the means to support her—”

“If you were very fortunate,” continued the general, unmoved by the young fellow’s pain, and unperturbed by the fact that he had himself lived upon his wife’s means as long as she lived, and then upon his daughter’s, “if you went back to Stoller—”

“I wouldn’t go back to him. I don’t say he’s knowingly a rascal, but he’s ignorantly a rascal, and he proposed a rascally thing to me. I behaved badly to him, and I’d give anything to undo the wrong I let him do himself; but I’ll never go back to him.”

“If you went back, on your old salary,” the general persisted pitilessly, “you would be very fortunate if you brought your earnings up to twenty-five hundred a year.”

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“Yes—”

“And how far do you think that would go in supporting my daughter on the scale she is used to? I don’t speak of your mother, who has the first claim upon you.”

Burnamy sat dumb; and his head which he had lifted indignantly when the question was of Stoller, began to sink.

The general went on. “You ask me to give you my daughter when you haven’t money enough to keep her in gowns; you ask me to give her to a stranger—”

“Not quite a stranger, General Triscoe,” Burnamy protested. “You have known me for three months at least, and any one who knows me in Chicago will tell you—”

“A stranger, and worse than a stranger,” the general continued, so pleased with the logical perfection of his position that he almost smiled, and certainly softened toward Burnamy. “It isn’t a question of liking you, Mr. Burnamy, but of knowing you; my daughter likes you; so do the Marches; so does everybody who has met you. I like you myself. You’ve done me personally a thousand kindnesses. But I know very little of you, in spite of our three months’ acquaintance; and that little is—But you shall judge for yourself! You were in the confidential employ of a man who trusted you, and you let him betray himself.”

“I did. I don’t excuse it. The thought of it burns like fire. But it wasn’t done maliciously; it wasn’t done falsely; it was done inconsiderately; and when it was done, it seemed irrevocable. But it wasn’t; I could have prevented, I could have stooped the mischief; and I didn’t! I can never outlive that.”

“I know,” said the general relentlessly, “that you have never attempted any defence. That has been to your credit with me. It inclined me to overlook your unwarranted course in writing to my daughter, when you told her you would never see her again. What did you expect me to think, after that, of your coming back to see her? Or didn’t you expect me to know it?”

“I expected you to know it; I knew she would tell you. But I don’t excuse that, either. It was acting a lie to come back. All I can say is that I had to see her again for one last time.”

“And to make sure that it was to be the last time, you offered yourself to her.”

“I couldn’t help doing that.”

“I don’t say you could. I don’t judge the facts at all. I leave them altogether to you; and you shall say what a man in my position ought to say to such a man as you have shown yourself.”

“No, I will say.” The door into the adjoining room was flung open, and Agatha flashed in from it.

Her father looked coldly at her impassioned face. “Have you been listening?” he asked.

“I have been hearing—”

“Oh!” As nearly as a man could, in bed, General Triscoe shrugged.

“I suppose I had, a right to be in my own room. I couldn’t help hearing; and I was perfectly astonished at you, papa, the cruel way you went on, after all you’ve said about Mr. Stoller, and his getting no more than he deserved.”

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“That doesn’t justify me,” Burnamy began, but she cut him short almost as severely as she—had dealt with her father.

“Yes, it does! It justifies you perfectly! And his wanting you to falsify the whole thing afterwards, more than justifies you.”

Neither of the men attempted anything in reply to her casuistry; they both looked equally posed by it, for different reasons; and Agatha went on as vehemently as before, addressing herself now to one and now to the other.

“And besides, if it didn’t justify you, what you have done yourself would; and your never denying it, or trying to excuse it, makes it the same as if you hadn’t done it, as far as you are concerned; and that is all I care for.” Burnamy started, as if with the sense of having heard something like this before, and with surprise at hearing it now; and she flushed a little as she added tremulously, “And I should never, never blame you for it, after that; it’s only trying to wriggle out of things which I despise, and you’ve never done that. And he simply had to come back,” she turned to her father, “and tell me himself just how it was. And you said yourself, papa—or the same as said—that he had no right to suppose I was interested in his affairs unless he—unless—And I should never have forgiven him, if he hadn’t told me then that he that he had come back because he—felt the way he did. I consider that that exonerated him for breaking his word, completely. If he hadn’t broken his word I should have thought he had acted very cruelly and—and strangely. And ever since then, he has behaved so nobly, so honorably, so delicately, that I don’t believe he would ever have said anything again—if I hadn’t fairly forced him. Yes! Yes, I did!” she cried at a movement of remonstrance from Burnamy. “And I shall always be proud of you for it.” Her father stared steadfastly at her, and he only lifted his eyebrows, for change of expression, when she went over to where Burnamy stood, and put her hand in his with a certain childlike impetuosity. “And as for the rest,” she declared, “everything I have is his; just as everything of his would be mine if I had nothing. Or if he wishes to take me without anything, then he can have me so, and I sha’n’t be afraid but we can get along somehow.” She added, “I have managed without a maid, ever since I left home, and poverty has no terrors for me!”

LXVIII.

General Triscoe submitted to defeat with the patience which soldiers learn. He did not submit amiably; that would have been out of character, and perhaps out of reason; but Burnamy and Agatha were both so amiable that they supplied good-humor for all. They flaunted their rapture in her father’s face as little as they could, but he may have found their serene satisfaction, their settled confidence in their fate, as hard to bear as a more boisterous happiness would have been.

It was agreed among them all that they were to return soon to America, and Burnamy was to find some sort of literary or journalistic employment in New York. She was much surer than he that this could be done with perfect ease; but they were of an equal mind that General Triscoe was not to be disturbed in any of his habits, or vexed in the tenor of his living; and until Burnamy was at least self-supporting there must be no talk of their being married.

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The talk of their being engaged was quite enough for the time. It included complete and minute auto-biographies on both sides, reciprocal analyses of character, a scientifically exhaustive comparison of tastes, ideas and opinions; a profound study of their respective chins, noses, eyes, hands, heights, complexions, moles and freckles, with some account of their several friends.

In this occupation, which was profitably varied by the confession of what they had each thought and felt and dreamt concerning the other at every instant since they met, they passed rapidly the days which the persistent anxiety of General Triscoe interposed before the date of their leaving Weimar for Paris, where it was arranged that they should spend a month before sailing for New York. Burnamy had a notion, which Agatha approved, of trying for something there on the New York-Paris Chronicle; and if he got it they might not go home at once. His gains from that paper had eked out his copyright from his book, and had almost paid his expenses in getting the material which he had contributed to it. They were not so great, however, but that his gold reserve was reduced to less than a hundred dollars, counting the silver coinages which had remained to him in crossing and recrossing frontiers. He was at times dimly conscious of his finances, but he buoyantly disregarded the facts, as incompatible with his status as Agatha's betrothed, if not unworthy of his character as a lover in the abstract.

The afternoon before they were to leave Weimar, they spent mostly in the garden before the Grand-Ducal Museum, in a conference so important that when it came on to rain, at one moment, they put up Burnamy's umbrella, and continued to sit under it rather than interrupt the proceedings even to let Agatha go back to the hotel and look after her father's packing. Her own had been finished before dinner, so as to leave her the whole afternoon for their conference, and to allow her father to remain in undisturbed possession of his room as long as possible.

What chiefly remained to be put into the general's trunk were his coats and trousers, hanging in the closet, and August took these down, and carefully folded and packed them. Then, to make sure that nothing had been forgotten, Agatha put a chair into the closet when she came in, and stood on it to examine the shelf which stretched above the hooks.

There seemed at first to be nothing on it, and then there seemed to be something in the further corner, which when it was tiptoed for, proved to be a bouquet of flowers, not so faded as to seem very old; the blue satin ribbon which they were tied up with, and which hung down half a yard, was of entire freshness except far the dust of the shelf where it had lain.

Agatha backed out into the room with her find in her hand, and examined it near to, and then at arm's length. August stood by with a pair of the general's trousers lying across his outstretched hands, and as Agatha absently looked round at him, she caught a light of intelligence in his eyes which changed her whole psychological relation to the

withered bouquet. Till then it had been a lifeless, meaningless bunch of flowers, which some one, for no motive, had tossed up on that dusty shelf in the closet. At August's smile it became something else. Still she asked lightly enough, "Was ist loss, August?"

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His smile deepened and broadened. “Fur die Andere,” he explained.

Agatha demanded in English, “What do you mean by feardy ondery?”

“Oddaw lehdy.”

“Other lady?” August nodded, rejoicing in big success, and Agatha closed the door into her own room, where the general had been put for the time so as to be spared the annoyance of the packing; then she sat down with her hands in her lap, and the bouquet in her hands. “Now, August,” she said very calmly, “I want you to tell me-ich wunsche Sie zu mir sagen—what other lady—wass andere Dame—these flowers belonged to—diese Blumen gehorte zu. Verstehen Sie?”

August nodded brightly, and with German carefully adjusted to Agatha’s capacity, and with now and then a word or phrase of English, he conveyed that before she and her Herr Father had appeared, there had been in Weimar another American Fraulein with her Frau Mother; they had not indeed staid in that hotel, but had several times supped there with the young Herr Bornahmee, who was occupying that room before her Herr Father. The young Herr had been much about with these American Damen, driving and walking with them, and sometimes dining or supping with them at their hotel, The Elephant. August had sometimes carried notes to them from the young Herr, and he had gone for the bouquet which the gracious Fraulein was holding, on the morning of the day that the American Damen left by the train for Hanover.

August was much helped and encouraged throughout by the friendly intelligence of the gracious Fraulein, who smiled radiantly in clearing up one dim point after another, and who now and then supplied the English analogues which he sought in his effort to render his German more luminous.

At the end she returned to the work of packing, in which she directed him, and sometimes assisted him with her own hands, having put the bouquet on the mantel to leave herself free. She took it up again and carried it into her own room, when she went with August to summon her father back to his. She bade August say to the young Herr, if he saw him, that she was going to sup with her father, and August gave her message to Burnamy, whom he met on the stairs coming down as he was going up with their tray.

Agatha usually supped with her father, but that evening Burnamy was less able than usual to bear her absence in the hotel dining-room, and he went up to a cafe in the town for his supper. He did not stay long, and when he returned his heart gave a joyful lift at sight of Agatha looking out from her balcony, as if she were looking for him. He made her a gay flourishing bow, lifting his hat high, and she came down to meet him at the hotel door. She had her hat on and jacket over one arm and she joined him at once for the farewell walk he proposed in what they had agreed to call their garden.

She moved a little ahead of him, and when they reached the place where they always sat, she shifted her jacket to the other arm and uncovered the hand in which she had been carrying the withered bouquet. “Here is something I found in your closet, when I was getting papa’s things out.”

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“Why, what is it?” he asked innocently, as he took it from her.

“A bouquet, apparently,” she answered, as he drew the long ribbons through his fingers, and looked at the flowers curiously, with his head aslant.

“Where did you get it?”

“On the shelf.”

It seemed a long time before Burnamy said with a long sigh, as of final recollection, “Oh, yes,” and then he said nothing; and they did not sit down, but stood looking at each other.

“Was it something you got for me, and forgot to give me?” she asked in a voice which would not have misled a woman, but which did its work with the young man.

He laughed and said, “Well, hardly! The general has been in the room ever since you came.”

“Oh, yes. Then perhaps somebody left it there before you had the room?”

Burnamy was silent again, but at last he said, “No, I flung it up there I had forgotten all about it.”

“And you wish me to forget about it, too?” Agatha asked in a gayety of tone that still deceived him.

“It would only be fair. You made me,” he rejoined, and there was something so charming in his words and way, that she would have been glad to do it.

But she governed herself against the temptation and said, “Women are not good at forgetting, at least till they know what.”

“Oh, I’ll tell you, if you want to know,” he said with a laugh, and at the words she—sank provisionally in their accustomed seat. He sat down beside her, but not so near as usual, and he waited so long before he began that it seemed as if he had forgotten again. “Why, it’s nothing. Miss Etkins and her mother were here before you came, and this is a bouquet that I meant to give her at the train when she left. But I decided I wouldn’t, and I threw it onto the shelf in the closet.”

“May I ask why you thought of taking a bouquet to her at the train?”

“Well, she and her mother—I had been with them a good deal, and I thought it would be civil.”

“And why did you decide not to be civil?”

“I didn’t want it to look like more than civility.”

“Were they here long?”

“About a week. They left just after the Marches came.”

Agatha seemed not to heed the answer she had exacted. She sat reclined in the corner of the seat, with her head drooping. After an interval which was long to Burnamy she began to pull at a ring on the third finger of her left hand, absently, as if she did not know what she was doing; but when she had got it off she held it towards Burnamy and said quietly, “I think you had better have this again,” and then she rose and moved slowly and weakly away.

He had taken the ring mechanically from her, and he stood a moment bewildered; then he pressed after her.

“Agatha, do you—you don’t mean—”

“Yes,” she said, without looking round at his face, which she knew was close to her shoulder. “It’s over. It isn’t what you’ve done. It’s what you are. I believed in you, in spite of what you did to that man—and your coming back when you said you wouldn’t—and—But I see now that what you did was you; it was your nature; and I can’t believe in you any more.”

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“Agatha!” he implored. “You’re not going to be so unjust! There was nothing between you and me when that girl was here! I had a right to—”

“Not if you really cared for me! Do you think I would have flirted with any one so soon, if I had cared for you as you pretended you did for me that night in Carlsbad? Oh, I don’t say you’re false. But you’re fickle—”

“But I’m not fickle! From the first moment I saw you, I never cared for any one but you!”

