

Elizabeth Visits America eBook

Elizabeth Visits America by Elinor Glyn

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Page 1

Elizabeth Visits America

After a few years of really perfect domestic bliss Elizabeth and her “Harry” had a rather serious quarrel, which ended in Lord Valmond’s going off to shoot big game in the wilds of Africa, leaving Elizabeth, who (in the absence of her mother and her favourite cousin, Octavia, abroad) had taken refuge with her great aunt Maria at Heaviland Manor, in an obstinate and disconsolate frame of mind.

Lord Valmond was two days out on his voyage when Elizabeth wrote to her parent:

HEAVILAND MANOR

Heaviland Manor

Dearest Mamma,—I hope you are taking every possible care of Hurstbridge and Ermytrude and seeing that the sweet angels do not eat pounds of chocolate between meals. If I had known how Harry was going to behave to me over such a simple thing as the Vicomte’s letter, I could never have let you take the children with you to Arcachon for these next months—I am feeling so lonely.

I came to great aunt Maria’s because on Saturday night when Harry refused to say he was sorry, it seemed the only dignified thing to do. I never thought of course that he would rush off to Africa like this, and although I feel I was perfectly right and should act in the very same way again—still—well, there is no use talking about it, dearest Mamma—and please don’t write me a sermon on wifely duty and submission—because it will only make me worse.

I don’t know what I shall do next or where I shall go—I mean to take the first chance of having some fun I can get. If he could go off in a huff—but I won’t speak of him even—I am going to forget I am married and have a good time like everyone else does. Naturally, I haven’t told a soul but you about it all—our quarrel I mean—and Aunt Maria thinks I am a poor ill-used darling to have a husband who wants to shoot lions, but Uncle John said it is quite natural, and Aunt Maria heard that and said, “Tut tut,” at once.

There is a tremendous excitement here! Can you imagine it, Mamma? They have actually got an automobile! It came this morning, and if it had been a flying machine it could not have been considered more wonderful. It is Uncle John’s fiftieth wedding present to Aunt Maria!—and they are going in it on the same tour they took on their wedding journey! Aunt Maria, as you know, has never been abroad since. We all went into the stable yard to see it. The face of the coachman! (You remember him?—always the same one.) It was a mixture of contempt and defiance. They did suggest having him taught a chauffeur’s duties, but the man who came from the place they bought the



car wisely suggested it might, at his age, be dangerous, and Aunt Maria also feared it would be bad for his sore throat—it is still sore!—so they have abandoned this idea.

They start on Monday—the anniversary of their wedding—and they have asked me to go with them, and I really think I shall.



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The most marvellous preparations are being made. One would think it was a journey to the South Pole. Aunt Maria spends hours each day in writing and rewriting lists of things she must have with her, and then Uncle John protests that only the smallest amount of luggage can be taken. So she consults with Janet Mackintosh, her maid, and then she turns to me and in a loud whisper says that of course she has to be patient with poor Janet as she is a newcomer and does not yet know her ways! She has been with her five years now, ever since her last Methuselah died, so one would have thought that long enough to learn, wouldn't one, Mamma?

The automobile is most remarkable, as it has a rumble on the back, because, as Aunt Maria explained, her maid and Uncle John's valet went in the rumble of the carriage on their wedding journey, and it is the proper place for servants, so she insisted upon the motor being arranged in the same way. Janet and the valet will have a suffocatingly dusty drive—enveloped in complete coverings of leather. Agnes is to sit beside the chauffeur and we three inside. I suppose everyone will scream with laughter as we career through the towns, but what matter! I shall go down to Cannes with them and join Octavia there if I find it too boring, and Harry cannot have a word to say to my travelling with my own relations. I feel like crying, dearest Mamma, so I won't write any more now.

Your affectionate daughter,
Elizabeth.

TONNERRE

Hotel de la POULE D'OR,
Tonnerre.
(Somewhere on the way to Dijon.)

Dearest Mamma,—We have got this far! Never have you imagined such an affair as our trip is. Coming across the Channel was bad enough. Aunt Maria sniffed chloroform and remained semi-conscious until we got to Boulogne, because she said one never could trust the sea, although it looked smooth enough from the pier; on her honeymoon she recollected just the same deceitful appearance and they took five hours and she was very sick and decided not to chance it again! Uncle John had to hold one of her hands and I the bottle, but we got there safely in the usual time and not a ripple on the water! The motor had been sent on, and after sleeping at Boulogne we started. The little gamins shouted, "Quel drole de char triomphant! Bon voyage, Mesdames," and Aunt Maria smiled and bowed as pleased as possible, not having heard a word.

Uncle John was as gay and attentive as I suppose he was on the journey—this is how they speak of it—and made one or two quite risqué jokes down the ear trumpet, and Aunt Maria blushed and looked so coy. Apparently she had had hysterics at Folkestone



originally—did you have them when you married, Mamma? I never thought of such a thing when Harry and I—but I did not mean to speak of him again. Aunt Maria wears the same shaped bonnet now as she did then, and strangely enough it is exactly like my new lovely chinchilla motor one Caroline sent for me to travel in. We have the car open all the time and in the noise Aunt Maria hears much better, so one has only to speak in an ordinary voice down the trumpet.



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Everything went all right until this morning; we left Versailles at dawn—how they were ever ready I don't know, considering the tremendous lot of wraps and pillows and footwarmers and heaven knows what they have;—besides Uncle John saying all the time it is their second honeymoon. However, we got off, and as we have been on the road two days, even Janet, who is naturally as meek as a mouse, is beginning to “turn” at her seat in the rumble; because, it having rained and there being no dust, she and Uncle John's valet are covered with mud instead, each time we arrive at a place, and have to be scraped off before they can even enter a hotel.

Agnes would simply have had a fit of blue rage if one had put her there;—as it is she is having an affair with the chauffeur. There must be an epidemic in the air now for women of forty to play with boys, as they get it even in her class. What was I saying, Oh! yes—Well, the first trouble began with a burst tyre, and we all had to get out while the new one was being put on; and as we were standing near, another car came up from the opposite direction, and would have passed us, only I suppose Aunt Maria looked so unusual the occupants stopped—occupant, I meant—it was an American—and asked if it—he, I mean, could be of any assistance. Uncle John, who thinks it right to gain information whenever he can from travellers, said, No, not materially, but he would be obliged to know if the country we were coming to was smooth or not. Then we knew it was an American! In those big coats one can't tell the nation at first, but directly he said: “It's like a base-ball ground—and I should say you'd find any machine could do it—” we guessed at once. He was so nice looking, Mamma—rather ugly, but good looking all the same; you know what I mean. His nose was crooked but his jaw was so square, and he had such jolly brown eyes—and they twinkled at one, and he was very, very tall. “We hope to get to Dijon tonight,” Uncle John said. “Can you tell us, sir, if we shall have any difficulty?” The American did not bother to raise his hat or any fuss, but just got out of his car and told the facts to Uncle John; and then he turned to the chauffeur, who was fumbling with the tyre—it was something complicated, not only just the bursting—and in a minute or two he was down in the mud giving such practical advice. And you never heard such slang! But I believe men like that sort of thing, as the chauffeur was not a bit offended at being interfered with.

When they had finished grovelling, he got in again, and Uncle John insisted upon exchanging cards with the stranger. He got out his from some pocket, but the American had not one. “By the living jingo,” he said, “I've no bit of pasteboard handy—but my name is Horatio Thomas Nelson Renour—and you'll find me any day at the Nelson Building, Osages City, Nevada. This is my first visit to Europe.” Perhaps I am not repeating exactly the right American, Mamma, but it was something like that. But I wish you could have seen him, I know you would have liked him as I did. Wait till I tell you what he did afterwards, then you will, anyway. “Anyway” is American—you see I have picked it up already!

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We waved a kind of grateful goodbye and went our different ways, and beyond its raining most of the time we had a quick journey; but at last we felt in the dusk we were off the right road. Like all chauffeurs ours had whizzed past every notice of the direction—so carefully printed up as they are in France, too. From the way they behave one would think chauffeurs believe themselves to possess a sixth sense and can feel in some occult manner the right turns, as they never bother to look at sign posts, or condescend to ask the way like ordinary mortals. Ours did not so much as stop even when the lane got into a mere track, until, with the weight of Uncle John, Aunt Maria and me in the back seat, and the extra stones in the rumble, as he made a sensational backing turn into a fieldish looking place, (it was dark twilight) our hind wheels sunk in up to their axles,—and the poor machinery groaned in its endeavours to extricate us! We had to get out in the gloom and mud, and Aunt Maria looked almost pathetic in her elastic side “prunella” boots, edged with fur, white silk stockings and red quilted silk petticoat held up very high. But she was so good tempered over it all! She said when one had been married happily for fifty years, and was having one’s honeymoon all over again—(she had forgotten the hysterics)—one ought not to grumble at trifles.

Meanwhile the hind wheels of the car sank deeper and deeper. I believe we should never have got out, and it would have been there still, if we had not heard a scream from a siren, and our American friend tore up again! It was pitch dark by now, and the valet, the chauffeur, and Uncle John were shoving and straining, and nothing was happening. Why he was returning this way, right out of the main road, he did not explain, but he jumped out and in a minute took command of the situation. He said, “If we had taken a waggon over the desert, we’d know how to fix up this in a shake.” He sent his chauffeur back to the nearest village for some boards and a shovel, and then dug out to firm ground and got the boards under, all so neatly and quickly, and no one thought of disobeying him! And we were soon all packed into the car again none the worse. Then he said he also found he was obliged to go back and would show us the way as far as we liked. Uncle John was so grateful, and we started.

Tonnerre was all as far as we could get to-night, and about six o’clock we arrived at this hotel I am writing from.

Mr. Horatio Thomas Nelson Renour was a few yards in front of us. “Say, Lord Wordon,” he said to Uncle John, “I guess this is no kind of a place your ladies have been accustomed to, but it’s probably pretty decent in spite of appearances. I know these sort of little shanties, and they aren’t half as bad as they look.”

He took as much pains to shout down Aunt Maria’s trumpet as Harry used in the beginning when he wanted to please me, and when we got upstairs she said she had no idea Americans were such “superior persons.” “One of Nature’s gentlemen, my dear, which are the only sort of true gentlemen you will find.”

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Such a hotel, Mamma! And Uncle John and Aunt Maria had to have the only big bedroom on the first floor, and Mr. Renour and I were given two little ones communicating on the back part. They thought of course we were of the same party, and married.

“Madame” could have the inner one, they explained, and “Monsieur” the outer! Aunt Maria, who thought, I suppose, they said Agnes, not “Monsieur,” smiled pleasantly and agreed—that would be “tout a fait bien.” Of course if Horatio Thomas Nelson Renour had been a Frenchman, or even heaps of Englishmen we know, he would have been delighted; instead of which he got perfectly crimson all over his bronzed face and explained in fearful French to the landlady he could not sleep except on a top floor. Wasn’t it nice of him, Mamma?

Dinner was at seven o’clock in the table d’hote, and about eight commercial travellers were already seated when we got down. We had glass racks to put our forks and knives on, and that wrung out kind of table linen, not ironed, but all beautifully clean; and wonderfully good food.

Uncle John made one end of our party and Mr. Renour the other, with Aunt Maria and me in the middle, and the commercial travellers, who all tucked in their table napkins under their chins, beyond. The American was so amusing:—it was his language, not exactly what he said. I shall get into it soon and tell you some of the sentences, but at first it is too difficult. Presently he said he did not understand about English titles; he supposed I had one, but he was not “kinder used to them,” so did I mind his calling me Lady Elizabeth, as he heard Aunt Maria calling me Elizabeth, and he felt sure “Miss” wouldn’t be all right, but would “Lady” be near enough? I said, quite, I was so enchanted, Mamma, to be taken for a young girl, after having been married nearly seven years and being twenty-four last month! I would not undeceive him for the world, and as we shall never see him again it won’t matter. Think, too, how cross Harry—but I won’t speak of him!

Aunt Maria had an amiable smile on all the time. Can you imagine them dining in a public room in an English hotel! The idea would horrify her, but she says no one should make fusses travelling, and I believe she would look just as pleased if we were shipwrecked on a desert island.

There was no salon to sit in after dinner, and the moon came out, so Mr. Renour suggested we ought to see the church, which is one of the things marked in the guide book. Uncle John said he would light his cigar and come with us, while Aunt Maria went to bed, but when we got outside the dear old fellow seemed tired and was quite glad to return when I suggested it; so the American and I went on alone. I must say, Mamma, it is lovely being married, when one comes to think of it, being able to stroll out like this with a young man all alone;—and I have never had the chance before, with Harry always so jealous, and forever at my heels. I shall make hay while



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the sun shines! He was so nice. He told me all about himself—he is a very rich mine owner—out West in America, and began as a poor boy without any education, who went out first as a cow-boy on a ranch and then took to mining and got a stroke of luck, and now owns the half of the great Osage Mine. And he is only twenty-nine. “I kinder felt I ought to see Europe,” he said, “never having been further East than Chicago; so I came over at Christmas time and have been around in this machine ever since.” He calls his automobile, an immense 90 h.p. Charon, his “machine!” He said all this so simply, as if it were quite natural to tell a stranger his life story, and he is perfectly direct—only you have to speak to him with the meaning you intend in the words. Metaphor is not the least use: he answers literally.

The church was shut, and as we had no excuse to stay out longer we strolled back. He was intensely respectful, and he ended up by saying he found me just the nicest girl he had seen “this side.” I was so pleased. I hope he will come on the rest of the way with us; we start at dawn. So good night, dearest Mamma.

Your affectionate daughter,
Elizabeth.

CANNES

CANNES. HOTEL DU PARC.

Dearest Mamma,—You will be surprised to hear my plans! Octavia came over from Monte Carlo directly we arrived, and in less than ten minutes had got most of the story of Harry’s and my quarrel out of me. I never meant to tell her anything, but she is such a dear. She said at once that she should take care of me, as she could not have me running about alone. And I really can’t stand any more of the honeymoon pair—and sitting three in the back seat. So prepare yourself for a great surprise, Mamma! I am going to America with Tom and Octavia! They sail in the Lusitania next Saturday and we are flying back to England tonight. I shan’t have any clothes but I don’t care; I shall not worry over that. We are going to see New York and then go right out to California, where Tom is going on to Mexico to kill tarpons or shoot turtles or whatever they do there.

The rest of our journey after Tonnerre was simple. At each place Mr. Renour was just in front of us, and showed us the way, and we grew quite to feel he was one of our party. Uncle John is devoted to him—and Aunt Maria, too. She says considering he speaks a foreign language—he does almost!—it is wonderful how he makes her hear!



Avignon interested me. It looks so wally and fortified, but I am greatly disappointed, the romantic story of Petrarque and his Laure is all nonsense. I find Laure had eleven children in about fifteen years, the guide said, and Petrarque continued making sonnets to her, never minding that a bit. Now do you believe it, Mamma? A man to stay in love for twenty years with a woman who kept on having eleven children all the image of the husband as good as gold! I don't! Petrarque was probably some tiresome prig like all poets, and thought her a suitable peg to hang his verses on.



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Mr. Renour and I are so friendly. He is not with us now because he had to go to Monte Carlo, so he does not yet know I am going to America. He still thinks I am not married—and do you know, Mamma, I believe he is falling in love with me—and I feel rather mean—but I expect we shan't see him before we start, so it will not so much matter. This morning quantities of flowers came up to my room with his card, and just written underneath, "got to meet a man at Monte Carlo, shan't be gone long." I am leaving him a note thanking him and saying we are off to his country. I have signed it, "Elizabeth Valmond" of course, so that may illuminate him—but I still feel rather mean.

We are only to be away two months and I think the change will do me good, and I know you will take every care of Hurstbridge and Ermytrude. I hate not having time to run over to see you and them, but Octavia says it can't possibly be done, and I am not to be silly; that two months is nothing, and I shall be back again at the original time you were to bring them to England—so I suppose she is right. I shall send Harry a cable to meet him at Zanzibar. He can't stop me then because we shall be on the sea, and if he is furious I shall be doubly pleased.

Aunt Maria and Uncle John have been so kind, but I can see are relieved Octavia is going to take me. They have grown more sentimental. At each place we come to they recollect some tender passage of their former trip. It seems Aunt Maria's hysterics ended at Folkstone. Octavia says she means really to see America and not only go to the houses of the smart people one knows when they are in England, because she is sure there are lots of other kinds quite as interesting and more original. We are to stay in New York and then go West. I shall not have a moment to write until I am on the ship, and trust I shall not be seasick.

Fondest love to my two angels and yourself,

Your affectionate daughter,
Elizabeth.

LUSITANIA

LUSITANIA. *Fourth day out.*

Dearest Mamma,—It is perfectly delightful being at sea—in this ship—because you don't really know you are on the hateful element. We have a charming suite with two real windows and beds, and even Agnes has not grumbled. There are lots of American on board, and really these travelling ones are quite as bad as the awful English people one meets on the Continent, only instead of having stick out teeth and elephants' feet, their general shapes are odd. It appears as if in the beginning Peter, or someone, called up to the Creator that so many thousands of arms and legs and bodies and heads were wanted to make this new nation, and so the requisite amount were pitched



down and then joined up without anyone's worrying to get them en suite. Thus A seems to have received B's head with C's arms, his own body and D's legs—and so on; not the least



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thought shown in their construction. They seem rough-hewn—with foreheads too prominent or noses too big, or too square shoulders or too deep set eyes, nearly always too something—and the women the same; whereas the children (there are only a few of them fortunately) are really impossible. There is one family of the fattest boys you ever saw—simply like the pictures of the fat boy of Peckham, and a little girl of six called Matilda. Matilda is certainly over thirty in her conversation—she told me she was sick of ocean travelling—her eighth voyage; and she was sick of the Continent, too—you get no good candy there and her Momma did nothing but shop. She has the voice of a young peacock and the repartee of a Dublin car driver—absolutely “all there.” They are fairly rich “store keepers” from Buffalo. The mother has nerves, the father dyspepsia and the nurse is seasick, so Matilda is quite her own mistress, and rushes over the entire ship conversing with everyone. She is most amusing for a short time, if it were not pathetic. She plays off one fat boy (cousins they are of hers) against the other, and one steward against another for biscuits and figs—with the most consummate skill. It is no wonder if this quality can be perfected so young by Americans that they can snatch all our best young men from us when they grow up.

I don't know how it is the most unattractive creatures of every nation seem to be the ones who travel. There is a family of English who have the next table to us, for instance; they make us blush for our country. The two young men are the most impossible bounders one could meet, and I am sure their names must be Percy and Ernest! When there was a dance last night they smoked pipes in the faces of their partners between the walses, and altogether were unspeakably aggressive. No American in the world would behave like that to women. I really think the English middle classes are the most odious—except, perhaps, the Germans—of any people on earth. And as these are the ones other nations see most of, no wonder they hate us.

Octavia is so entertained at everything. We have not spoken to anyone except one family who sit near us on the deck, and they have asked us to stay with them at their country place on the New Jersey shore. But—Oh! I forgot to tell you, Mamma, Mr. Renour is on board. Is it not a strange coincidence? He seemed very surprised to see us, and for a moment it was quite awkward when I introduced him to Octavia—because she, not being deaf like Aunt Maria, I knew would hear him calling me Lady Elizabeth and think it odd, and he would be certain to discover from her that I am married. So the best thing to do seemed to be to take a walk with him at once on the top deck and explain matters—this was just before dinner in the twilight.



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He told me it was unkind to have given him the slip as we did, and that he had had “quite a worry” to “come up with” us—but if I imagined he was going to let me get out of range again I was mistaken! You can’t think, Mamma, how difficult it was to screw up my courage to tell him I was married—he has such nice brown eyes;—and although his language is more remarkable than anything you ever heard, he is not the least little bit common. At last I blurted it out straight and explained and asked him to forgive me. He looked away at the sea for quite five minutes and his jaw was square as a box. Then he turned round and held out his hand. “Say,” he said, “I expect you didn’t mean to play a low down trick on me but it has hit pretty straight anyway. We’ll shake hands and I reckon I’ll keep out of your track for a day or so till I size up things and put them on the new elevation.” And then he went away, saying, “Good evening, Lady Valmond.” I could have cried, Mamma, I felt so small and paltry. He is a great big splendid creature and I wish I had not been so silly as to pretend in the beginning. Octavia thinks him delightful. He never appeared for two days—then he came up as if nothing had happened; only he looks at my hat or my chin or my feet now and never into my eyes as before, and he calls me Lady Valmond every other minute—and that is irritating. We shall get in to-morrow and this will be posted at Sandy Hook, so good-night, dearest Mamma.

Your affectionate daughter,
Elizabeth.

PLAZA HOTEL, NEW YORK

Plaza hotel,
NEW YORK.

Dearest Mamma,—We are here now, so this is where to address your letters. We went to another hotel first but we could not stand the impudence of the servants, and having to shout down the telephone for everything instead of ringing a bell—and here it is much nicer and one is humanly waited on.

America is too quaint. Crowds of reporters came on board to interview us! We never dreamed that they would bother just private people, but it was because of the titles, I suppose. Tom was furious but Octavia was delighted. She said she wanted to see all the American customs and if talking to reporters was one of them, she wanted that, too. So she was sweetly gracious and never told them a word of truth.