“You have strange ways of showing your devotion. Well, say you are not fickle. Say, that I’m fickle. I am. I have changed my mind. I see that it would never do. I leave you free to follow all the turning and twisting of your fancy.” She spoke rapidly, almost breathlessly, and she gave him no chance to get out the words that seemed to choke him. She began to run, but at the door of the hotel she stopped and waited till he came stupidly up. “I have a favor to ask, Mr. Burnamy. I beg you will not see me again, if you can help it before we go to-morrow. My father and I are indebted to you for too many kindnesses, and you mustn’t take any more trouble on our account. August can see us off in the morning.”

She nodded quickly, and was gone in-doors while he was yet struggling with his doubt of the reality of what had all so swiftly happened.

General Triscoe was still ignorant of any change in the status to which he had reconciled himself with so much difficulty, when he came down to get into the omnibus for the train. Till then he had been too proud to ask what had become of Burnamy, though he had wondered, but now he looked about and said impatiently, “I hope that young man isn’t going to keep us waiting.”

Agatha was pale and worn with sleeplessness, but she said firmly, “He isn’t going, papa. I will tell you in the train. August will see to the tickets and the baggage.”

August conspired with the traeger to get them a first-class compartment to themselves. But even with the advantages of this seclusion Agatha’s confidences to her father were not full. She told her father that her engagement was broken for reasons that did not mean anything very wrong in Mr. Burnamy but that convinced her they could never be happy together. As she did not give the reasons, he found a natural difficulty in accepting them, and there was something in the situation which appealed strongly to his contrary-mindedness. Partly from this, partly from his sense of injury in being obliged so soon to adjust himself to new conditions, and partly from his comfortable feeling of security from an engagement to which his assent had been forced, he said, “I hope you’re not making a mistake.”

“Oh, no,” she answered, and she attested her conviction by a burst of sobbing that lasted well on the way to the first stop of the train.

LXIX.

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It would have been always twice as easy to go direct from Berlin to the Hague through Hanover; but the Marches decided to go by Frankfort and the Rhine, because they wished to revisit the famous river, which they remembered from their youth, and because they wished to stop at Dusseldorf, where Heinrich Heine was born. Without this Mrs. March, who kept her husband up to his early passion for the poet with a feeling that she was defending him from age in it, said that their silver wedding journey would not be complete; and he began himself to think that it would be interesting.

They took a sleeping-car for Frankfort and they woke early as people do in sleeping-cars everywhere. March dressed and went out for a cup of the same coffee of which sleeping-car buffets have the awful secret in Europe as well as America, and for a glimpse of the twilight landscape. One gray little town, towered and steepled and red-roofed within its mediaeval walls, looked as if it would have been warmer in something more. There was a heavy dew, if not a light frost, over all, and in places a pale fog began to lift from the low hills. Then the sun rose without dispersing the cold, which was afterwards so severe in their room at the Russischer Hof in Frankfort that in spite of the steam-radiators they sat shivering in all their wraps till breakfast-time.

There was no steam on in the radiators, of course; when they implored the portier for at least a lamp to warm their hands by he turned on all the electric lights without raising the temperature in the slightest degree. Amidst these modern comforts they were so miserable that they vowed each other to shun, as long as they were in Germany, or at least while the summer lasted, all hotels which were steam-heated and electric-lighted. They heated themselves somewhat with their wrath, and over their breakfast they relented so far as to suffer themselves a certain interest in the troops of all arms beginning to pass the hotel. They were fragments of the great parade, which had ended the day before, and they were now drifting back to their several quarters of the empire. Many of them were very picturesque, and they had for the boys and girls running before and beside them, the charm which armies and circus processions have for children everywhere. But their passage filled with cruel anxiety a large old dog whom his master had left harnessed to a milk-cart before the hotel door; from time to time he lifted up his voice, and called to the absentee with hoarse, deep barks that almost shook him from his feet.

The day continued blue and bright and cold, and the Marches gave the morning to a rapid survey of the city, glad that it was at least not wet. What afterwards chiefly remained to them was the impression of an old town as quaint almost and as Gothic as old Hamburg, and a new town, handsome and regular, and, in the sudden arrest of some streets, apparently overbuilt. The modern architectural taste was of course Parisian;

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there is no other taste for the Germans; but in the prevailing absence of statues there was a relief from the most oppressive characteristic of the imperial capital which was a positive delight. Some sort of monument to the national victory over France there must have been; but it must have been unusually inoffensive, for it left no record of itself in the travellers' consciousness. They were aware of gardened squares and avenues, bordered by stately dwellings, of dignified civic edifices, and of a vast and splendid railroad station, such as the state builds even in minor European cities, but such as our paternal corporations have not yet given us anywhere in America. They went to the Zoological Garden, where they heard the customary Kalmucks at their public prayers behind a high board fence; and as pilgrims from the most plutrocratic country in the world March insisted that they must pay their devoirs at the shrine of the Rothschilds, whose natal banking-house they revered from the outside.

It was a pity, he said, that the Rothschilds were not on his letter of credit; he would have been willing to pay tribute to the Genius of Finance in the percentage on at least ten pounds. But he consoled himself by reflecting that he did not need the money; and he consoled Mrs. March for their failure to penetrate to the interior of the Rothschilds' birthplace by taking her to see the house where Goethe was born. The public is apparently much more expected there, and in the friendly place they were no doubt much more welcome than they would have been in the Rothschild house. Under that roof they renewed a happy moment of Weimar, which after the lapse of a week seemed already so remote. They wondered, as they mounted the stairs from the basement opening into a clean little court, how Burnamy was getting on, and whether it had yet come to that understanding between him and Agatha, which Mrs. March, at least, had meant to be inevitable. Then they became part of some such sight-seeing retinue as followed the custodian about in the Goethe horse in Weimar, and of an emotion indistinguishable from that of their fellow sight-seers. They could make sure, afterwards, of a personal pleasure in a certain prescient classicism of the house. It somehow recalled both the Goethe houses at Weimar, and it somehow recalled Italy. It is a separate house of two floors above the entrance, which opens to a little court or yard, and gives access by a decent stairway to the living-rooms. The chief of these is a sufficiently dignified parlor or salon, and the most important is the little chamber in the third story where the poet first opened his eyes to the light which he rejoiced in for so long a life, and which, dying, he implored to be with him more. It is as large as his death-chamber in Weimar, where he breathed this prayer, and it looks down into the Italian-looking court, where probably he noticed the world for the first time, and thought it a paved enclosure

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thirty or forty feet square. In the birth-room they keep his puppet theatre, and the place is fairly suggestive of his childhood; later, in his youth, he could look from the parlor windows and see the house where his earliest love dwelt. So much remains of Goethe in the place where he was born, and as such things go, it is not a little. The house is that of a prosperous and well-placed citizen, and speaks of the senatorial quality in his family which Heine says he was fond of recalling, rather than the sartorial quality of the ancestor who, again as Heine says, mended the Republic's breeches.

From the Goethe house, one drives by the Goethe monument to the Romer, the famous town-hall of the old free imperial city which Frankfort once was; and by this route the Marches drove to it, agreeing with their coachman that he was to keep as much in the sun as possible. It was still so cold that when they reached the Romer, and he stopped in a broad blaze of the only means of heating that they have in Frankfort in the summer, the travellers were loath to leave it for the chill interior, where the German emperors were elected for so many centuries. As soon as an emperor was chosen, in the great hall effigied round with the portraits of his predecessors, he hurried out in the balcony, ostensibly to show himself to the people, but really, March contended, to warm up a little in the sun. The balcony was undergoing repairs that day, and the travellers could not go out on it; but under the spell of the historic interest of the beautiful old Gothic place, they lingered in the interior till they were half-torpid with the cold. Then she abandoned to him the joint duty of viewing the cathedral, and hurried to their carriage where she basked in the sun till he came to her. He returned shivering, after a half-hour's absence, and pretended that she had missed the greatest thing in the world, but as he could never be got to say just what she had lost, and under the closest cross-examination could not prove that this cathedral was memorably different from hundreds of other fourteenth-century cathedrals, she remained in a lasting content with the easier part she had chosen. His only definite impression at the cathedral seemed to be confined to a Bostonian of gloomily correct type, whom he had seen doing it with his Baedeker, and not letting an object of interest escape; and his account of her fellow-townsman reconciled Mrs. March more and more to not having gone.

As it was warmer out-doors than in-doors at Frankfort, and as the breadth of sunshine increased with the approach of noon they gave the rest of the morning to driving about and ignorantly enjoying the outside of many Gothic churches, whose names even they did not trouble themselves to learn. They liked the river Main whenever they came to it, because it was so lately from Wurzburg, and because it was so beautiful with its bridges, old and new, and its boats of many patterns. They liked the market-place in front

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of the Romer not only because it was full of fascinating bargains in curious crockery and wooden-ware, but because there was scarcely any shade at all in it. They read from their Baedeker that until the end of the last century no Jew was suffered to enter the marketplace, and they rejoiced to find from all appearances that the Jews had been making up for their unjust exclusion ever since. They were almost as numerous there as the Anglo-Saxons were everywhere else in Frankfort. These, both of the English and American branches of the race, prevailed in the hotel diningroom, where the Marches had a mid-day dinner so good that it almost made amends for the steam-heating and electric-lighting.

As soon as possible after dinner they took the train for Mayence, and ran Rhinewards through a pretty country into what seemed a milder climate. It grew so much milder, apparently, that a lady in their compartment to whom March offered his forward-looking seat, ordered the window down when the guard came, without asking their leave. Then the climate proved much colder, and Mrs. March cowered under her shawls the rest of the way, and would not be entreated to look at the pleasant level landscape near, or the hills far off. He proposed to put up the window as peremptorily as it had been put down, but she stayed him with a hoarse whisper, “She may be another Baroness!” At first he did not know what she meant, then he remembered the lady whose claims to rank her presence had so poorly enforced on the way to Wurzburg, and he perceived that his wife was practising a wise forbearance with their fellow-passengers, and giving her a chance to turn out any sort of highhote she chose. She failed to profit by the opportunity; she remained simply a selfish, disagreeable woman, of no more perceptible distinction than their other fellow-passenger, a little commercial traveller from Vienna (they resolved from his appearance and the lettering on his valise that he was no other), who slept with a sort of passionate intensity all the way to Mayence.

LXX.

The Main widened and swam fuller as they approached the Rhine, and flooded the low-lying fields in-places with a pleasant effect under a wet sunset. When they reached the station in Mayence they drove interminably to the hotel they had chosen on the river-shore, through a city handsomer and cleaner than any American city they could think of, and great part of the way by a street of dwellings nobler, Mrs. March owned, than even Commonwealth Avenue in Boston. It was planted, like that, with double rows of trees, but lacked its green lawns; and at times the sign of Weinhandlung at a corner, betrayed that there was no such restriction against shops as keeps the Boston street so sacred. Otherwise they had to confess once more that any inferior city of Germany is of a more proper and dignified presence than the most parse-proud metropolis in America. To be sure, they said, the German towns had generally a thousand years’ start; but all the same the fact galled them.

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It was very bleak, though very beautiful when they stopped before their hotel on the Rhine, where all their impalpable memories of their visit to Mayence thirty years earlier precipitated themselves into something tangible. There were the reaches of the storied and fabled stream with its boats and bridges and wooded shores and islands; there were the spires and towers and roofs of the town on either bank crowding to the river's brink; and there within-doors was the stately portier in gold braid, and the smiling, bowing, hand-rubbing landlord, alluring them to his most expensive rooms, which so late in the season he would fain have had them take. But in a little elevator, that mounted slowly, very slowly, in the curve of the stairs, they went higher to something lower, and the landlord retired baked, and left them to the ministrations of the serving-men who arrived with their large and small baggage. All these retired in turn when they asked to have a fire lighted in the stove, without which Mrs. March would never have taken the fine stately rooms, and sent back a pretty young girl to do it. She came indignant, not because she had come lugging a heavy hod of coal and a great arm-load of wood, but because her sense of fitness was outraged by the strange demand.

"What!" she cried. "A fire in September!"

"Yes," March returned, inspired to miraculous aptness in his German by the exigency, "yes, if September is cold."

The girl looked at him, and then, either because she thought him mad, or liked him merry, burst into a loud laugh, and kindled the fire without a word more.

He lighted all the reluctant gas-jets in the vast gilt chandelier, and in less than half an hour the temperature of the place rose to at least sixty-five Fahrenheit, with every promise of going higher. Mrs. March made herself comfortable in a deep chair before the stove, and said she would have her supper there; and she bade him send her just such a supper of chicken and honey and tea as they had all had in Mayence when they supped in her aunt's parlor there all those years ago. He wished to compute the years, but she drove him out with an imploring cry, and he went down to a very gusty dining-room on the ground-floor, where he found himself alone with a young English couple and their little boy. They were friendly, intelligent people, and would have been conversable, apparently, but for the terrible cold of the husband, which he said he had contracted at the manoeuvres in Hombourg. March said he was going to Holland, and the Englishman was doubtful of the warmth which March expected to find there. He seemed to be suffering from a suspense of faith as to the warmth anywhere; from time to time the door of the dining-room self-opened in a silent, ghostly fashion into the court without, and let in a chilling draught about the legs of all, till the little English boy got down from his place and shut it.