They were perfectly polite, but they asked direct questions, how we liked America (we had not landed!), how long we were going to stay, what was our object in coming there, what we thought of the American divorce, *etc.*, *etc.* All but two were the same type: very prominent foreheads, deep set eyes, white faces, origin South of France or



Corsican mixed with Jew to look at, with the astounding American acuteness added, and all had the expression of a good terrier after a rat—the most intense concentration.

When we actually landed female ones attacked us, but Octavia who, as you know, doesn't really care for women, was not nearly so nice to them, and their articles in the papers about us are virulent!



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“Lady Chevenix is a homely looking person with henna-assisted hair and the true British haughty manner,” they put! They were not so disagreeable about me, but not flattering. Then they snap-shotted us, and Octavia really does look rather odd, as her nose got out of focus, I suppose, and appears like Mr. Punch’s; underneath is written, “An English Peeress and Society Beauty.” We laughed so!

New York Harbour is a wonderful sight, but you have read all about it often. The streets by it are awful, badly paved and hideous architecture, immense tall houses here and there, gaunt and staring like giants who have seen Medusa’s head and been turned into stone. Farther up town the buildings are all much the same, so their huge height does not show so greatly as with a few lower ones in between.

Every creature in the street has got a purposeful determined air, and even the horses, many of them without blinkers, have it, too, I wonder if we shall catch it before we leave. Nobody appears English—I mean of origin, even if their name is Smith or Brown; every other nation, with the strong stamp of “American” dominating whatever country they originally hailed from, but not English. They have all the appearance of rushing to some special place, not just taking a walk to nowhere.

You would have to come here to understand the insolence of the servants in most places. We naturally ordered tea (down the telephone) when we arrived, and presently a waiter brought a teapot and two cups and nothing else; and when we remonstrated he picked his teeth and grinned and said, “If you don’t ask for what you want you won’t get it. You said tea, and you’ve got tea, you never mentioned sugar and milk.” Then he bounced off, and when the lift boy whistled as he brought me up, and the Irish chambermaid began to chat to Octavia, she said she could not bear it any longer, and Tom must go out and find another hotel. So late last night we got here, which is charming; perhaps the attendants are paid extra for manners. But even here they call Octavia “Lady Chevenix” and me “Lady Valmond” every minute—never just “My Lady” like at home, and I am sure they would rather die than say “Your Ladyship!”

Mr. Renour had to leave us; we were so sorry, but he got a telegram as we landed, saying the superintendent of his mine had been shot and there was “trouble” out there, so he had to fly off at once. However, we have promised to go and stay with him presently and he is going to show us all the mining camps.

To-day we have rested, and quantities of the people one knows in London sent us flowers, and they are the best I have ever seen—roses so enormous they look like peonies, and on colossal stalks—in fact, everything is twice the size of at home.

We are going to dine at Sherry’s to-night with a party. It is the fashionable restaurant, and I will finish when I come back.

1:30 A.M.



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Everything is so amusing! and we have had a delightful evening. It is more like Paris than England, because one wears a hat at dinner, which I always think looks so much better in a restaurant. The party was about eighteen, and I sat next the host. American men; as far as I have yet seen, are of quite another sex to English or French—I mean you feel more as if you were out with kind Aunts or Grandmothers or benevolent Uncles than just men. They don't try to make the least love to you or say things with two meanings, and they are perfectly brotherly and serious, unless they are telling anecdotes with American humour—and that is not subtle. It is something that makes you laugh the moment you hear it, you have not to think a scrap. When they are not practically English, like the ones we see in London every season, they wear such funny clothes—often velvet collars on their coats! and the shoulders padded out so that every man is perfectly square; but everything looks extraordinarily well sewn and ironed and everybody is clean shaven; and Octavia says it takes at least two hundred years of gently bred ancestors to look like a gentleman clean shaven in evening dress, so perhaps that is why lots of them have the appearance of actors. Tom, with his ugly face and his long lean limbs, seemed as some other species of animal, or a Derby winner let loose among a pen of prize hackneys and cobs. Many of them are splendid of their kind, but it is perfectly absurd to pretend they look thoroughbred. One would not expect it of animals, with their mixed ancestry, so why of human beings.

Octavia says they would be insulted to hear me saying that, but I am sure they are far too sensible and logical; for if you were a mixture of cart horse, hunter, thoroughbred, Shetland and cob, you might have the good qualities of all and be a magnificent splendid creature, but you could not expect to look like one of the direct descendants of the Godolphin Arabian, could you, Mamma?

I don't mind that part in the least, but I would rather they had a more outdoor expression. As I looked round the room numbers of their faces seemed pasty, and their shapes thick through, and soft, as if they would bruise easily if one touched them, and lived a good deal in the dark. Also they don't have "flowers and honey" on their hair, so it does not shine and keep tidy, and it is not brushed smartly; and after our lovely guardsmen they look a little ungroomed about the head. This, of course, is only my first impression, after seeing the fashionable restaurant one evening. I may be quite wrong, generally speaking.

The women are so exquisitely dressed that it is difficult to form an opinion. They have whatever is the latest fashion, perfectly made; all their hair is done exactly alike in the way it is worn in Paris. Their figures have the last "look" and their jewels are simply divine. With all this beyond criticism, it is very difficult to say whether they are beautiful or not, naturally; the general effect is so perfect. They, as far as grooming and superlative "turnedoutness" is concerned (I had to make a new word), are the counterpart of our guardsmen.



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The food was exquisite and we had terrapin and canvas back ducks; and they are both the best things you ever tasted, only when you cut the duck you have to look the other way, and take the first bite with your eyes shut, because it has only run through the kitchen. And one would prefer to have the terrapin alone in one's room, because of the bones—a greater test in nice eating than the bunch of grapes which were given to the young diplomat in the story book.

But to begin with, I have not told you of the cocktail! I had to have one. You are handed it before anything else, while you are waiting for the soup, and it tastes like ipecacuanha wine mixed with brandy and something bitter and a touch of orange; but you have not swallowed it five minutes when you feel you have not a care in the world and nothing matters. You can't think, Mamma, how insidious and delightful—but of course I could not possibly have drunk anything after it, and I was so surprised to see everyone else swallowing champagne all through dinner; so I suppose it is a thing one gets accustomed to.

Now I am very sleepy, so good-night, dear Mamma.

Kisses to my angels.

Your affectionate daughter,
Elizabeth.

SPLEISTVILLE

SPLEISTVILLE,
Up the Hudson.

Dearest Mamma,—A whole week since we landed! and we are terribly amused ("terribly" is American for "much"); and do you know that describes almost everything in comparison to at home. Everything is "colossalised"—events, fortunes, accidents, climate, conversation, ambitions—everything is in the extreme—all en-gros, not en-detail. They can't even have a tram run off a line, which in England or France might kill one or two people, without its making a holocaust of half a street full. Even in their hospitality they are twice the size of other nations, simply too kind and generous for words. They have loaded us with invitations; we have been out morning, noon and night.

The thing which surprises me is they should still employ animals of normal size; one would expect to see elephants and mammoths drawing the hansoms and carts!

Now we are staying in a country palace with the family we met on the boat, whom the Americans we know in England would not speak to; in fact, I am sure they are rather hurt at our coming here; but Octavia says she prefers to see something we do not see



in England. The Van Verdens, and Courtfields and Latours are almost like us, only they are richer and have better French furniture. So she says she wants to see the others, the American Americans we don't meet at home. If people are nice in themselves how can it matter who they are or if "fashionable" or not. The whole thing is nonsense and if you belong to a country where the longest tradition is sixteen hundred and something, and your ancestor got there then through being a middle class puritan, or a ne'er-do-weel



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shipped off to colonise a savage land, it is too absurd to boast about ancestry or worry in the least over such things. The facts to be proud of are the splendid, vivid, vital, successful creatures they are now, no matter what their origin; but just like Hurstbridge and Ermytrude in the nursery, the one thing they can't have they think immensely of. Nearly everyone tells you here, their great-great-grandfather came over in the Mayflower. (How absurd of the Cunard line to be proud of the Mauretania! The Mayflower, of course, must have been twice the size.) I wonder if in Virginia they would inform us theirs were the original cavaliers. I don't expect so, because cavaliers always were gentlemen, and puritans of any century only of the middle classes. Fancy if we had to announce to strangers that Tom's ancestor carried the standard at Agincourt and Octavia's and mine came over with the Conqueror!

Even in a week Tom has got so wearied about the Mayflower that yesterday at lunch when some new people came, and one woman began again, he said his father had collected rags and bones, and his great-great-grandfather was hung for sheep stealing! The woman nearly had a fit, and I heard her reproaching our hostess afterwards, as she said she had been invited to meet an English Earl! And the poor hostess looked so unhappy and came and asked me in such a worried voice if it were really true; so I told her I thought not exactly, but that the late Earl had a wonderful collection of Persian carpets and ivories which Tom might be alluding to. Even this did not comfort her, I could see she was still troubled over the sheep stealing, and the only thing I could think of to explain that was about the eighth Earl, don't you remember, Mamma? who was beheaded for the Old Pretender.

But the exquisite part of it all is the lady Tom told the story to was interviewed directly she got home, I suppose, for this morning in most of the papers there are headlines six inches tall:

ENGLISH PEER NO CATCH

FATHER RAG AND BONE MERCHANT

GRANDFATHER HANGED

Tom is so enchanted he is going to have them framed for the smoking room at Chevenix. But our hostess is too unhappy and burns to get him to deny it publicly. "My dear lady," Tom said, "would you have me deny I've got a green nose?" She looked so puzzled, "Oh, Lord Chevenix," she said, "why, of course you have not. A little sunburnt, perhaps—but *green!*" Think of it, Mamma! Octavia and I nearly collapsed, and she is such a nice woman, too, and not really a fool; bright and cheery and sensible; but I am

afraid out here they don't yet quite understand Tom, or Octavia either, for the matter of that.

There is a lovely place in New York called the Riverside Drive, charming houses looking straight out on the Hudson. But if you live in that part none of the Four Hundred or Two Hundred and Fifty, or whatever it is, would visit you, hardly. These people we are staying with now have a mansion there but are soon going to move. The daughter, Natalie, told me to-day, that after this her Poppa would also take a house at Newport, because now they would have no difficulty in getting into the swim!



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We came here for the Sunday and it was raining when we arrived—after an odious train journey. Tom's valet and both the maids are perfectly at sea as yet, and while burning with rage over the lack of, and indifference of, the porters, are too scornfully haughty to adapt themselves to circumstances; so they still bring unnecessary hand luggage and argue with the conductor. We made a mistake in the train and there was no Pullman, so that means there is only one class. It really is so quaint. Mamma, having to travel as if it were third. It amused me immensely, two people on a seat on either side and an aisle through the middle down which the ticket collector walks, and for most of the journey a child raced backwards and forwards, jumping with sticky hands clinging to the sides of each seat while it sucked candy. The mother screeched, "Say, Willie, if you don't quit that game, I'll tell your pa when we get home!" However, Willie shouted, "You bet," and paid not the least attention!

Nearly everywhere where you have to come in contact with people in an obviously inferior or menial position, manners don't exist. They seem to think they can demonstrate their equality, if not superiority, by being as rude as possible. Of course if they were really the ladies and gentlemen they are trying to prove they are, they would be courteous and gentle. The attitude is, "I'm as good as you, indeed better!" Either you are a gentleman or woman, aren't you, Mamma? and you do not have to demonstrate it, everyone can see it; or you are not, and no amount of your own assertion that you are will make anyone believe you. So, of what use to be rude, or clamour, or boast? Doesn't it make you laugh, Mamma? Though it surprises me here because as a people they are certainly more intelligent than any other people on earth, and one would have thought they would have seen how futile and funny that side of them is.

The talk of equality is just as much nonsense in America as in every other place under the sun. How can people be called equal when the Browns won't know the Smiths! And the Van Brounckers won't know either, and Fifth Avenue does not bow to the West Side, and everyone is striving to "go one better" than his neighbour.

Station is as strictly defined as in England, where the village grocer's daughter at Valmond no longer could speak to a school friend, a little general servant who came to fetch treacle at the shop, when Pappa Grocer bought a piano! So you see, Mamma, it is in human nature, whether you are English or American, if you haven't a sense of humour. I suppose you have to be up where we are for it all to seem nonsense and not to matter; and, who knows? If there were another grade beyond us we might be just the same, too; but it is trash to talk of equality. Even a Socialist leader thinks himself above the crowd—and is, too, though I should imagine that the American middle and lower classes would assert they have no equal but God—if they don't actually look down on Him.

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How I am rambling on, and I wanted to tell you heaps of things! I shall never get them all into this letter.

When we arrived at this palace it was, as I say, raining, but that did not prevent the marble steps from being decorated with three footmen at equal distances to usher us into the care of a cabinet minister-looking butler, and then through a porphyry hall hung with priceless tapestry and some shockingly glaring imitation Elizabethan oak chairs—to the library, where our hostess awaited us in a magnificent decollete tea gown, and at least forty thousand pounds' worth of pearls. Natalie had the sweetest of frocks possible and was quite simple and nice, and there is not the least difference in her to the daughters of any of our “smart” friends.

The library was a library because they told us so, but there were not any books there, only groups of impossible furniture covered with magnificent brocade, and the finest flowers one ever saw, most perfectly put in huge vases by a really clever gardener; no subtle arrangement of colours, but every blossom the largest there could be in nature. The tea seemed to get mostly poured out by the servants, and the table was covered with a cloth so encrusted with Venetian lace one's cup was unsteady on it. That is one of the most remarkable points here—I mean America—as far as I have seen. The table cloths at every meal are masses of lace, and every sort of wonderful implement in the way of different gold forks and knives for every dish lie by your plate; and such exquisite glass; and some even have old polished tables like Aunt Maria, but instead of the simple slips they have mats and centrepieces and squares of magnificent lace. Only the very highest cream of the inner elect have plain table cloths and a little silver like we do at home. And it is always a “party”—everyone is conscious they are there, and they either assume bad manners or good ones, but nobody is sans gene. Octavia says it takes as long to be that as to look like a gentleman clean shaven in evening dress. The rooms are awfully hot, steam heated up to about 75, and it makes your head swim after a while. There is only the son and a married daughter and husband in the house besides ourselves and two young men. We should call them bank clerks at home, and that is, I suppose, what they are here; only it is all different. Every man works just like our middle classes; it is not the least unaristocratic to be a lawyer or a doctor or a wholesale store-keeper, or any profession you can name, so long as it makes you rich. A man who does nothing is not considered to “amount to anything,” and he generally doesn't, either! And I suppose it must be the climate, because directly they get immensely rich, so that the sons need not work, when it gets to the third generation, they often are invalids or weaklings, or have some funny vice or mania, and lots of them die of drink; which shows it is intended in some climates



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for men to work. Octavia says it takes centuries of wielding battle-axes and commanding vassals to give the consciousness of superiority which enables people to be idle without being vicious; but Tom says it is because they don't hunt and shoot, and go to the bench, and attend to their estates and county business; so instead they have to go crazy over fast motoring or flying machines, or any fad which is uppermost, not having any traditions of how their forefathers passed their time.

Last night there was a dinner party and some such clever men came. They were great financiers or business men or heads of Trusts. That means you have a splendid opportunity to speculate, only if anything goes wrong you have to chance all your other associates on the trust turning against you and saying it was all your fault, and then you generally have to commit suicide; but while you are head you can become frightfully rich and respected. I sat between two of the most successful of different things, and they talked all the time. They don't want to hear what you have to say, only to tell you about themselves and their ideas, so it is most interesting. They are not the least cultivated in literature or art or anything decorative, but full of ideas upon the future evolution of schemes and things; really intensely clever, some of them. Only the odd part of it is they don't seem to speculate upon what the marvellous conglomeration of false proportions, unbalance and luxury are going to bring their nation to, if they are not careful.

Mr. Spleist (that is our host's name) is so kind! He spoils his wife and Natalie more even than Harry spoils Ermyntrude; and the son-in-law is just the same to his wife. American husbands fetch and carry and come to heel like trained spaniels, and it is perfectly lovely; everything is so simple. If you happen to get bored with your husband, or he has a cold in his head, or anything that gets on your nerves, or you suddenly fancy some other man, you have not got all the bother and subterfuge of taking him for a lover and chancing a scandal like in England. You simply get your husband to let *you* divorce *him*, and make him give you heaps of money, and you keep the children if you happen to want them; or—there is generally only one—you agree to give that up for an extra million if he fancies it; and then you go off and marry your young man when he is free; because all American men are married, and he will have had to get his wife to divorce him. But when it is all “through,” then it is comfortable and tidy, only the families get mixed after a while, and people have to be awfully careful not to ask them out to dinner together. One little girl at a dancing class is reported to have said to another: “What do you think of your new Papa? I think he is a mean cuss. He gave me no candy when he was mine.”

Octavia says, from a morality standard, she does not see there is the least difference to our lovers in England and France, but I do, because here they have the comforting sense of the law finding it all right. The only tiresome part of it is, it must quite take away the zest of forbidden fruit that European nations get out of such affairs.



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Our bedrooms are marvels. Mine is immense, with two suites of impossible rococo Louis XV. furniture in it; the richest curtains with heaps of arranged draperies and fringe, grand writing table things, a few embroidered cushions; but no new books, or comfy sofas, or look of cosy anywhere. The bathrooms to each room are superb; miles beyond one's ideas of them in general at home. Tom says he can't sleep because the embroidered monograms on the pillows and things scratch his cheek, and the lace frills tickle his nose, while he catches his toes in the Venetian insertion in the sheets. The linen itself is the finest you ever saw, Mamma, and would be too exquisite plain. Now one knows where all those marvellously over-worked things in the Paris shops go to, and all the wonderful gold incrustated Carlsbad glass. You meet it here in every house.

The gardens are absurd, as compared with ours in England, but they have far better glass houses and forcing processes and perfection of each plant; because you see even the gardener would feel his had to be just one better than the people's next door. They are far prouder of these imported things than their divine natural trees, or the perfectly glorious view over the Hudson, and insisted upon us examining all that, while Mr. Spleist told us how much it all cost and would not let us linger to get the lovely picture of the river and the opposite shore; until Octavia said we had a few greenhouses at home and some fairly fine gardens, but nowhere had we so noble a river or so vast a view, and he seemed to be quite hurt at all that, because he had not bought them, I suppose! And yet, Mamma, I cannot tell you what kind, nice people the Spleists really are; only the strange quality of boast and application of personal material gain is most extraordinary.

The outside of the house is brownish red sandstone, and is a wonderful mixture of all styles.

There is no room in it where there is any look of what we call "home," and not one shabby thing. Mrs. Spleist has a "boudoir"—and it is a boudoir! It is as if you went into the best shop and said, "I want a boudoir;" just as you would, "I want a hat," and paid for it and brought it home with you. Natalie has a sitting-room, and it is just the same. They are not quite far enough up yet on the social ladder to have every corner of the establishment done by Duveen, and the result is truly appalling.

The food is wonderful, extraordinarily good; but although the footmen are English they don't wait anything like as well as if they had remained at home; and Octavia's old maid, Wilbor, told her the hurly burly downstairs is beyond description; snatching their meals anywhere, with no time or etiquette or housekeeper's room; all, everyone for himself, and the devil take the hindmost. And the absolutely disrespectful way they speak of their master and mistress—machines to make money out of, they seem to think—perfectly astonished Wilbor, who highly disapproves of it all. Agnes, having a French woman's eye to the main chance, says, "N'importe, ici on gagne beaucoup d'argent!" So probably she will leave me before we return.



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What volumes I have written, dearest Mamma!

Best love from your,

Affectionate daughter,
Elizabeth.

PLAZA HOTEL, NEW YORK

PLAZA HOTEL, NEW YORK, *Friday.*

Dearest Mamma,—Octavia and I feel we are growing quite “rattled.” (Do forgive me for using such a word, but it is American and describes us.) The telephone rings from the moment we wake until we go out, and reporters wait to pounce upon us if we leave our rooms. We are entertained at countless feasts, and to-morrow we are going down town to lunch at a city restaurant, after seeing the Stock Exchange, so I will tell you of that presently. We can’t do or say a thing that a totally different and garbled version of it does not appear in the papers, often with pictures; and yesterday, while Octavia was out with me, she was made to have given an interview upon whether or no Mr. Roosevelt should propose a law to enforce American wives to each have at least six children! It is printed that she asked how many husbands they were allowed, and the reporter lady who writes the interview expresses herself as quite shocked; but Octavia said, when she read it this morning, that she thought whoever was speaking for her asked a very sensible question. What do you think, Mamma? Octavia is enchanted with all these things, and is keeping a large scrap book. But the one we like best was in the Sunday’s paper, when there was a full sheet with dark hints as to our private lives by “One Who Knows.”

All the history of the little dancer Ottalie Cheveny was tacked on to Octavia’s past! The name sounding something the same is quite enough reason for its being Octavia’s story here! Tom is having this one put with his collection for the smoking-room, because he says when Octavia “fluffs” (that, I think, means “ruffles”) him, he will be able to look up at it and think of “what might have been!”

I am said to be here while a divorce is being arranged by my family because Harry has gone off to India with a fair haired widow!!! Think, Mamma, of his rage when I send him a copy. Isn’t it lovely?