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He alone continued cheerful, for March's spirits certainly did not rise when some mumbling Americans came in and muttered over their meat at another table. He hated to own it, but he had to own that wherever he had met the two branches of the Anglo-Saxon race together in Europe, the elder had shown, by a superior chirpiness, to the disadvantage of the younger. The cast clothes of the old-fashioned British offishness seemed to have fallen to the American travellers who were trying to be correct and exemplary; and he would almost rather have had back the old-style bragging Americans whom he no longer saw. He asked of an agreeable fellow-countryman whom he found later in the reading-room, what had become of these; and this compatriot said he had travelled with one only the day before, who had posed before their whole compartment in his scorn of the German landscape, the German weather, the German government, the German railway management, and then turned out an American of German birth! March found his wife in great bodily comfort when he went back to her, but in trouble of mind about a clock which she had discovered standing on the lacquered iron top of the stove. It was a French clock, of architectural pretensions, in the taste of the first Empire, and it looked as if it had not been going since Napoleon occupied Mayence early in the century. But Mrs. March now had it sorely on her conscience where, in its danger from the heat of the stove, it rested with the weight of the Pantheon, whose classic form it recalled. She wondered that no one had noticed it before the fire was kindled, and she required her husband to remove it at once from the top of the stove to the mantel under the mirror, which was the natural habitat of such a clock. He said nothing could be simpler, but when he lifted it, it began to fall all apart, like a clock in the house of the Hoodoo. Its marble base dropped-off; its pillars tottered; its pediment swayed to one side. While Mrs. March lamented her hard fate, and implored him to hurry it together before any one came, he contrived to reconstruct it in its new place. Then they both breathed freer, and returned to sit down before the stove. But at the same moment they both saw, ineffaceably outlined on the lacquered top, the basal form of the clock. The chambermaid would see it in the morning; she would notice the removal of the clock, and would make a merit of reporting its ruin by the heat to the landlord, and in the end they would be mulcted of its value. Rather than suffer this wrong they agreed to restore it to its place, and, let it go to destruction upon its own terms. March painfully rebuilt it where he had found it, and they went to bed with a bad conscience to worse dreams.

He remembered, before he slept, the hour of his youth when he was in Mayence before, and was so care free that he had heard with impersonal joy two young American voices speaking English in the street under his window. One of them broke from the common talk with a gay burlesque of pathos in the line:

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"Oh heavens! she cried, my Heeding country save!"

and then with a laughing good-night these unseen, unknown spirits of youth parted and departed. Who were they, and in what different places, with what cares or ills, had their joyous voices grown old, or fallen silent for evermore? It was a moonlight night, March remembered, and he remembered how he wished he were out in it with those merry fellows.

He nursed the memory and the wonder in his dreaming thought, and he woke early to other voices under his window. But now the voices, though young, were many and were German, and the march of feet and the stamp of hooves kept time with their singing. He drew his curtain and saw the street filled with broken squads of men, some afoot and some on horseback, some in uniform and some in civil dress with students' caps, loosely straggling on and roaring forth that song whose words he could not make out. At breakfast he asked the waiter what it all meant, and he said that these were conscripts whose service had expired with the late manoeuvres, and who were now going home. He promised March a translation of the song, but he never gave it; and perhaps the sense of their joyful home-going remained the more poetic with him because its utterance remained inarticulate.

March spent the rainy Sunday, on which they had fallen, in wandering about the little city alone. His wife said she was tired and would sit by the fire, and hear about Mayence when he came in. He went to the cathedral, which has its renown for beauty and antiquity, and he there added to his stock of useful information the fact that the people of Mayence seemed very Catholic and very devout. They proved it by preferring to any of the divine old Gothic shrines in the cathedral, an ugly baroque altar, which was everywhere hung about with votive offerings. A fashionably dressed young man and young girl sprinkled themselves with holy water as reverently as if they had been old and ragged. Some tourists strolled up and down the aisles with their red guide-books, and studied the objects of interest. A resplendent beadle in a cocked hat, and with along staff of authority posed before his own ecclesiastical consciousness in blue and silver. At the high altar a priest was saying mass, and March wondered whether his consciousness was as wholly ecclesiastical as the beadle's, or whether somewhere in it he felt the historical majesty, the long human consecration of the place.

He wandered at random in the town through streets German and quaint and old, and streets French and fine and new, and got back to the river, which he crossed on one of the several handsome bridges. The rough river looked chill under a sky of windy clouds, and he felt out of season, both as to the summer travel, and as to the journey he was making. The summer of life as well as the summer of that year was past. Better return to his own radiator in his flat on Stuyvesant Square; to the great ugly brutal town which, if it was not home to him, was as much home to him as to any one. A longing for New York welled up his heart, which was perhaps really a wish to be at work again. He

said he must keep this from his wife, who seemed not very well, and whom he must try to cheer up when he returned to the hotel.

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But they had not a very joyous afternoon, and the evening was no gayer. They said that if they had not ordered their letters sent to Dusseldorf they believed they should push on to Holland without stopping; and March would have liked to ask, Why not push on to America? But he forbore, and he was afterwards glad that he had done so.

In the morning their spirits rose with the sun, though the sun got up behind clouds as usual; and they were further animated by the imposition which the landlord practised upon them. After a distinct and repeated agreement as to the price of their rooms he charged them twice as much, and then made a merit of throwing off two marks out of the twenty he had plundered them of.

“Now I see,” said Mrs. March, on their way down to the boat, “how fortunate it was that we baked his clock. You may laugh, but I believe we were the instruments of justice.”

“Do you suppose that clock was never baked before?” asked her husband. “The landlord has his own arrangement with justice. When he overcharges his parting guests he says to his conscience, Well, they baked my clock.”

LXXI.

The morning was raw, but it was something not to have it rainy; and the clouds that hung upon the hills and hid their tops were at least as fine as the long board signs advertising chocolate on the river banks. The smoke rising from the chimneys of the manufactories of Mayence was not so bad, either, when one got them in the distance a little; and March liked the way the river swam to the stems of the trees on the low grassy shores. It was like the Mississippi between St. Louis and Cairo in that, and it was yellow and thick, like the Mississippi, though he thought he remembered it blue and clear. A friendly German, of those who began to come aboard more and more at all the landings after leaving Mayence, assured him that he was right, and that the Rhine was unusually turbid from the unusual rains. March had his own belief that whatever the color of the Rhine might be the rains were not unusual, but he could not gainsay the friendly German.

Most of the passengers at starting were English and American; but they showed no prescience of the international affinition which has since realized itself, in their behavior toward one another. They held silently apart, and mingled only in the effect of one young man who kept the Marches in perpetual question whether he was a Bostonian or an Englishman. His look was Bostonian, but his accent was English; and was he a Bostonian who had been in England long enough to get the accent, or was he an Englishman who had been in Boston long enough to get the look? He wore a belated straw hat, and a thin sack-coat; and in the rush of the boat through the raw air they fancied him very cold, and longed to offer him one of their superabundant wraps. At times March actually lifted a shawl from his knees, feeling sure that the stranger

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was English and that he might make so bold with him; then at some glacial glint in the young man's eye, or at some petrific expression of his delicate face, he felt that he was a Bostonian, and lost courage and let the shawl sink again. March tried to forget him in the wonder of seeing the Germans begin to eat and drink, as soon as they came on boards either from the baskets they had brought with them, or from the boat's provision. But he prevailed, with his smile that was like a sneer, through all the events of the voyage; and took March's mind off the scenery with a sudden wrench when he came unexpectedly into view after a momentary disappearance. At the table d'hote, which was served when the landscape began to be less interesting, the guests were expected to hand their plates across the table to the stewards but to keep their knives and forks throughout the different courses, and at each of these partial changes March felt the young man's chilly eyes upon him, inculpating him for the semi-civilization of the management. At such times he knew that he was a Bostonian.

The weather cleared, as they descended the river, and under a sky at last cloudless, the Marches had moments of swift reversion to their former Rhine journey, when they were young and the purple light of love mantled the vineyarded hills along the shore, and flushed the castled steeps. The scene had lost nothing of the beauty they dimly remembered; there were certain features of it which seemed even fairer and grander than they remembered. The town of Bingen, where everybody who knows the poem was more or less born, was beautiful in spite of its factory chimneys, though there were no compensating castles near it; and the castles seemed as good as those of the theatre. Here and there some of them had been restored and were occupied, probably by robber barons who had gone into trade. Others were still ruinous, and there was now and then such a mere gray snag that March, at sight of it, involuntarily put his tongue to the broken tooth which he was keeping for the skill of the first American dentist.

For natural sublimity the Rhine scenery, as they recognized once more, does not compare with the Hudson scenery; and they recalled one point on the American river where the Central Road tunnels a jutting cliff, which might very well pass for the rock of the Loreley, where she dreams

> 'Solo sitting by the shores of old romance'

and the trains run in and out under her knees unheeded. "Still, still you know," March argued, "this is the Loreley on the Rhine, and not the Loreley on the Hudson; and I suppose that makes all the difference. Besides, the Rhine doesn't set up to be sublime; it only means to be storied and dreamy and romantic and it does it. And then we have really got no Mouse Tower; we might build one, to be sure."

“Well, we have got no denkmal, either,” said his wife, meaning the national monument to the German reconquest of the Rhine, which they had just passed, “and that is something in our favor.”

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“It was too far off for us to see how ugly it was,” he returned.

“The denkmal at Coblenz was so near that the bronze Emperor almost rode aboard the boat.”

He could not answer such a piece of logic as that. He yielded, and began to praise the orcharded levels which now replaced the vine-purpled slopes of the upper river. He said they put him in mind of orchards that he had known in his boyhood; and they, agreed that the supreme charm of travel, after all, was not in seeing something new and strange, but in finding something familiar and dear in the heart of the strangeness.

At Cologne they found this in the tumult of getting ashore with their baggage and driving from the steamboat landing to the railroad station, where they were to get their train for Dusseldorf an hour later. The station swarmed with travellers eating and drinking and smoking; but they escaped from it for a precious half of their golden hour, and gave the time to the great cathedral, which was built, a thousand years ago, just round the corner from the station, and is therefore very handy to it. Since they saw the cathedral last it had been finished, and now under a cloudless evening sky, it soared and swept upward like a pale flame. Within it was a bit over-clean, a bit bare, but without it was one of the great memories of the race, the record of a faith which wrought miracles of beauty, at least, if not piety.

The train gave the Marches another, and last, view of it as they slowly drew out of the city, and began to run through a level country walled with far-off hills; past fields of buckwheat showing their stems like coral under their black tops; past peasant houses changing their wonted shape to taller and narrower forms; past sluggish streams from which the mist rose and hung over the meadows, under a red sunset, glassy clear till the manifold factory chimneys of Dusseldorf stained it with their dun smoke.

This industrial greeting seemed odd from the town where Heinrich Heine was born; but when they had eaten their supper in the capital little hotel they found there, and went out for a stroll, they found nothing to remind them of the factories, and much to make them think of the poet. The moon, beautiful and perfect as a stage moon, came up over the shoulder of a church as they passed down a long street which they had all to themselves. Everybody seemed to have gone to bed, but at a certain corner a girl opened a window above them, and looked out at the moon.

When they returned to their hotel they found a highwalled garden facing it, full of black depths of foliage. In the night March woke and saw the moon standing over the garden, and silvering its leafy tops. This was really as it should be in the town where the idolized poet of his youth was born; the poet whom of all others he had adored, and who had once seemed like a living friend; who had been witness of his first love, and had helped him to speak it.

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His wife used to laugh at him for his Heine-worship in those days; but she had since come to share it, and she, even more than he, had insisted upon this pilgrimage. He thought long thoughts of the past, as he looked into the garden across the way, with an ache for his perished self and the dead companionship of his youth, all ghosts together in the silvered shadow. The trees shuddered in the night breeze, and its chill penetrated to him where he stood.

His wife called to him from her room, “What are you doing?”

“Oh, sentimentalizing,” he answered boldly.

“Well, you will be sick,” she said, and he crept back into bed again.

They had sat up late, talking in a glad excitement. But he woke early, as an elderly man is apt to do after broken slumbers, and left his wife still sleeping. He was not so eager for the poetic interests of the town as he had been the night before; he even deferred his curiosity for Heine’s birth-house to the instructive conference which he had with his waiter at breakfast. After all, was not it more important to know something of the actual life of a simple common class of men than to indulge a faded fancy for the memory of a genius, which no amount of associations could feed again to its former bloom? The waiter said he was a Nuremberger, and had learned English in London where he had served a year for nothing. Afterwards, when he could speak three languages he got a pound a week, which seemed low for so many, though not so low as the one mark a day which he now received in Dusseldorf; in Berlin he paid the hotel two marks a day. March confided to him his secret trouble as to tips, and they tried vainly to enlighten each other as to what a just tip was.

He went to his banker’s, and when he came back he found his wife with her breakfast eaten, and so eager for the exploration of Heine’s birthplace that she heard with indifference of his failure to get any letters. It was too soon to expect them, she said, and then she showed him her plan, which she had been working out ever since she woke. It contained every place which Heine had mentioned, and she was determined not one should escape them. She examined him sharply upon his condition, accusing him of having taken cold when he got up in the night, and acquitting him with difficulty. She herself was perfectly well, but a little fagged, and they must have a carriage.

They set out in a lordly two-spanner, which took up half the little Bolkerstrasse where Heine was born, when they stopped across the way from his birthhouse, so that she might first take it all in from the outside before they entered it. It is a simple street, and not the cleanest of the streets in a town where most of them are rather dirty. Below the houses are shops, and the first story of Heine’s house is a butcher shop, with sides of

pork and mutton hanging in the windows; above, where the Heine family must once have lived, a gold-beater and a frame-maker displayed their signs.