We are enjoying ourselves more than I can say, and they are perfect dears, most of the people who entertain us;—so gay and merry and kind;—and we are growing quite accustomed to the voices and the odd grammar and phrasing. At first you get a singing in your head from the noise of a room full of people speaking. They simply scream, and

it makes a peculiar echo, as if the walls were metal. Everyone talks at once, and no one ever listens to anything the person near them says.



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A ladies' lunch is like this: Octavia and I arrive at a gorgeous mansion, and are ushered into a marvellous Louis XV. morning room, with wonderful tapestry furniture and beautiful pictures arranged rather like a museum. There is never a look of the mistress of the house having settled anything herself, or chosen a pillow because the colours in a certain sofa required it; or, in fact, there is never the expression of any individuality of ownership; anyone could have just such another house if he or she were rich enough to give carte blanche to the best antique art shop; but the things all being really good and beautiful do not jar like the mixture at the Spleists did. Often whole rooms have been brought out, just as they were, from foreign palaces, panelling, pictures and all, and it gives such a quaint sense of unreality to feel the old atmosphere in this young, vigorous country. The hostess's bedroom and boudoir and bath room are often shown to us, and they are all masterpieces of decoration and luxury; and I can't think how they can keep on feeling as good as gold in them! Perfectly lovely luxurious surroundings always make me long for Harry to play with, or some other nice young man—did not they you, Mamma, when you were young and felt things?

About twenty other women are probably there besides us, all dressed in the most expensive magnificent afternoon frocks; and they all have lovely Cartier jewelled watches, and those beautiful black ribbon and diamond chains round their necks, like Harry gave me last birthday. No one wears old fashioned or ugly jewels, all are in exquisite taste, while the pearls at one lunch would have paid for a kingdom.

When everyone has been presented to us, being the strangers, luncheon is announced, and we go into a magnificent dining-room, sometimes with the blinds so much drawn that we have to have electric lights. The footmen are in full dress, with silk stockings, and one or two places they had them powdered, and that did make Octavia smile. I don't think one ought to have powder unless it has been the custom of the family for generations, do you, Mamma? Well, then, beside each person's plate, beyond the countless food implements lying on the lace-encrusted cloth, are lovely bunches of orchids, or whatever is the most rare and difficult to get; and cocktails have sometimes been handed in the salon before, and sometimes are handed in the dining-room, but at the ladies' lunches in very small glasses.

With such heaps of divorces, in a very large party you can't help having some what Mrs. Van Brounker-Courtfield (a perfect old darling of nearly eighty whom we lunched with on Wednesday) calls "court relations," together; by that meaning, supposing Mrs. A. has divorced Mr. A., and re-married Mr. B., who has been divorced by Mrs. B., who has re-married Mr. C., who happened to be a widower with grown up married daughters—then the daughters and the present Mrs. B., late Mrs. A.,



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would be “court relations,” and might meet at lunch. Mr. A. himself and his present wife would also be the late Mrs. B.’s and present Mrs. C.’s court relations. Do you understand, Mamma? It is the sort of ones connected with the case whom it would be unpleasant to speak about it to, but not the actual principals. And when I asked Mrs. Van Brounker-Courtfield why she called them “court relations” she said because the divorce court was their common ground of connection, and it was a very good reason, and quite as true as calling people blood relations in London or Paris! And that pleased Octavia very much, because she said it was the first subtle thing she had heard in New York. But I must get on with the lunch.

You begin your clam broth (such an “exquit” soup, as Ermytrude would call it), and the lady next you says she has been “just crazy” to meet you, and heaps of nice things that make you pleased with yourself and ready to enjoy your food. You are just going to say something civil in return, and get a few words out, when your neighbour interrupts you with more nice things, and stacks of questions, and remarks about herself, all rather disconnected, and before you can speak again, the lady beyond, or even across the table, has interpolated with a sentence beginning always like this, “Now let me tell you something;” and long before she can get to the end of that, the person at her side has interrupted her. And so it goes on. It sounds as if I were telling you of another Mad Hatter’s tea party, Mamma, but it is not at all; and it is wonderful how much sense you can get out of it, and what amusing and clever bright things they say, though at the end you feel a little confused; and what with the smell of the innumerable flowers and the steam heated rooms, and the cigarettes, I can’t think how they have wits enough left to play bridge all the afternoon, as they do, with never a young man to wake them up. Of course it is amusing for Octavia and me to see all this, as we are merely visitors, but fancy, Mamma! doing it as a part of one’s life! Dressing up and making oneself splendid and attractive to meet only *women!*

They are not the least interested in politics or the pursuits of their husbands or brothers, and hardly any of them have the duties we have to do, like opening bazaars and giving away prizes and being heads of all sorts of organisations, nor do they have quantities of tenants’ welfare to look after, or be responsible for anything. Of course they must pass the time somehow, and they all have secretaries who take every sort of ordinary trouble of notes and letters and things off their shoulders, so they ought to be awfully happy, oughtn’t they? But they often have nerves or some imaginary disease or fad, and are frightfully restless, and Octavia says it is because in the natural development of the female of any country, numbers of these are really at the stage when they should be doing manual labour, according to their ancestry,

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and so having nothing to occupy them and living in every dreamed-of luxury, they get nerves instead. But I think it is because they never have nice young men to play with, everyone being busy working down town in the day time. We are told that even when the husbands do come home before dinner they are too tired to talk much, and as I said before nearly all the men, married or single, make you feel as good as gold, so it is no wonder such numbers of beautiful Americans come to Europe. I am quite sure if we had to lead their life we would turn into the most awful creatures. It is greatly to their credit they remain so nice.

When you can get one or two alone to have a connected conversation they are perfectly charming, and often very cultivated, and nearly always knowing about music; but sometimes, supposing one is discussing a phaze of the Renaissance, say, they will suddenly speak of something as belonging to it of quite another period, and you feel perfectly nonplussed, it seems so remarkable with the clever things they have just said they can make such mistakes. Perhaps it's that they do not study any one subject very deeply.

One thing is noticeable and nice. The conversations everywhere are all absolutely "jeune fille"; never anything the least "risque," though it is often amusing.

Among the "smart set" (do forgive this awful term, Mamma, but I mean by that the ones who are "in the swim" and whose society is the goal of the other's desire: I don't know what else to call them) they don't often tell you about the Mayflower and their ancestors; though on Wednesday a frightfully rich person who has only lately been admitted into this inner circle because her daughters have both married foreign Princes, said to me, she loved the English, and was indeed English herself and some distant connection of our King, being descended from Queen Elizabeth!!! It was rather unfortunate her having pitched upon our Virgin Queen, wasn't it, Mamma!? But perhaps as she had rather an Italian look it was the affair of the Venetian attache, and when I suggested that to her, she gazed at me blankly and said, "Why, no, there never has been any side-tracking in our family; we've always been virtuous and always shall be."

Now that you know, generally, what a luncheon is, I must tell you of the particular one at Mrs. Van Brounker-Courtfield's. She is the dearest old lady you ever met, Mamma—witty and quaint and downright, with an immense chic—grey hair brushed up into the most elaborate coiffure, jet black eyes with the wickedest twinkle in them, and a strong cleft in a double chin. She is rather stout but has Paris clothes and perfect jewels. She is not a bit like English old ladies, sticking to their hideous early Victorian settings for their diamonds; hers are the very latest, and although she is seventy-eight, she crosses the ocean twice a year to have her frocks fitted, and see what is going on.



She was of a real old Southern family, before the war, very rich and aristocratic. She, of course, never mentions the Mayflower or the cavaliers, but you can read all about her ancestors in any history of America. She has such a strong sense of humour and the fitness of things, that she has adapted herself to the present, instead of remaining aloof and going to the wall as she told me so many of her friends and relations did.



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We met at Mrs. Latour's (you know Valerie Latour, Lady Holloway's sister; when she is in England she often stays with us at Valmond). She took to Octavia and me at once, and we to her, and on Wednesday we lunched with her, and when Queen Elizabeth's descendant, Mrs. Clerehart, said what I told you, she caught my eye, and you never saw such a look of fun in a human eye, and we became great friends at once. She says one must take New York as it is, and one will find it a most amusing place. She never hesitates to say what she thinks anywhere, and lots of people hate her, and most of them are afraid of her, but all find it an honour when she will receive them.

"My dear," she said, "in my young days there were gentle people and common people, but now there is no distinction in society, only one of dollars and cents, and whether you get into the right swim or not. I receive all sorts, and some of the last risen are quite the nicest, and amuse me more than my own old friends!"

She says the young men in New York are mostly awful, according to her ideas, and nearly all drink too many cocktails, and that is what makes them so unreserved when they get to their clubs, so the women can't have them for lovers because they talk about it. She does not think it is because American women are so cold or so good that they are so virtuous, but because the men don't tempt them at all. Also she says it's being such a young nation they are still dreadfully provincial. But there are other and good qualities from being young, Mamma; it makes them have the kindest hearts, and be more generous and hospitable, so I think I like it as well as our old ones.

Mrs. Van Brounker-Courtfield said she had asked a sprinkling of all sorts to meet us, and it was then she explained about the court relations, because she found she had Mrs. Clem Busfield with the sister-in-law of Clem Busfield's new wife, and that inadvertently her secretary, who arranged the table, had put them side by side.

She sat in the middle, at the end of the table, with Octavia and me at her right and left, and it was beyond Octavia these two sat. She explained it all to me in so distinct a voice I was afraid they would hear, but she added that Julia Busfield was really a lady and would pull through all right!

"My dear," she said, "it is in these situations sometimes the parvenues show the yellow streak, these and being touchy. They don't always come up to the scratch, otherwise there is no difference in them, and that is the glory of our country."

Then she told me that is the way she judges their advance, according to their touchiness. They can't stand any chaff, she said, and if a stranger dares to make any criticism of Americans to them, they are up in arms at once and tear them to pieces! "Now, you in old countries, are amused or supremely indifferent if foreigners laugh at you," she said, "as we are in the South, but our parvenues in the East haven't got to that plane yet, and resent the slightest show of criticism or raillerie. You see they are not quite sure of themselves." Isn't that quaint of them, Mamma?