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But did the Heine family really once live there? The house looked so fresh and new that in spite of the tablet in its front affirming it the poet's birthplace, they doubted; and they were not reassured by the people who half halted as they passed, and stared at the strangers, so anomalously interested in the place. They dismounted, and crossed to the butcher shop where the provision man corroborated the tablet, but could not understand their wish to go up stairs. He did not try to prevent them, however, and they climbed to the first floor above, where a placard on the door declared it private and implored them not to knock. Was this the outcome of the inmate's despair from the intrusion of other pilgrims who had wised to see the Heine dwelling-rooms? They durst not knock and ask so much, and they sadly descended to the ground-floor, where they found a butcher boy of much greater apparent intelligence than the butcher himself, who told them that the building in front was as new as it looked, and the house where Heine was really born was the old house in the rear. He showed them this house, across a little court patched with mangy grass and lilac-bushes; and when they wished to visit it he led the way. The place was strewn both underfoot and overhead with feathers; it had once been all a garden out to the street, the boy said, but from these feathers, as well as the odor which prevailed, and the anxious behavior of a few hens left in the high coop at one side, it was plain that what remained of the garden was now a chicken slaughteryard. There was one well-grown tree, and the boy said it was of the poet's time; but when he let them into the house, he became vague as to the room where Heine was born; it was certain only that it was somewhere upstairs and that it could not be seen. The room where they stood was the frame-maker's shop, and they bought of him a small frame for a memorial. They bought of the butcher's boy, not so commercially, a branch of lilac; and they came away, thinking how much amused Heine himself would have been with their visit; how sadly, how merrily he would have mocked at their effort to revere his birthplace.

They were too old if not too wise to be daunted by their defeat, and they drove next to the old court garden beside the Rhine where the poet says he used to play with the little Veronika, and probably did not. At any rate, the garden is gone; the Schloss was burned down long ago; and nothing remains but a detached tower in which the good Elector Jan Wilhelm, of Heine's time, amused himself with his many mechanical inventions. The tower seemed to be in process of demolition, but an intelligent workman who came down out of it, was interested in the strangers' curiosity, and directed them to a place behind the Historical Museum where they could find a bit of the old garden. It consisted of two or three low trees, and under them the statue of the Elector by which Heine sat with the little Veronika, if he really

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did. Afresh gale blowing through the trees stirred the bushes that backed the statue, but not the laurel wreathing the Elector's head, and meeting in a neat point over his forehead. The laurel wreath is stone, like the rest of the Elector, who stands there smirking in marble ermine and armor, and resting his baton on the nose of a very small lion, who, in the exigencies of foreshortening, obligingly goes to nothing but a tail under the Elector's robe.

This was a prince who loved himself in effigy so much that he raised an equestrian statue to his own renown in the market-place, though he modestly refused the credit of it, and ascribed its erection to the affection of his subjects. You see him therein a full-bottomed wig, mounted on a rampant charger with a tail as big round as a barrel, and heavy enough to keep him from coming down on his fore legs as long as he likes to hold them up. It was to this horse's back that Heine clambered when a small boy, to see the French take formal possession of Dusseldorf; and he clung to the waist of the bronze Elector, who had just abdicated, while the burgomaster made a long speech, from the balcony of the Rathhaus, and the Electoral arms were taken down from its doorway.

The Rathhaus is a salad-dressing of German gothic and French rococo as to its architectural style, and is charming in its way, but the Marches were in the market-place for the sake of that moment of Heine's boyhood. They felt that he might have been the boy who stopped as he ran before them, and smacked the stomach of a large pumpkin lying at the feet of an old market-woman, and then dashed away before she could frame a protest against the indignity. From this incident they philosophized that the boys of Dusseldorf are as mischievous at the end of the century as they were at the beginning; and they felt the fascination that such a bounteous, unkempt old marketplace must have for the boys of any period. There were magnificent vegetables of all sorts in it, and if the fruits were meagre that was the fault of the rainy summer, perhaps. The market-place was very dirty, and so was the narrow street leading down from it to the Rhine, which ran swift as a mountain torrent along a slatternly quay. A bridge of boats crossing the stream shook in the rapid current, and a long procession of market carts passed slowly over, while a cluster of scows waited in picturesque patience for the draw to open.

They saw what a beautiful town that was for a boy to grow up in, and how many privileges it offered, how many dangers, how many chances for hairbreadth escapes. They chose that Heine must often have rushed shrieking joyfully down that foul alley to the Rhine with other boys; and they easily found a leaf-strewn stretch of the sluggish Dussel, in the Public Garden, where his playmate, the little Wilhelm, lost his life and saved the kitten's. They were not so sure of the avenue through which the poet saw the Emperor Napoleon come riding on his small white

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horse when he took possession of the Elector's dominions. But if it was that where the statue of the Kaiser Wilhelm I. comes riding on a horse led by two Victories, both poet and hero are avenged there on the accomplished fact. Defeated and humiliated France triumphs in the badness of that foolish denkmal (one of the worst in all denkmal-ridden Germany), and the memory of the singer whom the Hohenzollern family pride forbids honor in his native place, is immortal in its presence.

On the way back to their hotel, March made some reflections upon the open neglect, throughout Germany, of the greatest German lyrist, by which the poet might have profited if he had been present. He contended that it was not altogether an effect of Hohenzollern pride, which could not suffer a joke or two from the arch-humorist; but that Heine had said things of Germany herself which Germans might well have found unpardonable. He concluded that it would not do to be perfectly frank with one's own country. Though, to be sure, there would always be the question whether the Jew-born Heine had even a step-fatherland in the Germany he loved so tenderly and mocked so pitilessly. He had to own that if he were a negro poet he would not feel bound to measure terms in speaking of America, and he would not feel that his fame was in her keeping.

Upon the whole he blamed Heine less than Germany and he accused her of taking a shabby revenge, in trying to forget him; in the heat of his resentment that there should be no record of Heine in the city where he was born, March came near ignoring himself the fact that the poet Freiligrath was also born there. As for the famous Dusseldorf school of painting, which once filled the world with the worst art, he rejoiced that it was now so dead, and he grudged the glance which the beauty of the new Art Academy extorted from him. It is in the French taste, and is so far a monument to the continuance in one sort of that French supremacy, of which in another sort another denkmal celebrates the overthrow. Dusseldorf is not content with the denkmal of the Kaiser on horseback, with the two Victories for grooms; there is a second, which the Marches found when they strolled out again late in the afternoon. It is in the lovely park which lies in the heart of the city, and they felt in its presence the only emotion of sympathy which the many patriotic monuments of Germany awakened in them. It had dignity and repose, which these never had elsewhere; but it was perhaps not so much for the dying warrior and the pitying lion of the sculpture that their hearts were moved as for the gentle and mournful humanity of the inscription, which dropped into equivalent English verse in March's note-book:

> Fame was enough for the Victors, and glory and verdurous laurel;
> Tears by their mothers wept founded this image of stone.

To this they could forgive the vaunting record, on the reverse, of the German soldiers who died heroes in the war with France, the war with Austria, and even the war with poor little Denmark!

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The morning had been bright and warm, and it was just that the afternoon should be dim and cold, with a pale sun looking through a September mist, which seemed to deepen the seclusion and silence of the forest reaches; for the park was really a forest of the German sort, as parks are apt to be in Germany. But it was beautiful, and they strayed through it, and sometimes sat down on the benches in its damp shadows, and said how much seemed to be done in Germany for the people's comfort and pleasure. In what was their own explicitly, as well as what was tacitly theirs, they were not so restricted as we were at home, and especially the children seemed made fondly and lovingly free of all public things. The Marches met troops of them in the forest, as they strolled slowly back by the winding Dussel to the gardened avenue leading to the park, and they found them everywhere gay and joyful. But their elders seemed subdued, and were silent. The strangers heard no sound of laughter in the streets of Dusseldorf, and they saw no smiling except on the part of a very old couple, whose meeting they witnessed and who grinned and cackled at each other like two children as they shook hands. Perhaps they were indeed children of that sad second childhood which one would rather not blossom back into.

In America, life is yet a joke with us, even when it is grotesque and shameful, as it so often is; for we think we can make it right when we choose. But there is no joking in Germany, between the first and second childhoods, unless behind closed doors. Even there, people do not joke above their breath about kings and emperors. If they joke about them in print, they take out their laugh in jail, for the press laws are severely enforced, and the prisons are full of able editors, serious as well as comic. Lese-majesty is a crime that searches sinners out in every walk of life, and it is said that in family jars a husband sometimes has the last word of his wife by accusing her of blaspheming the sovereign, and so having her silenced for three months at least behind penitential bars.

"Think," said March, "how simply I could adjust any differences of opinion between us in Dusseldorf."

"Don't!" his wife implored with a burst of feeling which surprised him. "I want to go home!"

They had been talking over their day, and planning their journey to Holland for the morrow, when it came to this outburst from her in the last half-hour before bed which they sat prolonging beside their stove.

"What! And not go to Holland? What is to become of my after-cure?"

"Oh, it's too late for that, now. We've used up the month running about, and tiring ourselves to death. I should like to rest a week—to get into my berth on the Norumbia and rest!"

“I guess the September gales would have something to say about that.”

“I would risk the September gales.”

LXXII.

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In the morning March came home from his bankers gay with the day's provisional sunshine in his heart, and joyously expectant of his wife's pleasure in the letters he was bringing. There was one from each of their children, and there was one from Fulkerson, which March opened and read on the street, so as to intercept any unpleasant news there might be in them; there were two letters for Mrs. March which he knew without opening were from Miss Triscoe and Mrs. Adding respectively; Mrs. Adding's, from the postmarks, seemed to have been following them about for some time.

"They're all right at home," he said. "Do see what those people have been doing."

"I believe," she said, taking a knife from the breakfast tray beside her bed to cut the envelopes, "that you've really cared more about them all along than I have."

"No, I've only been anxious to be done with them."

She got the letters open, and holding one of them up in each hand she read them impartially and simultaneously; then she flung them both down, and turned her face into her pillow with an impulse of her inalienable girlishness. "Well, it is too silly."

March felt authorized to take them up and read them consecutively; when he had done, so he did not differ from his wife. In one case, Agatha had written to her dear Mrs. March that she and Burnamy had just that evening become engaged; Mrs. Adding, on her part owned a farther step, and announced her marriage to Mr. Kenby. Following immemorial usage in such matters Kenby had added a postscript affirming his happiness in unsparing terms, and in Agatha's letter there was an avowal of like effect from Burnamy. Agatha hinted her belief that her father would soon come to regard Burnamy as she did; and Mrs. Adding professed a certain humiliation in having realized that, after all her misgiving about him, Rose seemed rather relieved than otherwise, as if he were glad to have her off his hands.

"Well," said March, "with these troublesome affairs settled, I don't see what there is to keep us in Europe any longer, unless it's the consensus of opinion in Tom, Bella, and Fulkerson, that we ought to stay the winter."

"Stay the winter!" Mrs. March rose from her pillow, and clutched the home letters to her from the abeyance in which they had fallen on the coverlet while she was dealing with the others. "What do you mean?"

"It seems to have been prompted by a hint you let drop, which Tom has passed to Bella and Fulkerson."

"Oh, but that was before we left Carlsbad!" she protested, while she devoured the letters with her eyes, and continued to denounce the absurdity of the writers. Her son and daughter both urged that now their father and mother were over there, they had better

stay as long as they enjoyed it, and that they certainly ought not to come home without going to Italy, where they had first met, and revisiting the places which they had seen together when they

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were young engaged people: without that their silver wedding journey would not be complete. Her son said that everything was going well with 'Every Other Week', and both himself and Mr. Fulkerson thought his father ought to spend the winter in Italy, and get a thorough rest. "Make a job of it, March," Fulkerson wrote, "and have a Sabbatical year while you're at it. You may not get another."

"Well, I can tell them," said Mrs. March indignantly, "we shall not do anything of the kind."

"Then you didn't mean it?"

"Mean it!" She stopped herself with a look at her husband, and asked gently, "Do you want to stay?"

"Well, I don't know," he answered vaguely. The fact was, he was sick of travel and of leisure; he was longing to be at home and at work again. But if there was to be any self-sacrifice which could be had, as it were, at a bargain; which could be fairly divided between them, and leave him the self and her the sacrifice, he was too experienced a husband not to see the advantage of it, or to refuse the merit. "I thought you wished to stay."

"Yes," she sighed, "I did. It has been very, very pleasant, and, if anything, I have over-enjoyed myself. We have gone romping through it like two young people, haven't we?"

"You have," he assented. "I have always felt the weight of my years in getting the baggage registered; they have made the baggage weigh more every time."

"And I've forgotten mine. Yes, I have. But the years haven't forgotten me, Basil, and now I remember them. I'm tired. It doesn't seem as if I could ever get up. But I dare say it's only a mood; it may be only a cold; and if you wish to stay, why—we will think it over."

"No, we won't, my dear," he said, with a generous shame for his hypocrisy if not with a pure generosity. "I've got all the good out of it that there was in it, for me, and I shouldn't go home any better six months hence than I should now. Italy will keep for another time, and so, for the matter of that, will Holland."

"No, no!" she interposed. "We won't give up Holland, whatever we do. I couldn't go home feeling that I had kept you out of your after-cure; and when we get there, no doubt the sea air will bring me up so that I shall want to go to Italy, too, again. Though it seems so far off, now! But go and see when the afternoon train for the Hague leaves, and I shall be ready. My mind's quite made up on that point."

“What a bundle of energy!” said her husband laughing down at her.

He went and asked about the train to the Hague, but only to satisfy a superficial conscience; for now he knew that they were both of one mind about going home. He also looked up the trains for London, and found that they could get there by way of Ostend in fourteen hours. Then he went back to the banker’s, and with the help of the Paris-New York Chronicle which he found there, he got the sailings of the first steamers home. After that he strolled about the streets for a last impression of Dusseldorf, but it was rather blurred by the constantly recurring pull of his thoughts toward America, and he ended by turning abruptly at a certain corner, and going to his hotel.