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Then she asked me to look round the table and to tell her if I had ever seen a better looking set of women, and of course I had not; they were really charming and so exquisitely dressed, and the apparently most aristocratic of all she told me was the daughter of a Western miner and an English housemaid! And she even had a soft, sweet voice. I talked to her afterwards. Is it not too wonderful to think of what such parentage would make English people look! It must be climate and that splendid go ahead vitality—whatever it is, I do admire it. And as Mrs. Van Brounker-Courtfield seemed so human and not touchy I asked her why a number of the New York men did not appear to have caught the same appearance of wonderful refinement and breeding, and she said because the sort of life a man leads makes him look what he does far more than blood, and that the few that lived the life of English gentlemen looked like them, just as the rest who live the life of our city clerks look like them, minus our City clerks' Saturday interest in sport, and plus the cocktail. And this must be true, Mamma, because Mr. Renour, who was what all these people would call a rough Westerner, and would probably not speak to (until he became a trillionaire of course) was a nature's gentleman and looked out-door and hard; and if he had been dressed by Mr. Davis, and his hair cut by Mr. Charles, would have been as good looking as anyone in the world.

These "reasons why" do interest me so much, and I am always collecting them. But I must get back to what happened at lunch. I heard it from Octavia afterwards, who made a fearful betise.

We had met the new Mrs. Busfield the day before but had not been told a word of the story, so Octavia being vaguely aware that there were two brothers Busfield, thought this one, who for the sake of non-confusion I must speak of as "Julia," was the other brother's wife, and to be amiable told her how charming she thought "Arma" (the new wife) was, and how awfully devoted the husband seemed, and were they not very proud to have such a perfect beauty in the family!

"Julia" got crimson and coughed, and then the lady from the other side joined in telling Octavia that "Arma" was *her* sister-in-law, but no relation to this Mrs. Busfield! Octavia, of course, turned the conversation and spoke to the hostess, but she said the two beside her, in spite of not being on speaking terms chatted feverishly to each other for the rest of lunch to avoid pauses, in case, Octavia supposes, she should ask any more difficult questions. So you see, Mamma, even a person with as fine perceptions as Octavia can make awkward betises here. It is like steering among the Thousand Islands and hidden rocks and currents.

Mrs. Van B.-C.'s (the name is really too long to go on writing) house is perfectly awful. She told us so before we could even formulate the thought ourselves! It was done up about fourteen years ago, she said, when it was one of the first houses as high up on Fifth Avenue, and was the time of the most appalling taste in decoration. Every sort of gilding and dreadful Louis XV., and gorged cupids sitting on cannon ball clouds, with

here and there a good picture and bit of china, and crimson brocade edged with plush for curtains!



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She told us she did not mean to change it. It is comfortable, she said, and lots of her new people really admire it in their hearts! And it will last her time, and when her granddaughter comes into it it will no doubt be “down town” and turned into a shop, things move so fast.

After lunch we all came up to this fearful salon, and then we saw what a perfect hostess she is, moving from group to group and saying exactly the right thing in her crisp, old voice—there is nothing sleepy and Southern about her. At last she sat down by me and she told me such an exquisite story, showing the feeling after the war and the real aristocrats the Southerners were. Two old aunts of hers were left absolutely destitute, having been great heiresses, and to support themselves took in sewing, making dresses for their friends. Their overseer became immediately rich, and a year or so afterwards gave a grand ball for his daughter. The day before the ball an old and not bright friend called, and found Miss Barbara sewing a white satin frock and the tears dropping from her eyes. She pressed her hand in sympathy, and said she felt as badly as she did to see her making when she ought to be wearing, the frock; but Miss Barbara sat up straight and said, “It is not that; I like the work, but what do you think! Timothy Murran (the overseer) has had the impudence to send us an invitation!” Isn’t this a dear story, Mamma, and should not we have loved and honoured those old ladies?

But Mrs. Van B.-C. says the modern people in New York would not in the least understand this subtle pride, and would only think them old fools, and she added—“which they probably were!”

She says we are not to judge of American men by most of those we have seen in New York as yet; that there are a section of elderly, refined and cultivated gentlemen, no longer interested in trade now, who were contemporaries of her daughter (the beautiful Duchesse de Ville Tranche, who died so tragically). She wants us to meet them.

But Octavia and I both told her we liked those we had seen very much indeed; they were so kind, only not naughty like Englishmen. And she had such a look in her eye as she said, “That is just it, my dear, and it makes all the difference.”

You see, Mamma, I am not telling you of any of the people we know in England, because as I said before they are just like us, and not interesting in consequence. Octavia and I feel we want to see quite others, and next week perhaps we start for the West.

Heavens! The mail is going. I must stop!

Fondest love to my angels,

Your affectionate daughter,
Elizabeth

LATOUR COURT, LONG ISLAND

Latour court, long island,
Saturday.



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Dearest Mamma,—We are here for Sunday, but first I must tell you of the day “down town.” We went with one of the interesting business men we have met lately, and we seemed to motor for miles along Fifth Avenue until one would think one was dreaming; all the houses seemed to be from fifteen to twenty-five stories high, and so the air rushes down the gorges the streets are, like a tornado, even if it is not a particularly windy day. It is a mercy American women have such lovely feet and nice shapes, because when they cross to a place called the Flat Iron Building the gusts do what they please with their garments. I am quite sure if the Roues’ Club in Piccadilly could get itself removed to a house just here, those wicked old men would spend their days glued to the windows. Well, we passed Washington Square, which has a look of Russell or Bedford Squares, part of it, and beyond that I can’t remember the names of the streets; it all was so crowded and intent and wonderful,—people racing and chasing after wealth, I suppose.

Finally we got to Wall Street and the Stock Exchange. And Wall Street is quite a little narrow, ordinary street, almost as mean as our Threadneedle or Lombard Streets! The Stock Exchange is the most beautiful building! I don’t suppose you have ever been in one, Mamma, and I certainly shall never want to see another. Imagine a colossal room as high as a church, with a Greek roof and a gallery at one end, and down below countless human beings—men at highest tension dealing with stocks and shares, in a noise of hell which in groups here and there rose to a scream of exaltation or a roar of disappointment. How anyone could keep nerves or hearing sense, after a week of it, one cannot imagine. No wonder American men have nervous prostration, and are so often a little deaf. The floor was strewn with bits of paper, that they had used to make calculations on, and they had a lovely kind of game of snowballing with it now and then—I suppose to vary the monotony of shouting and screaming. The young ones would pelt each other. It must have been a nice change.—Then there were a lot of partitions with glass panels at the end of the room, and into these they kept rushing like rabbits into their holes, to send telegrams about the prices, I suppose. And all the while in a balcony half way up one of the great blank empty walls, a dear old white bearded gentleman sat and gazed in a benevolent way at the shrieking crowd below.

They told us he was there to keep order! But no one appeared to care a pin for his presence, and as he did not seem to mind, either, what row they made, we rather wondered what the occasions could be when he would exert his authority! Presently he went away to lunch, and as no one else took his place, they were able to make as much noise as they liked, though it did not seem any greater than before.



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Can you imagine, Mamma, spending days in a place like that? No wonder when they get up town they don't want to talk. But Mrs. Van Brounker-Courtfield says everyone is too restless to stay quietly at home in the evenings, and when they have pulled themselves together with a cocktail they have to dress and go out to dine at some restaurant or with friends, and then the theatre. At first one thinks they are simply angels to their wives, working all day long down town like that—they seem a race of predestined husbands. If one wanted a husband who spent his entire day away from one and was too tired when he came in to talk of anything but a few sentences on Wall Street affairs, one would certainly choose a rich American, because he would load one with money and jewels, and absolutely obey one when he was at home, and let one spend most of the time in Europe. But Mrs. Van Brounker-Courtfield says all that is only a sop to Cerberus, to keep the wives from grumbling at not being made love to like women of other nations are; that all men are hunters, and while ours in England chase foxes and are thrilled with politics the New Yorkers hunt dollars, and it is the same thing. Wall Street is their adored mistress, and the wives are just their family. As you were married such ages ago I don't know if you quite understand what I mean about men, Mamma, and the effect they have on one. There are creatures who,—the moment they come into the room you know they are there. You *know* it isn't a woman. It is not an intellectual or soul feeling, but it is rather lovely, all the same, and although I am furious with Harry and intend to be horrid to him, I must say he has this power stronger than anyone I have ever met; when he is close to me I have a kind of creep of pleasure, and when he kisses those little curls at the back of my neck I feel thrills all down my back. Do you know what I mean, Mamma? I have divided men up into two lots. Those one could go to Australia alone with, and those one couldn't, and it does not matter in the least their age or looks or station or anything, it is just whether or no they have got this quality. Well, as far as I have seen, Valerie Latour's husband and one or two others are the only men who have it here in New York, although lots are very good looking and intelligent, and all are kind; but there is a didactic way of talking, a complete absence of subtlety or romance.—And even those it would be perfectly safe to go with; because they would not dream of making love to one, but they have the igniting quality in themselves. Some of the elder men over forty are really attractive and intensely clever, but as everyone is married, one would always have the bore of the wives' frowns if one played with them. How I do wander from what I was telling you!



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Tom came with us to the Stock Exchange. We have to leave him at home when we go to the women's lunches, but he spends the time with Valerie Latour, and in the late afternoons he goes to the Clubs with the husbands, and he says they are awfully good fellows and many brilliantly amusing, and full of common sense; but at some of the clubs they have not got any unwritten laws as to manners, so now and then when they get rather drunk, they are astonishingly rude to one another. It is not considered a great disgrace for a young man to get tipsy here; the slang for it is to get "full." There are two grades, "fresh" and "full." When you are "fresh" you are just breezy and what we would call "above yourself;" but when you are "full," you can't speak plain, and are sometimes unsteady on your feet, so it is very unpleasant. You can be "fresh," too, without having drunk anything, if you have an uppish nature. Octavia and I were perfectly astonished the first time we heard it spoken of. A rather nice looking boy who was at dinner had apparently been "full" the night before, and the women on both sides of him chaffed him and scolded him as if it were a joke. I am glad it is still considered a disgrace in England, because when it does occur it is kept out of sight.

After the Stock Exchange we went to see the workings of one of the great journals. That was too wonderful, Mamma, everything happening in a vast room on one floor; compositing, typewriting, printing, and sorting. It is astonishing the tremendous power of concentrating the will to be able to think in that flurry and noise;—hundreds of clean-shaven young men in shirt-sleeves smoking cigars or cigarettes and doing their various duties. The types interested us so; physiognomy counts for nothing, apparently,—faces that might have been the first Napoleon or Tennyson or even Shakespeare,—doing the simple manual part of lifting the blocks of metal and attending to the machinery, older men, these;—and the Editor, who naturally must have been very clever, had a round moon face, tiny baby nose, two marbles stuffed in for eyes and the look of a boyish simpleton.

Tom was so enchanted because at the sporting editor's desk there were a party of prize fighters, the "world's light weight"—whatever that means, a half "coloured gentleman," that is what niggers are called—with such white teeth and wiry and slight; and two large bull dogs of men who were heavyweights. I felt obliged to ask them if they minded at all having their noses smashed in and black eyes, and if they felt nervous ever, and the little coloured gentleman grinned and said he only felt nervous over the money of the thing! He was not anxious about the art or fame! He just wanted to win. Is not that an extraordinary point of view, Mamma—*To win?* It is the national motto, it seems; *how*, does not matter so much; and that is what makes them so splendidly successful, and that is what the other nations who play games with them don't understand. They, poor old-fashioned things, are taking an interest in the sport part, and so scattering their forces, while the Americans are concentrating on the winning. And it is this quality which of course will make them the rulers of the world in time.



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All the people were so courteous to us, and naturally Tom was more interested in this than any of the things we have yet seen. One reporter who showed us round had a whimsical sense of humour (not “American humour,” that, as I told you before, is different) and we really enjoyed ourselves, and before we were out of the building they presented us with copies of the paper with accounts of our visit in the usual colossalised style. Was not that quick work, Mamma?

The things they put in the papers here are really terrible, and must be awfully exciting for the little boys and girls who read them going to school; every paltry scandal in enormous headlines, and the most intimate details of people’s lives exposed and exaggerated, while the divorces and suicides fill every page. But if there is anything good happening, like sailors behaving well at sea and saving lives, or any fine but unsensational thing, it only gets a small notice. The poor reporters can’t help it; they are dismissed unless they worry people for interviews and write “catchy” articles about them, so, of course, they can’t stick to the truth; and as the people who read like to hear something spicy, they are obliged to give it all a lurid turn. The female ones are sometimes spiteful; I expect because women often can’t help being so about everything. These wonderfully sensational papers have only developed in the last ten years, we are told, so they have not had time to see the effect it is going to have upon the coming generation.

The better people don’t pay the least attention to anything that is printed, but of course ordinary people in any country would.

We lunched in the most fashionable restaurant down town, but I never can describe to you, Mamma, the noise and flurry and rush of it. As if countless men screaming at the top of their voices and every plate being rattled by scurrying waiters, were not enough, there was the loudest band as well! Unless you simply yelled you could not make your neighbour hear. I suppose it is listening to the other din at the Stock Exchange all the morning;—they would feel lonely if they had quiet to eat in.

Our party was augmented by a celebrated judge, and some other lawyers. We had been told he was most learned and a wonderful wit, and someone we should see as a representative American; half the people said he was a “crook,” and the other half that he was the “only straight” judge; and when I asked what a “crook” was, our host told me the word explained itself, but that you would be called a crook by all the trusts if you gave judgment against them, just as, if you let them off, you would be the only honest judge. So whatever you were called did not amount to anything! The Judge was much younger than our judges, and had a moustache, and looked just like ordinary people, and not a bit dignified.



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As he has to deliver long speeches when he is judging, one would have thought he might have liked a little rest and light conversation when he came out to lunch, especially as every man likes to talk to Octavia and me; but not a bit of it, he continued to lay down the law in a didactic way so that no one else could speak. He did not even pretend to be interested in us. What he said was all quite clever and splendidly put, but having to show politeness and listen with one's fork suspended in the air, lets the food get cold, and as it was excellent, all sorts of lovely American dishes, at last I just attended to that, and did not hear some of his speeches.

The band suddenly stopped and Octavia's voice saying, "Indeed" (all she could get in) rang out like the man on the Lusitania shouting orders down the megaphone; and when we got outside we all felt deaf and had sore throats.

The intense relief to come here out of all noise or hustle, to Valerie Latour's for Sunday! But I am so tired now I will finish this to-morrow.

Your affectionate daughter,
ELIZABETH.

LATOUR COURT, LONG ISLAND,

Sunday.

DEAREST MAMMA,—I am resting, so I can put another letter in with the one I wrote last night. We came here, as I said, after the down town luncheon, and it is so quaint going over on the ferry; we just sat in the motor we have hired while we are in New York, and it rolled on to a broad place on a huge flat steamer, with all the rest of the traffic, and the boat quietly steamed across the water, and when it touched the other side we drove off again. And presently as one gets past the station it looks like going into the wilds, but along the edges of the roads are small villas made of boards with shingle roofs; here the clerks (they pronounce it just as it is spelt) and small business people live, their little bits of land a few feet round each house not railed or hedged off, but simply mown grass marking them from public property.

Most of them are spruce and painted, and they can be moved if necessary. We met one coming down the road, the lace curtains in the windows and a cat looking out and brushing its whiskers. The house was set on rollers and being pulled along. Isn't it a splendid idea, Mamma? Fancy if I could have the east wing of Valmond, that was added in eighteen hundred, cut off and just trotted round to the north courtyard, where it would not show so much, how nice that would be; but everything is so dreadfully stable and solid with us, and here everything is transitory and can come and go in a night. All the country we came through looks the wilds, uncultivated, almost as if bears could live in the woods. Farms have been there, but now the land is too valuable and is only sold



for building purposes. But the effect of wild is intense and makes the contrast of the over-cultivated avenue borders greater. Once inside the gates, the winding avenue begins, covered like all the avenues we have seen with fine granite gravel. But even in the wildest wild it is lit with electric light, and here and there a neat villa. This is typical of America, the contrivances of the brain of man forced upon primitive nature.



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The house is simply charming; outside a beautiful colonial style, so suitable to the splendid trees and general look of the land, and inside all panelled, and everything in the most perfect taste, and not too grand. But it surprises me that Valerie, who has been so much in England, should still have the same want of the personal note in her house. Everything is beyond criticism, so perfect and suitable, but not in a single room, even her own sitting room, is there that strong sense of her as I think we all have in our rooms at home. I am sure, Mamma, you would know even the great state drawing-rooms at Chevenix were Octavia's, and there is not a corner of Valmond or Hurstbridge or even the town house, that I do not decide upon the arranging of. But here I don't think they would be bothered; and they only stay in their houses for so short a period, rushing from New York to Newport and the country to Europe, so none of the places feel like home. That is the only possible thing which spoils this one,—otherwise it is perfection. But then you see they could start fair by building it themselves; they had not to inherit a huge castle from their forefathers, with difficult drains to combat and an insufficient water supply, to say nothing of the trail of the serpent of fearful early Victorian taste over even the best things of the eighteenth century. The *horrors* that now live in the housemaids' bed rooms which I collected from the royal suite at Valmond!

It was a perfect joy to get here into peace, and we were allowed to rest quietly until dinner, and Valerie came and talked to me while I lay on the sofa. She said her husband was "crazy" about me, and she thought it would do him a great deal of good for me to play with him a little, and that she was crazy about Tom; so I said if she could find someone for Octavia it seemed a nice little *chasse croisee* and we ought all to be very happy together. Then she said she had someone coming down by a later train who ought to be just Octavia's affair, and who in the world do you think it is, Mamma? The Vicomte! Gaston de la Tremors!!!!

Think of what Harry will say when he hears! Isn't it too lovely? He will of course believe I made a rendezvous with him, considering the furious rage he was in when I got the Vicomte's letter. You remember, Mamma, he used to be in love with me at the Chateau de Croixmare, and always has been a red rag to a bull for Harry. When we met him by chance at Monte Carlo last year, the first time since my marriage, there was nearly a scene; and, as you know, his simple letter saying he would be in London, and might he see me, was the cause of Harry's and my quarrel. So now, when he finds poor Gaston is out here, he will be foaming with rage, and will of course come back from Africa at once, and probably beat me and shoot the Vicomte; so I had better have a little fun while I can. It has sent my spirits up to the skies; and I am so glad Agnes brought my loveliest garments here. You need not worry about me, Mamma, as I am sure you are beginning to! I really will be as good as gold, but I must amuse myself a little in this my only chance. I took such care dressing for dinner, and wore no jewels, because everyone here has such wonderful ones. And when I was going down the stairs I felt quite excited.



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Gaston has not altered much, and I think I told you last year when we saw him his hair is not coupe en brosse now, so he is better looking, and he gets his clothes at an English tailor; and as Harry is not here to contrast him with, he really seemed very attractive and you couldn't for one instant feel he was your aunt or grandmother, or that you could go to Australia with him safely! And while all the nice American men—and Valerie only has the nicest—were saying bright pleasant things, he, who was behind my chair and apparently talking to Mrs. Van Brounker-Courtfield (she is here), managed to bend down and tell me he adored me, and had only come to America because he found I was not in London!

There was that lovely sense of having a secret, and although he sat on one side of Valerie, and Tom at the other, and I was miles away with the host—it was a huge dinner party—still his eyes said whatever eyes could say between bouquets of flowers. On my other hand was the father of one of the guests. Valerie had told us beforehand she considered him not of their world, but the daughter was charming and married to a youth who is one of their friends, so as he was staying with them she had to ask him too. Both Octavia and I wanted to have him next us because these characters are so much more interesting than just their world, who are the same as Englishmen, almost, with the sex taken out, and a more emphasised way of talking.

Octavia and I tossed up for him and I won and he was a gem,—a rugged powerful face and grey bushy hair and really well dressed. He had eyes that saw through one at once and beyond, and his hands were strong and well shaped, with the most exquisitely polished nails. He did not make horrid noises clearing his throat as lots of them do, and he was not the least deaf. Instantly we got on. He said if we were seeing America we were not to judge the nation by the men we should see in society in New York (each person we meet tells us this!); that we should go out West if we wanted to find the giant brains who make the country great.

“It's not that I mean to disparage Mrs. Latour's guests,” he said, looking round the table; “they are what they are, good enough in their way, humming birds and mocking birds to flit among the flowers, and pretty poor at that when you compare them with Europeans; but they don't amount to anything for the nation. They couldn't evolve a scheme that would benefit a foot beyond their noses!” And when I asked him why he had allowed his daughter to marry one of them, he said with such a whimsical air, that women in America did what they “darned well pleased,” and that he guessed that everyone had to “work out their own problem along that line.”

“The Almighty played a trick on us,” he said. “Putting the desire for one particular person into our heads, now and again in our lives leads to heaps of trouble, and don't benefit the race. If we'd no feelings we could select according to reason and evolve perfection in time.”



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Isn't that a splendid idea, Mamma? He went on to say he studied psychology a good deal, and he found to look at life from that standpoint was the most satisfactory way. He said it was no use mixing up sentiment and what you thought things ought to be with what things really were. "We've got to see the truth Ma'am, that's all," he said. Then he said, "these cotton wool ba-lambs" never saw the truth of anything from one year's end to another, and, "it ain't because it's too difficult, but because they have not got a red cent of brains to think for themselves!"

While he was saying all this he never took his eyes off me, and he spoke with quiet force. He went on and was too interesting expounding his theories along every line (I am getting American), and I looked up and caught Valerie's eye, and she collapsed with laughter; she thought it quite funny that I should find him thrilling. Presently I asked him what his views were about us in England, we of the leisure class, and he said he thought most of us were pretty sound because we did our duties and generally kept our heads.