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He found his wife dressed, but fallen again on her bed, beside which her breakfast stood still untasted; her smile responded wanly to his brightness. “I’m not well, my dear,” she said. “I don’t believe I could get off to the Hague this afternoon.”

“Could you to Liverpool?” he returned.

“To Liverpool?” she gasped. “What do you mean?”

“Merely that the Cupania is sailing on the twentieth, and I’ve telegraphed to know if we can get a room. I’m afraid it won’t be a good one, but she’s the first boat out, and—”

“No, indeed, we won’t go to Liverpool, and we will never go home till you’ve had your after-cure in Holland.” She was very firm in this, but she added, “We will stay another night, here, and go to the Hague tomorrow. Sit down, and let us talk it over. Where were we?”

She lay down on the sofa, and he put a shawl over her. “We were just starting for Liverpool.”

“No, no we weren’t! Don’t say such things, dearest! I want you to help me sum it all, up. You think it’s been a success, don’t you?”

“As a cure?”

“No, as a silver wedding journey?”

“Perfectly howling.”

“I do think we’ve had a good time. I never expected to enjoy myself so much again in the world. I didn’t suppose I should ever take so much interest in anything. It shows that when we choose to get out of our rut we shall always find life as fresh and delightful as ever. There is nothing to prevent our coming any year, now that Tom’s shown himself so capable, and having another silver wedding journey. I don’t like to think of it’s being confined to Germany quite.”

“Oh, I don’t know. We can always talk of it as our German-Silver Wedding Journey.”

“That’s true. But nobody would understand nowadays what you meant by German-silver; it’s perfectly gone out. How ugly it was! A sort of greasy yellowish stuff, always getting worn through; I believe it was made worn through. Aunt Mary had a castor of it, that I can remember when I was a child; it went into the kitchen long before I grew up. Would a joke like that console you for the loss of Italy?”

“It would go far to do it. And as a German-Silver Wedding Journey, it’s certainly been very complete.”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s given us a representative variety of German cities. First we had Hamburg, you know, a great modern commercial centre.”

“Yes! Go on!”

“Then we had Leipsic, the academic.”

“Yes!”

“Then Carlsbad, the supreme type of a German health resort; then Nuremberg, the mediaeval; then Anspach, the extinct princely capital; then Wurzburg, the ecclesiastical rococo; then Weimar, for the literature of a great epoch; then imperial Berlin; then Frankfort, the memory of the old free city; then Dusseldorf, the centre of the most poignant personal interest in the world—I don’t see how we could have done better, if we’d planned it all, and not acted from successive impulses.”

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“It’s been grand; it’s been perfect! As German-Silver Wedding Journey it’s perfect—it seems as if it had been ordered! But I will never let you give up Holland! No, we will go this afternoon, and when I get to Schevleningen, I’ll go to bed, and stay there, till you’ve completed your after-cure.”

“Do you think that will be wildly gay for the convalescent?”

She suddenly began to cry. “Oh, dearest, what shall we do? I feel perfectly broken down. I’m afraid I’m going to be sick—and away from home! How could you ever let me overdo, so?” She put her handkerchief to her eyes, and turned her face into the sofa pillow.

This was rather hard upon him, whom her vivid energy and inextinguishable interest had not permitted a moment’s respite from pleasure since they left Carlsbad. But he had been married, too long not to understand that her blame of him was only a form of self-reproach for her own self-forgetfulness. She had not remembered that she was no longer young till she had come to what he saw was a nervous collapse. The fact had its pathos and its poetry which no one could have felt more keenly than he. If it also had its inconvenience and its danger he realized these too.

“Isabel,” he said, “we are going home.”

“Very well, then it will be your doing.”

“Quite. Do you think you could stand it as far as Cologne? We get the sleeping-car there, and you can lie down the rest of the way to Ostend.”

“This afternoon? Why I’m perfectly strong; it’s merely my nerves that are gone.” She sat up, and wiped her eyes. “But Basil! If you’re doing this for me—”

“I’m doing it for myself,” said March, as he went out of the room.

She stood the journey perfectly well, and in the passage to Dover she suffered so little from the rough weather that she was an example to many robust matrons who filled the ladies’ cabin with the noise of their anguish during the night. She would have insisted upon taking the first train up to London, if March had not represented that this would not expedite the sailing of the Cupania, and that she might as well stay the forenoon at the convenient railway hotel, and rest. It was not quite his ideal of repose that the first people they saw in the coffee-room when they went to breakfast should be Kenby and Rose Adding, who were having their tea and toast and eggs together in the greatest apparent good-fellowship. He saw his wife shrink back involuntarily from the encounter, but this was only to gather force for it; and the next moment she was upon them in all the joy of the surprise. Then March allowed himself to be as glad as the others both seemed, and he shook hands with Kenby while his wife kissed Rose; and they all talked

at once. In the confusion of tongues it was presently intelligible that Mrs. Kenby was going to be down in a few minutes; and Kenby took March into his confidence with a smile which was, almost a wink in explaining that he knew

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how it was with the ladies. He said that Rose and he usually got down to breakfast first, and when he had listened inattentively to Mrs. March's apology for being on her way home, he told her that she was lucky not to have gone to Schevleningen, where she and March would have frozen to death. He said that they were going to spend September at a little place on the English coast, near by, where he had been the day before with Rose to look at lodgings, and where you could bathe all through the month. He was not surprised that the Marches were going home, and said, Well, that was their original plan, wasn't it?

Mrs. Kenby, appearing upon this, pretended to know better, after the outburst of joyful greeting with the Marches; and intelligently reminded Kenby that he knew the Marches had intended to pass the winter in Paris. She was looking extremely pretty, but she wished only to make them see how well Rose was looking, and she put her arm round his shoulders as she spoke, Schevleningen had done wonders for him, but it was fearfully cold there, and now they were expecting everything from Westgate, where she advised March to come, too, for his after-cure: she recollected in time to say, She forgot they were on their way home. She added that she did not know when she should return; she was merely a passenger, now; she left everything to the men of the family. She had, in fact, the air of having thrown off every responsibility, but in supremacy, not submission. She was always ordering Kenby about; she sent him for her handkerchief, and her rings which she had left either in the tray of her trunk, or on the pin-cushion, or on the wash-stand or somewhere, and forbade him to come back without them. He asked for her keys, and then with a joyful scream she owned that she had left the door-key in the door and the whole bunch of trunk-keys in her trunk; and Kenby treated it all as the greatest joke; Rose, too, seemed to think that Kenby would make everything come right, and he had lost that look of anxiety which he used to have; at the most he showed a friendly sympathy for Kenby, for whose sake he seemed mortified at her. He was unable to regard his mother as the delightful joke which she appeared to Kenby, but that was merely temperamental; and he was never distressed except when she behaved with unreasonable caprice at Kenby's cost.

As for Kenby himself he betrayed no dissatisfaction with his fate to March. He perhaps no longer regarded his wife as that strong character which he had sometimes wearied March by celebrating; but she was still the most brilliant intelligence, and her charm seemed only to have grown with his perception of its wilful limitations. He did not want to talk about her so much; he wanted rather to talk about Rose, his health, his education, his nature, and what was best to do for him. The two were on terms of a confidence and affection which perpetually amused Mrs. Kenby, but which left the sympathetic witness nothing to desire in their relation.

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They all came to the train when the Marches started up to London, and stood waving to them as they pulled out of the station. “Well, I can’t see but that’s all right,” he said as he sank back in his seat with a sigh of relief. “I never supposed we should get out of their marriage half so well, and I don’t feel that you quite made the match either, my dear.”

She was forced to agree with him that the Kenbys seemed happy together, and that there was nothing to fear for Rose in their happiness. He would be as tenderly cared for by Kenby as he could have been by his mother, and far more judiciously. She owned that she had trembled for him till she had seen them all together; and now she should never tremble again.

“Well?” March prompted, at a certain inconclusiveness in her tone rather than her words.

“Well, you can see that it, isn’t ideal.”

“Why isn’t it ideal? I suppose you think that the marriage of Burnamy and Agatha Triscoe will be ideal, with their ignorances and inexperiences and illusions.”

“Yes! It’s the illusions: no marriage can be perfect without them, and at their age the Kenbys can’t have them.”

“Kenby is a solid mass of illusion. And I believe that people can go and get as many new illusions as they want, whenever they’ve lost their old ones.”

“Yes, but the new illusions won’t wear so well; and in marriage you want illusions that will last. No; you needn’t talk to me. It’s all very well, but it isn’t ideal.”

March laughed. “Ideal! What is ideal?”

“Going home!” she said with such passion that he had not the heart to point out that they were merely returning to their old duties, cares and pains, with the worn-out illusion that these would be altogether different when they took them up again.

LXXIII.

In fulfilment of another ideal Mrs. March took straightway to her berth when she got on board the Cupania, and to her husband’s admiration she remained there till the day before they reached New York. Her theory was that the complete rest would do more than anything else to calm her shaken nerves; and she did not admit into her calculations the chances of adverse weather which March would not suggest as probable in the last week in September. The event justified her unconscious faith. The ship’s run was of unparalled swiftness, even for the Cupania, and of unparalled

smoothness. For days the sea was as sleek as oil; the racks were never on the tables once; the voyage was of the sort which those who make it no more believe in at the time than those whom they afterwards weary in boasting of it.

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The ship was very full, but Mrs. March did not show the slightest curiosity to know who her fellow-passengers were. She said that she wished to be let perfectly alone, even by her own emotions, and for this reason she forbade March to bring her a list of the passengers till after they had left Queenstown lest it should be too exciting. He did not take the trouble to look it up, therefore; and the first night out he saw no one whom he knew at dinner; but the next morning at breakfast he found himself to his great satisfaction at the same table with the Eltwins. They were so much at ease with him that even Mrs. Eltwin took part in the talk, and told him how they had spent the time of her husband's rigorous after-cure in Switzerland, and now he was going home much better than they had expected. She said they had rather thought of spending the winter in Europe, but had given it up because they were both a little homesick. March confessed that this was exactly the case with his wife and himself; and he had to add that Mrs. March was not very well otherwise, and he should be glad to be at home on her account. The recurrence of the word home seemed to deepen Eltwin's habitual gloom, and Mrs. Eltwin hastened to leave the subject of their return for inquiry into Mrs. March's condition; her interest did not so far overcome her shyness that she ventured to propose a visit to her; and March found that the fact of the Eltwins' presence on board did not agitate his wife. It seemed rather to comfort her, and she said she hoped he would see all he could of the poor old things. She asked if he had met any one else he knew, and he was able to tell her that there seemed to be a good many swells on board, and this cheered her very much, though he did not know them; she liked to be near the rose, though it was not a flower that she really cared for.

She did not ask who the swells were, and March took no trouble to find out. He took no trouble to get a passenger-list, and he had the more trouble when he tried at last; the lists seemed to have all vanished, as they have a habit of doing, after the first day; the one that he made interest for with the head steward was a second-hand copy, and had no one he knew in it but the Eltwins. The social solitude, however, was rather favorable to certain other impressions. There seemed even more elderly people than there were on the Norumbia; the human atmosphere was gray and sober; there was nothing of the gay expansion of the outward voyage; there was little talking or laughing among those autumnal men who were going seriously and anxiously home, with faces fiercely set for the coming grapple; or necks meekly bowed for the yoke. They had eaten their cake, and it had been good, but there remained a discomfort in the digestion. They sat about in silence, and March fancied that the flown summer was as dreamlike to each of them as it now was to him. He hated to be of their dreary company, but spiritually he knew that he was of it; and he vainly turned to cheer himself with the younger passengers. Some matrons who went about clad in furs amused him, for they must have been unpleasantly warm in their jackets and boas; nothing but the hope of being able to tell the customs inspector with a good conscience that the things had been worn, would have sustained one lady draped from head to foot in Astrakhan.

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They were all getting themselves ready for the fray or the play of the coming winter; but there seemed nothing joyous in the preparation. There were many young girls, as there always are everywhere, but there were not many young men, and such as there were kept to the smoking-room. There was no sign of flirtation among them; he would have given much for a moment of the pivotal girl, to see whether she could have brightened those gloomy surfaces with her impartial lamp. March wished that he could have brought some report from the outer world to cheer his wife, as he descended to their state-room. They had taken what they could get at the eleventh hour, and they had got no such ideal room as they had in the Norumbia. It was, as Mrs. March graphically said, a basement room. It was on the north side of the ship, which is a cold exposure, and if there had been any sun it could not have got into their window, which was half the time under water. The green waves, laced with foam, hissed as they ran across the port; and the electric fan in the corridor moaned like the wind in a gable.

He felt a sinking of the heart as he pushed the state-room door open, and looked at his wife lying with her face turned to the wall; and he was going to withdraw, thinking her asleep, when she said quietly, “Are we going down?”

“Not that I know of,” he answered with a gayety he did not feel. “But I’ll ask the head steward.”

She put out her hand behind her for him to take, and clutched his fingers convulsively. “If I’m never any better, you will always remember this happy, summer, won’t you? Oh, it’s been such a happy summer! It has been one long joy, one continued triumph! But it was too late; we were too old; and it’s broken me.”

The time had been when he would have attempted comfort; when he would have tried mocking; but that time was long past; he could only pray inwardly for some sort of diversion, but what it was to be in their barren circumstance he was obliged to leave altogether to Providence. He ventured, pending an answer to his prayers upon the question, “Don’t you think I’d better see the doctor, and get you some sort of tonic?”

She suddenly turned and faced him. “The doctor! Why, I’m not sick, Basil! If you can see the purser and get our rooms changed, or do something to stop those waves from slapping against that horrible blinking one-eyed window, you can save my life; but no tonic is going to help me.”

She turned her face from him again, and buried it in the bedclothes, while he looked desperately at the racing waves, and the port that seemed to open and shut like a weary eye.

“Oh, go away!” she implored. “I shall be better presently, but if you stand there like that —Go and see if you can’t get some other room, where I needn’t feel as if I were drowning, all the way over.”

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He obeyed, so far as to go away at once, and having once started, he did not stop short of the purser's office. He made an excuse of getting greenbacks for some English bank-notes, and then he said casually that he supposed there would be no chance of having his room on the lower deck changed for something a little less intimate with the sea. The purser was not there to take the humorous view, but he conceived that March wanted something higher up, and he was able to offer him a room of those on the promenade where he had seen swells going in and out, for six hundred dollars. March did not blench, but said he would get his wife to look at it with him, and then he went out somewhat dizzily to take counsel with himself how he should put the matter to her. She would be sure to ask what the price of the new room would be, and he debated whether to take it and tell her some kindly lie about it, or trust to the bracing effect of the sum named in helping restore the lost balance of her nerves. He was not so rich that he could throw six hundred dollars away, but there might be worse things; and he walked up and down thinking. All at once it flashed upon him that he had better see the doctor, anyway, and find out whether there were not some last hope in medicine before he took the desperate step before him. He turned in half his course, and ran into a lady who had just emerged from the door of the promenade laden with wraps, and who dropped them all and clutched him to save herself from falling.

"Why, Mr. March!" she shrieked.

"Miss Triscoe!" he returned, in the astonishment which he shared with her to the extent of letting the shawls he had knocked from her hold lie between them till she began to pick them up herself. Then he joined her and in the relief of their common occupation they contrived to possess each other of the reason of their presence on, the same boat. She had sorrowed over Mrs. March's sad state, and he had grieved to hear that her father was going home because he was not at all well, before they found the general stretched out in his steamer-chair, and waiting with a grim impatience for his daughter.

"But how is it you're not in the passenger-list?" he inquired of them both, and Miss Triscoe explained that they had taken their passage at the last moment, too late, she supposed, to get into the list. They were in London, and had run down to Liverpool on the chance of getting berths. Beyond this she was not definite, and there was an absence of Burnamy not only from her company but from her conversation which mystified March through all his selfish preoccupations with his wife. She was a girl who had her reserves, but for a girl who had so lately and rapturously written them of her engagement, there was a silence concerning her betrothed that had almost positive quality. With his longing to try Miss Triscoe upon Mrs. March's malady as a remedial agent, he had now the desire to try Mrs. March upon Miss Triscoe's mystery as a solvent. She stood talking to him, and refusing to sit down and be wrapped up in the chair next her father. She said that if he were going to ask Mrs. March to let her come to her, it would not be worth while to sit down; and he hurried below.

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“Did you get it?” asked his wife, without looking round, but not so apathetically as before.

“Oh, yes. That’s all right. But now, Isabel, there’s something I’ve got to tell you. You’d find it out, and you’d better know it at once.”

She turned her face, and asked sternly, “What is it?”

Then he said, with, an almost equal severity, “Miss Triscoe is on board.
Miss Triscoe-and-her-father. She wishes to come down and see you.”

Mrs. March sat up and began to twist her hair into shape. “And Burnamy?”

“There is no Burnamy physically, or so far as I can make out, spiritually. She didn’t mention him, and I talked at least five minutes with her.”

“Hand me my dressing-sack,” said Mrs. March, “and poke those things on the sofa under the berth. Shut up that wash-stand, and pull the curtain across that hideous window. Stop! Throw those towels into your berth. Put my shoes, and your slippers into the shoe-bag on the door. Slip the brushes into that other bag. Beat the dent out of the sofa cushion that your head has made. Now!”

“Then—then you will see her?”

“See her!”

Her voice was so terrible that he fled before it, and he returned with Miss Triscoe in a dreamlike simultaneity. He remembered, as he led the way into his corridor, to apologize for bringing her down into a basement room.

“Oh, we’re in the basement, too; it was all we could get,” she said in words that ended within the state-room he opened to her. Then he went back and took her chair and wraps beside her father.

He let the general himself lead the way up to his health, which he was not slow in reaching, and was not quick in leaving. He reminded March of the state he had seen him in at Wurzburg, and he said it had gone from bad to worse with him. At Weimar he had taken to his bed and merely escaped from it with his life. Then they had tried Schevleningen for a week, where, he said in a tone of some injury, they had rather thought they might find them, the Marches. The air had been poison to him, and they had come over to England with some notion of Bournemouth; but the doctor in London had thought not, and urged their going home. “All Europe is damp, you know, and dark as a pocket in winter,” he ended.

There had been nothing about Burnamy, and March decided that he must wait to see his wife if he wished to know anything, when the general, who had been silent, twisted his head towards him, and said without regard to the context, “It was complicated, at Weimar, by that young man in the most devilish way. Did my daughter write to Mrs. March about—Well it came to nothing, after all; and I don’t understand how, to this day. I doubt if they do. It was some sort of quarrel, I suppose. I wasn’t consulted in the matter either way. It appears that parents are not consulted in these trifling affairs, nowadays.” He had married his daughter’s mother in open defiance of her father; but in the glare of his daughter’s wilfulness this fact had whitened into pious obedience. “I dare say I shall be told, by-and-by, and shall be expected to approve of the result.”

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A fancy possessed March that by operation of temperamental laws General Triscoe was no more satisfied with Burnamy's final rejection than with his acceptance. If the engagement was ever to be renewed, it might be another thing; but as it stood, March divined a certain favor for the young man in the general's attitude. But the affair was altogether too delicate for comment; the general's aristocratic frankness in dealing with it might have gone farther if his knowledge had been greater; but in any case March did not see how he could touch it. He could only say, He had always liked Burnamy, himself.

He had his good qualities, the general owned. He did not profess to understand the young men of our time; but certainly the fellow had the instincts of a gentleman. He had nothing to say against him, unless in that business with that man—what was his name?

"Stoller?" March prompted. "I don't excuse him in that, but I don't blame him so much, either. If punishment means atonement, he had the opportunity of making that right very suddenly, and if pardon means expunction, then I don't see why that offence hasn't been pretty well wiped out.

"Those things are not so simple as they used to seem," said the general, with a seriousness beyond his wont in things that did not immediately concern his own comfort or advantage.

LXXVI.

In the mean time Mrs. March and Miss Triscoe were discussing another offence of Burnamy's.

"It wasn't," said the girl, excitedly, after a plunge through all the minor facts to the heart of the matter, "that he hadn't a perfect right to do it, if he thought I didn't care for him. I had refused him at Carlsbad, and I had forbidden him to speak to me about—on the subject. But that was merely temporary, and he ought to have known it. He ought to have known that I couldn't accept him, on the spur of the moment, that way; and when he had come back, after going away in disgrace, before he had done anything to justify himself. I couldn't have kept my self-respect; and as it was I had the greatest difficulty; and he ought to have seen it. Of course he said afterwards that he didn't see it. But when—when I found out that *she* had been in Weimar, and all that time, while I had been suffering in Carlsbad and Wurzburg, and longing to see him—let him know how I was really feeling—he was flirting with that—that girl, then I saw that he was a false nature, and I determined to put an end to everything. And that is what I did; and I shall always think I—did right—and—"

The rest was lost in Agatha's handkerchief, which she put up to her eyes. Mrs. March watched her from her pillow keeping the girl's unoccupied hand in her own, and softly pressing it till the storm was past sufficiently to allow her to be heard.

Then she said, "Men are very strange—the best of them. And from the very fact that he was disappointed, he would be all the more apt to rush into a flirtation with somebody else."

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Miss Triscoe took down her handkerchief from a face that had certainly not been beautified by grief. “I didn’t blame him for the flirting; or not so much. It was his keeping it from me afterwards. He ought to have told me the very first instant we were engaged. But he didn’t. He let it go on, and if I hadn’t happened on that bouquet I might never have known anything about it. That is what I mean by—a false nature. I wouldn’t have minded his deceiving me; but to let me deceive myself—Oh, it was too much!”

Agatha hid her face in her handkerchief again. She was perching on the edge of the berth, and Mrs. March said, with a glance, which she did not see, toward the sofa, “I’m afraid that’s rather a hard seat for you.

“Oh, no, thank you! I’m perfectly comfortable—I like it—if you don’t mind?”

Mrs. March pressed her hand for answer, and after another little delay, sighed and said, “They are not like us, and we cannot help it. They are more temporizing.”

“How do you mean?” Agatha unmasked again.

“They can bear to keep things better than we can, and they trust to time to bring them right, or to come right of themselves.”

“I don’t think Mr. March would trust things to come right of themselves!” said Agatha in indignant accusal of Mrs. March’s sincerity.

“Ah, that’s just what he would do, my dear, and has done, all along; and I don’t believe we could have lived through without it: we should have quarrelled ourselves into the grave!”

“Mrs. March!”

“Yes, indeed. I don’t mean that he would ever deceive me. But he would let things go on, and hope that somehow they would come right without any fuss.”

“Do you mean that he would let anybody deceive themselves?”

“I’m afraid he would—if he thought it would come right. It used to be a terrible trial to me; and it is yet, at times when I don’t remember that he means nothing but good and kindness by it. Only the other day in Ansbach—how long ago it seems!—he let a poor old woman give him her son’s address in Jersey City, and allowed her to believe he would look him up when we got back and tell him we had seen her. I don’t believe, unless I keep right round after him, as we say in New England, that he’ll ever go near the man.”

Agatha looked daunted, but she said, “That is a very different thing.”

“It isn’t a different kind of thing. And it shows what men are,—the sweetest and best of them, that is. They are terribly apt to be—easy-going.”

“Then you think I was all wrong?” the girl asked in a tremor.

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“No, indeed! You were right, because you really expected perfection of him. You expected the ideal. And that’s what makes all the trouble, in married life: we expect too much of each other—we each expect more of the other than we are willing to give or can give. If I had to begin over again, I should not expect anything at all, and then I should be sure of being radiantly happy. But all this talking and all this writing about love seems to turn our brains; we know that men are not perfect, even at our craziest, because women are not, but we expect perfection of them; and they seem to expect it of us, poor things! If we could keep on after we are in love just as we were before we were in love, and take nice things as favors and surprises, as we did in the beginning! But we get more and more greedy and exacting—”

“Do you think I was too exacting in wanting him to tell me everything after we were engaged?”

“No, I don’t say that. But suppose he had put it off till you were married?” Agatha blushed a little, but not painfully, “Would it have been so bad? Then you might have thought that his flirting up to the last moment in his desperation was a very good joke. You would have understood better just how it was, and it might even have made you fonder of him. You might have seen that he had flirted with some one else because he was so heart-broken about you.”

“Then you believe that if I could have waited till—till—but when I had found out, don’t you see I couldn’t wait? It would have been all very well if I hadn’t known it till then. But as I did know it. Don’t you see?”

“Yes, that certainly complicated it,” Mrs. March admitted. “But I don’t think, if he’d been a false nature, he’d have owned up as he did. You see, he didn’t try to deny it; and that’s a great point gained.”

“Yes, that is true,” said Agatha, with conviction. “I saw that afterwards. But you don’t think, Mrs. March, that I was unjust or—or hasty?”

“No, indeed! You couldn’t have done differently under the circumstances. You may be sure he felt that—he is so unselfish and generous—” Agatha began to weep into her handkerchief again; Mrs. March caressed her hand. “And it will certainly come right if you feel as you do.”

“No,” the girl protested. “He can never forgive me; it’s all over, everything is over. It would make very little difference to me, what happened now—if the steamer broke her shaft, or anything. But if I can only believe I wasn’t unjust—”

Mrs. March assured her once more that she had behaved with absolute impartiality; and she proved to her by a process of reasoning quite irrefragable that it was only a question of time, with which place had nothing to do, when she and Burnamy should

come together again, and all should be made right between them. The fact that she did not know where he was, any more than Mrs. March herself, had nothing to do with the result; that was a mere detail, which would settle itself. She clinched her argument by confessing that her own engagement had been broken off, and that it had simply renewed itself. All you had to do was to keep willing it, and waiting. There was something very mysterious in it.

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“And how long was it till—” Agatha faltered.

“Well, in our ease it was two years.”

“Oh!” said the girl, but Mrs. March hastened to reassure her.

“But our case was very peculiar. I could see afterwards that it needn’t have been two months, if I had been willing to acknowledge at once that I was in the wrong. I waited till we met.”

“If I felt that I was in the wrong, I should write,” said Agatha. “I shouldn’t care what he thought of my doing it.”

“Yes, the great thing is to make sure that you were wrong.”

They remained talking so long, that March and the general had exhausted all the topics of common interest, and had even gone through those they did not care for. At last the general said, “I’m afraid my daughter will tire Mrs. March.”

“Oh, I don’t think she’ll tire my wife. But do you want her?”

“Well, when you’re going down.”

“I think I’ll take a turn about the deck, and start my circulation,” said March, and he did so before he went below.

He found his wife up and dressed, and waiting provisionally on the sofa. “I thought I might as well go to lunch,” she said, and then she told him about Agatha and Burnamy, and the means she had employed to comfort and encourage the girl. “And now, dearest, I want you to find out where Burnamy is, and give him a hint. You will, won’t you! If you could have seen how unhappy she was!”

“I don’t think I should have cared, and I’m certainly not going to meddle. I think Burnamy has got no more than he deserved, and that he’s well rid of her. I can’t imagine a broken engagement that would more completely meet my approval. As the case stands, they have my blessing.”

“Don’t say that, dearest! You know you don’t mean it.”

“I do; and I advise you to keep your hands off. You’ve done all and more than you ought to propitiate Miss Triscoe. You’ve offered yourself up, and you’ve offered me up—”

“No, no, Basil! I merely used you as an illustration of what men were—the best of them.”

“And I can’t observe,” he continued, “that any one else has been considered in the matter. Is Miss Triscoe the sole sufferer by Burnamy’s flirtation? What is the matter with a little compassion for the pivotal girl?”

“Now, you know you’re not serious,” said his wife; and though he would not admit this, he could not be seriously sorry for the new interest which she took in the affair. There was no longer any question of changing their state-room. Under the tonic influence of the excitement she did not go back to her berth after lunch, and she was up later after dinner than he could have advised. She was absorbed in Agatha, but in her liberation from her hypochondria, she began also to make a comparative study of the American swells, in the light of her late experience with the German highhotes. It is true that none of the swells gave her the opportunity of

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examining them at close range, as the highhotes had done. They kept to their, state-rooms mostly, where, after he thought she could bear it, March told her how near he had come to making her their equal by an outlay of six hundred dollars. She now shuddered at the thought; but she contended that in their magnificent exclusiveness they could give points to European princes; and that this showed again how when Americans did try to do a thing, they beat the world. Agatha Triscoe knew who they were, but she did not know them; they belonged to another kind of set; she spoke of them as “rich people,” and she seemed content to keep away from them with Mrs. March and with the shy, silent old wife of Major Eltwin, to whom March sometimes found her talking.

He never found her father talking with Major Eltwin. General Triscoe had his own friends in the smoking-room, where he held forth in a certain corner on the chances of the approaching election in New York, and mocked their incredulity when he prophesied the success of Tammany and the return of the King. March himself much preferred Major Eltwin to the general and his friends; he lived back in the talk of the Ohioan into his own younger years in Indiana, and he was amused and touched to find how much the mid-Western life seemed still the same as he had known. The conditions had changed, but not so much as they had changed in the East and the farther West. The picture that the major drew of them in his own region was alluring; it made March homesick; though he knew that he should never go back to his native section. There was the comfort of kind in the major; and he had a vein of philosophy, spare but sweet, which March liked; he liked also the meekness which had come through sorrow upon a spirit which had once been proud.

They had both the elderly man’s habit of early rising, and they usually found themselves together waiting impatiently for the cup of coffee, ingenuously bad, which they served on the Cupania not earlier than half past six, in strict observance of a rule of the line discouraging to people of their habits. March admired the vileness of the decoction, which he said could not be got anywhere out of the British Empire, and he asked Eltwin the first morning if he had noticed how instantly on the Channel boat they had dropped to it and to the sour, heavy, sodden British bread, from the spirited and airy Continental tradition of coffee and rolls.

The major confessed that he was no great hand to notice such things, and he said he supposed that if the line had never lost a passenger, and got you to New York in six days it had a right to feed you as it pleased; he surmised that if they could get their airing outside before they took their coffee, it would give the coffee a chance to taste better; and this was what they afterwards did. They met, well buttoned and well mined up, on the promenade when it was yet so early that they were not at once sure of each other in the twilight, and watched the morning planets pale east and west before the sun

rose. Sometimes there were no paling planets and no rising sun, and a black sea, ridged with white, tossed under a low dark sky with dim rifts.

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One morning, they saw the sun rise with a serenity and majesty which it rarely has outside of the theatre. The dawn began over that sea which was like the rumpled canvas imitations of the sea on the stage, under long mauve clouds bathed in solemn light. Above these, in the pale tender sky, two silver stars hung, and the steamer's smoke drifted across them like a thin dusky veil. To the right a bank of dun cloud began to burn crimson, and to burn brighter till it was like a low hill-side full of gorgeous rugosities fleeced with a dense dwarfish growth of autumnal shrubs. The whole eastern heaven softened and flushed through diaphanous mists; the west remained a livid mystery. The eastern masses and flakes of cloud began to kindle keenly; but the stars shone clearly, and then one star, till the tawny pink hid it. All the zenith reddened, but still the sun did not show except in the color of the brilliant clouds. At last the lurid horizon began to burn like a flame-shot smoke, and a fiercely bright disc edge pierced its level, and swiftly defined itself as the sun's orb.

Many thoughts went through March's mind; some of them were sad, but in some there was a touch of hopefulness. It might have been that beauty which consoled him for his years; somehow he felt himself, if no longer young, a part of the young immortal frame of things. His state was indefinable, but he longed to hint at it to his companion.

"Yes," said Eltwin, with a long deep sigh. "I feel as if I could walk out through that brightness and find her. I reckon that such hopes wouldn't be allowed to lie to us; that so many ages of men couldn't have fooled themselves so. I'm glad I've seen this." He was silent and they both remained watching the rising sun till they could not bear its splendor. "Now," said the major, "it must be time for that mud, as you call it." Over their coffee and crackers at the end of the table which they had to themselves, he resumed. "I was thinking all the time—we seem to think half a dozen things at once, and this was one of them—about a piece of business I've got to settle when I reach home; and perhaps you can advise me about it; you're an editor. I've got a newspaper on my hands; I reckon it would be a pretty good thing, if it had a chance; but I don't know what to do with it: I got it in trade with a fellow who has to go West for his lungs, but he's staying till I get back. What's become of that young chap—what's his name?—that went out with us?"

"Burnamy?" prompted March, rather breathlessly.

"Yes. Couldn't he take hold of it? I rather liked him. He's smart, isn't he?"

"Very," said March. "But I don't know where he is. I don't know that he would go into the country—. But he might, if—"

They entered provisionally into the case, and for argument's sake supposed that Burnamy would take hold of the major's paper if he could be got at. It really looked to March like a good chance for him, on Eltwin's showing; but he was not confident of

Burnamy's turning up very soon, and he gave the major a pretty clear notion why, by entering into the young fellow's history for the last three months.

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“Isn’t it the very irony of fate?” he said to his wife when he found her in their room with a cup of the same mud he had been drinking, and reported the facts to her.

“Irony?” she said, with all the excitement he could have imagined or desired. “Nothing of the kind. It’s a leading, if ever there was one. It will be the easiest thing in the world to find Burnamy. And out there she can sit on her steps!”

He slowly groped his way to her meaning, through the hypothesis of Burnamy’s reconciliation and marriage with Agatha Triscoe, and their settlement in Major Eltwin’s town under social conditions that implied a habit of spending the summer evenings on their front porch. While he was doing this she showered him with questions and conjectures and requisitions in which nothing but the impossibility of going ashore saved him from the instant devotion of all his energies to a world-wide, inquiry into Burnamy’s whereabouts.

The next morning he was up before Major Eltwin got out, and found the second-cabin passengers free of the first-cabin promenade at an hour when their superiors were not using it. As he watched these inferiors, decent-looking, well-clad men and women, enjoying their privilege with a furtive air, and with stolen glances at him, he asked himself in what sort he was their superior, till the inquiry grew painful. Then he rose from his chair, and made his way to the place where the material barrier between them was lifted, and interested himself in a few of them who seemed too proud to avail themselves of his society on the terms made. A figure seized his attention with a sudden fascination of conjecture and rejection: the figure of a tall young man who came out on the promenade and without looking round, walked swiftly away to the bow of the ship, and stood there, looking down at the water in an attitude which was bewilderingly familiar. His movement, his posture, his dress, even, was that of Burnamy, and March, after a first flush of pleasure, felt a sickening repulsion in the notion of his presence. It would have been such a cheap performance on the part of life, which has all sorts of chances at command, and need not descend to the poor tricks of second-rate fiction; and he accused Burnamy of a complicity in the bad taste of the affair, though he realized, when he reflected, that if it were really Burnamy he must have sailed in as much unconsciousness of the Triscoes as he himself had done. He had probably got out of money and had hurried home while he had still enough to pay the second-cabin fare on the first boat back. Clearly he was not to blame, but life was to blame for such a shabby device; and March felt this so keenly that he wished to turn from the situation, and have nothing to do with it. He kept moving toward him, drawn by the fatal attraction, and at a few paces’ distance the young man whirled about and showed him the face of a stranger.

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March made some witless remark on the rapid course of the ship as it cut its way through the water of the bow; the stranger answered with a strong Lancashire accent; and in the talk which followed, he said he was going out to see the cotton-mills at Fall River and New Bedford, and he seemed hopeful of some advice or information from March; then he said he must go and try to get his Missus out; March understood him to mean his wife, and he hurried down to his own, to whom he related his hair-breadth escape from Burnamy.

“I don’t call it an escape at all!” she declared. “I call it the greatest possible misfortune. If it had been Burnamy we could have brought them together at once, just when she has seen so clearly that she was in the wrong, and is feeling all broken up. There wouldn’t have been any difficulty about his being in the second-cabin. We could have contrived to have them meet somehow. If the worst came to the worst you could have lent him money to pay the difference, and got him into the first-cabin.”

“I could have taken that six-hundred-dollar room for him,” said March, “and then he could have eaten with the swells.”

She answered that now he was teasing; that he was fundamentally incapable of taking anything seriously; and in the end he retired before the stewardess bringing her first coffee, with a well-merited feeling that if it had not been for his triviality the young Lancashireman would really have been Burnamy.

LXXV.

Except for the first day and night out from Queenstown, when the ship rolled and pitched with straining and squeaking noises, and a thumping of the lifted screws, there was no rough weather, and at last the ocean was livid and oily, with a long swell, on which she swayed with no perceptible motion save from her machinery.

Most of the seamanship seemed to be done after dark, or in those early hours when March found the stewards cleaning the stairs, and the sailors scouring the promenades. He made little acquaintance with his fellow-passengers. One morning he almost spoke with an old Quaker lady whom he joined in looking at the Niagara flood which poured from the churning screws; but he did not quite get the words out. On the contrary he talked freely with an American who, bred horses on a farm near Boulogne, and was going home to the Horse Show; he had been thirty-five years out of the country, but he had preserved his Yankee accent in all its purity, and was the most typical-looking American on board. Now and then March walked up and down with a blond Mexican whom he found of the usual well-ordered Latin intelligence, but rather flavorless; at times he sat beside a nice Jew, who talked agreeably, but only about business; and he philosophized the race as so tiresome often because it seemed so often without philosophy. He made desperate attempts at times to interest himself in

the pool-selling in the smoking-room where the betting on the ship's wonderful run was continual.

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He thought that people talked less and less as they drew nearer home; but on the last day out there was a sudden expansion, and some whom he had not spoken with voluntarily addressed him. The sweet, soft air was like midsummer the water rippled gently, without a swell, blue under the clear sky, and the ship left a wide track that was silver in the sun. There were more sail; the first and second class baggage was got up and piled along the steerage deck.

Some people dressed a little more than usual for the last dinner which was earlier than usual, so as to be out of the way against the arrival which had been variously predicted at from five to seven-thirty. An indescribable nervousness culminated with the appearance of the customs officers on board, who spread their papers on cleared spaces of the dining-tables, and summoned the passengers to declare that they had nothing to declare, as a preliminary to being searched like thieves at the dock.

This ceremony proceeded while the Cupania made her way up the Narrows, and into the North River, where the flare of lights from the crazy steeps and cliffs of architecture on the New York shore seemed a persistence of the last Fourth of July pyrotechnics. March blushed for the grotesque splendor of the spectacle, and was confounded to find some Englishmen admiring it, till he remembered that aesthetics were not the strong point of our race. His wife sat hand in hand with Miss Triscoe, and from time to time made him count the pieces of small baggage in the keeping of their steward; while General Triscoe held aloof in a sarcastic calm.

The steamer groped into her dock; the gangways were lifted to her side; the passengers fumbled and stumbled down their incline, and at the bottom the Marches found themselves respectively in the arms of their son and daughter. They all began talking at once, and ignoring and trying to remember the Triscoes to whom the young Marches were presented. Bella did her best to be polite to Agatha, and Tom offered to get an inspector for the general at the same time as for his father. Then March, remorsefully remembered the Eltwins, and looked about for them, so that his son might get them an inspector too. He found the major already in the hands of an inspector, who was passing all his pieces after carelessly looking into one: the official who received the declarations on board had noted a Grand Army button like his own in the major's lapel, and had marked his fellow-veteran's paper with the mystic sign which procures for the bearer the honor of being promptly treated as a smuggler, while the less favored have to wait longer for this indignity at the hands of their government. When March's own inspector came he was as civil and lenient as our hateful law allows; when he had finished March tried to put a bank-note in his hand, and was brought to a just shame by his refusal of it. The bed-room steward keeping guard over the baggage helped put-it together after the search, and protested that March had feed him so handsomely that he would stay there with it as long as they wished. This partly restored March's self-respect, and he could share in General Triscoe's indignation with the Treasury ruling which obliged him to pay duty on his own purchases in excess of the hundred-dollar

limit, though his daughter had brought nothing, and they jointly came far within the limit for two.

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He found that the Triscoes were going to a quiet old hotel on the way to Stuyvesant Square, quite in his own neighborhood, and he quickly arranged for all the ladies and the general to drive together while he was to follow with his son on foot and by car. They got away from the scene of the customs' havoc while the steamer shed, with its vast darkness dimly lit by its many lamps, still showed like a battle-field where the inspectors groped among the scattered baggage like details from the victorious army searching for the wounded. His son clapped him on the shoulder when he suggested this notion, and said he was the same old father; and they got home as gayly together as the dispiriting influences of the New York ugliness would permit. It was still in those good and decent times, now so remote, when the city got something for the money paid out to keep its streets clean, and those they passed through were not foul but merely mean.

The ignoble effect culminated when they came into Broadway, and found its sidewalks, at an hour when those of any European metropolis would have been brilliant with life, as unpeopled as those of a minor country town, while long processions of cable-cars carted heaps of men and women up and down the thoroughfare amidst the deformities of the architecture.

The next morning the March family breakfasted late after an evening prolonged beyond midnight in spite of half-hourly agreements that now they must really all go to bed. The children had both to recognize again and again how well their parents were looking; Tom had to tell his father about the condition of 'Every Other Week'; Bella had to explain to her mother how sorry her husband was that he could not come on to meet them with her, but was coming a week later to take her home, and then she would know the reason why they could not all, go back to Chicago with him: it was just the place for her father to live, for everybody to live. At breakfast she renewed the reasoning with which she had maintained her position the night before; the travellers entered into a full expression of their joy at being home again; March asked what had become of that stray parrot which they had left in the tree-top the morning they started; and Mrs. March declared that this was the last Silver Wedding Journey she ever wished to take, and tried to convince them all that she had been on the verge of nervous collapse when she reached the ship. They sat at table till she discovered that it was very nearly eleven o'clock, and said it was disgraceful.

Before they rose, there was a ring at the door, and a card was brought in to Tom. He glanced at it, and said to his father, "Oh, yes! This man has been haunting the office for the last three days. He's got to leave to-day, and as it seemed to be rather a case of life and death with him, I said he'd probably find you here this morning. But if you don't want to see him, I can put him off till afternoon, I suppose."

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He tossed the card to his father, who looked at it quietly, and then gave it to his wife. “Perhaps I’d as well see him?”

“See him!” she returned in accents in which all the intensity of her soul was centred. By an effort of self-control which no words can convey a just sense of she remained with her children, while her husband with a laugh more teasing than can be imagined went into the drawing-room to meet Burnamy.

The poor fellow was in an effect of belated summer as to clothes, and he looked not merely haggard but shabby. He made an effort for dignity as well as gayety, however, in stating himself to March, with many apologies for his persistency. But, he said, he was on his way West, and he was anxious to know whether there was any chance of his ‘Kasper Hauler’ paper being taken if he finished it up. March would have been a far harder-hearted editor than he was, if he could have discouraged the suppliant before him. He said he would take the Kasper Hauler paper and add a band of music to the usual rate of ten dollars a thousand words. Then Burnamy’s dignity gave way, if not his gayety; he began to laugh, and suddenly he broke down and confessed that he had come home in the steerage; and was at his last cent, beyond his fare to Chicago. His straw hat looked like a withered leaf in the light of his sad facts; his thin overcoat affected March’s imagination as something like the diaphanous cast shell of a locust, hopelessly resumed for comfort at the approach of autumn. He made Burnamy sit down, after he had once risen, and he told him of Major Eltwin’s wish to see him; and he promised to go round with him to the major’s hotel before the Eltwins left town that afternoon.

While he prolonged the interview in this way, Mrs. March was kept from breaking in upon them only by the psychical experiment which she was making with the help and sympathy of her daughter at the window of the dining-room which looked up Sixteenth Street. At the first hint she gave of the emotional situation which Burnamy was a main part of, her son; with the brutal contempt of young men for other young men’s love affairs, said he must go to the office; he bade his mother tell his father there was no need of his coming down that day, and he left the two women together. This gave the mother a chance to develop the whole fact to the daughter with telegrammic rapidity and brevity, and then to enrich the first-outline with innumerable details, while they both remained at the window, and Mrs. March said at two-minutely intervals, with no sense of iteration for either of them, “I told her to come in the morning, if she felt like it, and I know she will. But if she doesn’t, I shall say there is nothing in fate, or Providence either. At any rate I’m going to stay here and keep longing for her, and we’ll see whether there’s anything in that silly theory of your father’s. I don’t believe there is,” she said, to be on the safe side.

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Even when she saw Agatha Triscoe enter the park gate on Rutherford Place, she saved herself from disappointment by declaring that she was not coming across to their house. As the girl persisted in coming and coming, and at last came so near that she caught sight of Mrs. March at the window and nodded, the mother turned ungratefully upon her daughter, and drove her away to her own room, so that no society detail should hinder the divine chance. She went to the door herself when Agatha rang, and then she was going to open the way into the parlor where March was still closeted with Burnamy, and pretend that she had not known they were there. But a soberer second thought than this prevailed, and she told the girl who it was that was within and explained the accident of his presence. "I think," she said nobly, "that you ought to have the chance of going away if you don't wish to meet him."

The girl, with that heroic precipitation which Mrs. March had noted in her from the first with regard to what she wanted to do, when Burnamy was in question, answered, "But I do wish to meet him, Mrs. March."

While they stood looking at each other, March came out to ask his wife if she would see Burnamy, and she permitted herself so much stratagem as to substitute Agatha, after catching her husband aside and subduing his proposed greeting of the girl to a hasty handshake.

Half an hour later she thought it time to join the young people, urged largely by the frantic interest of her daughter. But she returned from the half-open door without entering. "I couldn't bring myself to break in on the poor things. They are standing at the window together looking over at St. George's."

Bella silently clasped her hands. March gave cynical laugh, and said, "Well we are in for it, my dear." Then he added, "I hope they'll take us with them on their Silver Wedding Journey."

PG EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Declare that they had nothing to declare
Despair which any perfection inspires
Disingenuous, hypocritical passion of love
Fundamentally incapable of taking anything seriously
Held aloof in a sarcastic calm
Illusions: no marriage can be perfect without them
Married life: we expect too much of each other
Not do to be perfectly frank with one's own country
Offence which any difference of taste was apt to give him
Passionate desire for excess in a bad thing
Puddles of the paths were drying up with the haste

Race seemed so often without philosophy
Self-sacrifice which could be had, as it were, at a bargain
She always came to his defence when he accused himself

PG EDITORS BOOKMARKS FOR THE COMPLETE TRILOGY:

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Affected absence of mind
Affectional habit
All the loveliness that exists outside of you, dearest is little
All luckiest or the unluckiest, the healthiest or the sickest
Americans are hungrier for royalty than anybody else
Amusing world, if you do not refuse to be amused
Anticipative homesickness
Anticipative reprisal
Any sort of stuff was good enough to make a preacher out of
Appearance made him doubt their ability to pay so much
Artists never do anything like other people
As much of his story as he meant to tell without prompting
At heart every man is a smuggler
Bad wars, or what are comically called good wars
Ballast of her instinctive despondency
Be good, sweet man, and let who will be clever
Beautiful with the radiance of loving and being loved
Bewildering labyrinth of error
Biggest place is always the kindest as well as the cruelest
Brag of his wife, as a good husband always does
Brown-stone fronts
But when we make that money here, no one loses it
Buttoned about him as if it concealed a bad conscience
Calm of those who have logic on their side
Civilly protested and consented
Clinging persistence of such natures
Coldly and inaccessibly vigilant
Collective silence which passes for sociality
Comfort of the critical attitude
Conscience weakens to the need that isn't
Considerable comfort in holding him accountable
Courage hadn't been put to the test
Courtship
Deadly summer day
Death is peace and pardon
Death is an exile that no remorse and no love can reach
Decided not to let the facts betray themselves by chance
Declare that they had nothing to declare
Despair which any perfection inspires
Did not idealize him, but in the highest effect she realized him
Dinner unites the idea of pleasure and duty
Disingenuous, hypocritical passion of love
Dividend: It's a chicken before it's hatched

Does any one deserve happiness
Does anything from without change us?
Dog that had plainly made up his mind to go mad
Effort to get on common ground with an inferior
Europe, where society has them, as it were, in a translation
Evil which will not let a man forgive his victim
Explained perhaps too fully
Extract what consolation lurks in the irreparable
Family buryin' grounds
Favorite stock of his go up and go down under the betting
Feeblest-minded are sure to lead the talk
Feeling rather ashamed,—for he had laughed too
Feeling of contempt for his unambitious destination
Flavors not very sharply distinguished from one another
Fundamentally incapable of taking anything seriously
Futility of travel
Gayety, which lasted beyond

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any apparent reason for it
Glad; which considering, they ceased to be
Got their laugh out of too many things in life
Guilty rapture of a deliberate dereliction
Had learned not to censure the irretrievable
Had no opinions that he was not ready to hold in abeyance
Handsome pittance
Happiness is so unreasonable
Happiness built upon and hedged about with misery
He expected to do the wrong thing when left to his own devices
He buys my poverty and not my will
Headache darkens the universe while it lasts
Heart that forgives but does not forget
Held aloof in a sarcastic calm
Helplessness begets a sense of irresponsibility
Helplessness accounts for many heroic facts in the world
Hemmed round with this eternal darkness of death
Homage which those who have not pay to those who have
Honest selfishness
Hopeful recklessness
How much can a man honestly earn without wronging or oppressing
Humanity may at last prevail over nationality
Hurry up and git well—or something
Hypothetical difficulty
I cannot endure this—this hopefulness of yours
I want to be sorry upon the easiest possible terms
I supposed I had the pleasure of my wife's acquaintance
I'm not afraid—I'm awfully demoralized
If you dread harm enough it is less likely to happen
Ignorant of her ignorance
Illusions: no marriage can be perfect without them
Impertinent prophecies of their enjoying it so much
Indispensable
Indulge safely in the pleasures of autobiography
Intrepid fancy that they had confronted fate
It had come as all such calamities come, from nothing
It must be your despair that helps you to bear up
It don't do any good to look at its drawbacks all the time
It 's the same as a promise, your not saying you wouldn't
Jesting mood in the face of all embarrassments
Justice must be paid for at every step in fees and costs
Less intrusive than if he had not been there

Less certain of everything that I used to be sure of
Life was like the life at a sea-side hotel, but more monotonous
Life of the ship, like the life of the sea: a sodden monotony
Life has taught him to truckle and trick
Long life of holidays which is happy marriage
Love of justice hurry them into sympathy with violence
Made money and do not yet know that money has made them
Madness of sight-seeing, which spoils travel
Man's willingness to abide in the present
Married life: we expect too much of each other
Married the whole mystifying world of womankind
Married for no other purpose than to avoid being an old maid
Marry for love two or three times
Monologue to which the wives of absent-minded men resign

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Muddy draught which impudently affected to be coffee
Nervous woes of comfortable people
Never-blooming shrub
Never could have an emotion without desiring to analyze it
Night so bad that it was worse than no night at all
No man deserves to sufer at the hands of another
No longer the gross appetite for novelty
No right to burden our friends with our decisions
Not do to be perfectly frank with one's own country
Nothing so apt to end in mutual dislike,—except gratitude
Nothing so sad to her as a bride, unless it's a young mother
Novelists, who really have the charge of people's thinking
Oblivion of sleep
Offence which any difference of taste was apt to give him
Only so much clothing as the law compelled
Only one of them was to be desperate at a time
Our age caricatures our youth
Parkman
Passionate desire for excess in a bad thing
Patience with mediocrity putting on the style of genius
Patronizing spirit of travellers in a foreign country
People that have convictions are difficult
Person talks about taking lessons, as if they could learn it
Poverty as hopeless as any in the world
Prices fixed by his remorse
Puddles of the paths were drying up with the haste
Race seemed so often without philosophy
Recipes for dishes and diseases
Reckless and culpable optimism
Reconciliation with death which nature brings to life at last
Rejoice in everything that I haven't done
Rejoice as much at a non-marriage as a marriage
Repeated the nothings they had said already
Respect for your mind, but she don't think you've got any sense
Say when he is gone that the woman gets along better without him
Seemed the last phase of a world presently to be destroyed
Seeming interested in points necessarily indifferent to him
Self-sufficiency, without its vulgarity
Self-sacrifice which could be had, as it were, at a bargain
Servant of those he loved

She always came to his defence when he accused himself
She cares for him: that she was so cold shows that
She could bear his sympathy, but not its expression
Shouldn't ca' fo' the disgrace of bein' poo'—its inconvenience
Sigh with which ladies recognize one another's martyrdom
So hard to give up doing anything we have meant to do
So old a world and groping still
Society: All its favors are really bargains
Sorry he hadn't asked more; that's human nature
Suffering under the drip-drip of his innocent egotism
Superstition that having and shining is the chief good
Superstition of the romances that love is once for all
That isn't very old—or not so old as it used to be
The knowledge of your helplessness in any circumstances

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There is little proportion about either pain or pleasure
They were so near in age, though they were ten years apart
They can only do harm by an expression of sympathy
Timidity of the elder in the presence of the younger man
To do whatever one likes is finally to do nothing that one likes
Took the world as she found it, and made the best of it
Tragical character of heat
Travel, with all its annoyances and fatigues
Tried to be homesick for them, but failed
Turn to their children's opinion with deference
Typical anything else, is pretty difficult to find
Unfounded hope that sooner or later the weather would be fine
Used to having his decisions reached without his knowledge
Vexed by a sense of his own pitifulness
Voice of the common imbecility and incoherence
Voting-cattle whom they bought and sold
Wages are the measure of necessity and not of merit
We get too much into the hands of other people
We don't seem so much our own property
Weariness of buying
What we can be if we must
When you look it—live it
Wilful sufferers
Willingness to find poetry in things around them
Wish we didn't always recognize the facts as we do
Without realizing his cruelty, treated as a child
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
Would sacrifice his best friend to a phrase