"Now, I guess, Ma'am, your husband has quite a lot of business to do in a year?" and I said yes, that of course there was endless work in the management of a large estate, and politics, besides hunting and shooting, which was stern business with us! Then he told me with them the leisured class had no responsibilities, except to keep an eye on their brokers, and so they got into mischief.

"Tisn't in the American blood to be idle," he said; "they can't keep straight if they are." After that I asked him what he thought about the English and American marriages among our nobility, and he got so vehement that he brought his hand down on the table and made such a clatter everyone looked.

It would take too long, Mamma, to repeat all his words, which were too quaint; but the sense of them, was that he would forbid them by law, because American girls to begin with had been brought up with the idea they were to be petted and bowed down to by all men, and no Englishman in his heart considered a woman his equal! And then to go on with, they did not know a thing of the duties of the position, or the tenue which is required to keep up the dignity of an old title, so when it came to the scratch they were found wanting. "Which of 'em's got prestige, I ask you, Ma'am, in your country? They may rub along all right, and when it is a question of society I guess they're queens, but which of 'em acts like the real thing in the country, or is respected by the people?"

I really did not know what to say, Mamma, so he went on. "They're all right sometimes till the rub, and they may do better if they've been educated in Europe—they are so mightily adaptable; but just an American girl like my Lola there,—I'd rather see her dead than married to your greatest Dook."



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I said I knew numbers of perfect dears married in England, and he said, "Maybe, maybe, but if there comes a ruction, they won't grin and bear it in silence on account of the family as you would, they will take it into the courts, and come out on top, too; but it causes a talk and that is not good for prestige. You asked me about the thing in principle and I'm bound to tell you the truth. We aren't brought up on tradition in our country, and our girls don't know what noblesse oblige means; they consider natural feelings first; guess it's old fashioned anyway, but it is necessary in your old country, or the game won't work." I said I thought he held quite different views to the rest of his countrymen, who placed their women on a pedestal above the whole world. Then he blazed at me! "Don't you make any mistake about that. I'm with them there; I think our women are ahead, taking them all round, but that don't make them suited to old countries, any more than new wine in old bottles or new patches in old garments;--- breaks the bottle and wears out the stuff."

I said I would not misunderstand him, but I was sure most of his own country-women at the table would be offended to hear his views, and again he said, "Maybe, maybe! Pretty empty heads; they can't reason; they only see what they want to, but I see the straight truth."

I am not clever enough to have argued with him properly, but I did ask him in his theorising if he did not think it was good for our old race to have the mixture of new blood; and he said no, that by the rules of breeding we wanted re-stocking from the primitive. "Your old families should take a strong country lass now and then. Let 'em marry their milk-maids and leave our hot-house plants alone. Have you read Burbank's books?" he added. "No? Well, read 'em; you'll understand then cause and effect; though his are all about plants. He's the greatest giant we've got in America, in my opinion."

You will think I am being a frightful bore, Mamma, telling you all this; and I can't give you the strange force and power of this man's personality, which made him so interesting; but I had to write it all because I am telling you everything which strikes me as American, and different to us, and we have nothing like this man at home; and when the lady at his other hand did claim his attention, Daniel Latour, after reproaching me for my shoulder being turned to him for so long, told me some of his history. Elias P. Arden, his name is, and he is a senator. He has had a remarkable career, rising from nothing, and being the bravest, coolest, hardest man in the mining camps. He is colossally rich, and his daughter Lola is perfectly lovely, and married to a silly young Vinerhorn, who has a country house close here.

It is so quaint how all the men stand in awe of their wives! Daniel Latour, even though he knows Valerie is a great friend of mine, and would not mind a bit, still kept glancing nervously across at her whenever he said anything a little go-ahead.



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After dinner, of course, the Vicomte immediately came to me. Here the men leave the dining-room with us, like in France, and the Vicomte did not even go back with the others to smoke. But it was all done in such a clever way it attracted no attention.

Jack Brandon had turned up, you know, Lord Felixtowe's brother: he came with some people with whom he is spending the Sunday, and his methods to speak with the lady he admires were so different to the Vicomte's. Of course he had that extraordinary sans-gene of all those men, that absolute unselfconsciousness which is not aware there is anyone else in the room but himself and the lady he is bent upon; but instead of being discreet, and making a semblance of taking an interest in the rest of the company, as the Vicomte did, he just sprawled into a chair near her, monopolised her conversation, and stared blankly in front of him whenever she spoke to any one else. And Tom was doing almost the same by Valerie. It is undoubtedly this quality of perfect ease and unconscious insolence which for some unaccountable reason is attractive in Englishmen. If it were assumed it would be insupportable impertinence, but as you know, Mamma, it is not in the least. They are perfectly unconscious of their behaviour; it is just that there is one woman they want to speak to in a room, so that is all they see; the rest of the people are merely furniture. Now, American men are always polite and unselfish, and almost self-conscious where women are concerned, whereas the French have too polished manners naturally to allow them to forget the general company.

I tried to keep Gaston from making love to me, and when he would go on, I said it bored me to death, and if he wanted to remain friends with me he must simply amuse me; and then to tease him I got up and went and talked to the Western senator. He had such a quizzical entertaining look in his keen eye—he was being stiffly deferential to one of the ladies, a Mrs. Welsh, who was talking to him so brightly. It looked like a huge mastiff allowing a teeny griffon to play with it.

"They're bright as paint," he said to me when we sat down on a sofa, pointing to Mrs. Welsh. "Dainty, pretty creatures. I don't think women want brains, not man's brains, anyway." I am sure you would agree with this, Mamma, and I am sure he is right.

I said to him how extraordinarily generous all American husbands and fathers seemed to their women-kind, and what lovely clothes they had, and what heaps of money they must spend on them; and he said, "By the Lord, why shouldn't they? What's the use of money but to spend, and if that's what makes them happy, let 'em." Then he added, "I'm always grateful and kind of devotional towards women. It's only through them we ever get a taste of heaven on this used-up old earth, and it doesn't matter how low they've sunk, any of 'em would die for the man they really love. Whenever I hear a man speak a disparaging word of a woman, I know, no matter what his other qualifications are, he's a mean yellow dog underneath."



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Did you ever hear of such a darling, chivalrous gentleman, Mamma? And his eyes got all soft, and I am *sure*, when he was younger, he had all the quality I told you of; and though it would have been safe to go to the moon with him because of his honour, he would have made *you* feel it would have been nice if he kissed you.

I told him I thought he was lovely, and he smiled rather sadly; and although he seems to have not much knowledge of literature in a dilettante sense, he has a great splendid mind; and if there are many more senators like him at Washington this country ought to be the best governed in the world. He makes you feel you are on a mountain top or in pine forests, or some vast space, and all the people of society such poor little things. But he is too kindly even to despise them really; and he looks at his daughter's weak, reedy husband with affectionate toleration as the last toy she wanted and had got. "Lola had a keen fancy for Randolph," he said. "She liked his being a swell, and if he's her joy, what's it to me that I could break his bones with one clasp of my hand?" And he put out his strong well kept fingers.

You know, Mamma, I do wonder if such a man could marry one of us, who understand that a really fine male creature is our superior and not meant to obey us, and who would appreciate all his splendid aims, and not think they were there just to buy us diamonds—I wonder what sort of children we should have? They ought to be absolutely superb, oughtn't they?

I was so thrilled with Mr. Elias P. Arden that I stayed on the sofa with him all the evening, and he told me every sort of interesting thing, and at last said he would like us to come and see the mining camps with him in the West. He is a president of the railway there, and he has a private car.

"I'll bring along a specimen of young man for your inspection, Ma'am," he said. "Nelson Renour, the finest young chap I've met in my life."

And when he said that, a great rush of remembrance came over me, and I felt I should love to see him again, and I told the Senator so, and how we had met him, and just then Tom joined us and we have arranged it all; when we have been to Philadelphia to stay with Kitty Bond for a day or two, we are going right out West, and shall all meet the private car at Los Angeles and go to the camps. "Lola" and her husband are coming, too, and anyone else we like; and the Vicomte immediately proposed himself, as he said he is deeply interested in mining and wants to invest some money. I think we shall have a superb time, don't you, Mamma? And I am longing to be off, but we have still some more social things to do, and go to one dance.

It is so late in the year all the balls are finished and lots of people have already gone to Europe. They are having this one on purpose for us, because Octavia said she wanted to see some young men and girls, and how they amuse themselves. The girls have a perfectly emancipated and glorious time, and are petted and spoilt to a degree. They



don't come much to the ladies' lunches, but they have girls' lunches of their own, and their own motor cars and horses, or whatever else they want, and do not have to ask their mothers' leave about anything.



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Among the married women there are two distinct sets here in the inner cream, the one which Valerie leads, and which has everything like England, and does not go in for any of those wonderful entertainments where elephants do the waiting with their trunks, or you sit in golden swings over a lake while swans swim with the food on trays on their backs—I am exaggerating, of course, but you know what I mean. Valerie says all that is in shocking taste, which of course it is. She never has anything eccentric, only splendid presents at her cotillions, and all the diplomats from Washington come over, and the whole tone of her house is exactly as it is at home, except that many of them are brighter and more amusing than we are.

Then the other set is the “go one better set,”—that is the best way I can describe it. If one has a party one week, another must have a finer one the week after, and so on, until thousands and thousands of dollars are spent on flowers, for instance, for one afternoon; and in it nothing is like England. I believe it must be purely American, or perhaps one ought to say New York.

These two sets meet at Newport, but they won't speak to any others. I wish we were going to stay long enough to go there.

When all the dinner party had gone, Octavia and I and one of the other women who are staying in the house, went up with Valerie into her sitting room, and coseyed round the fire; but when Tom and the Vicomte knocked at the door, and wanted to come in, too, and cosey with us, Valerie looked the wee-est trifle shocked, and rather nervously put them off; and she said to me afterwards that the room opened right into her bedroom, and Daniel would have been awfully cross if they had come in! It is in tiny trifles like this that even Valerie is a fraction provincial. I suppose she had a Puritan ancestor. Puritans, as one knows, always have those odd minds that see something bad in everything.

This morning some of them went to church, but I was not in time. I was so tired I overslept myself and then stayed hours in my bath. The bath-rooms here are superb. Certainly the American plumbers are the best in the world. I can't imagine what the American women do when they marry foreign noblemen and go home with them to their old castles where they would be expected to wash in a dish.

When I got down I found Gaston pacing the library like a maniac. “*Enfin, enfin,*” he cried, as he kissed my hand.

“*Enfin* what?” I said, and he told me he had been waiting here for me the whole morning, and they would soon be home from church and he would not get another chance to see me alone. So I just played with him a little, Mamma!—and it was too delightful being as provoking as possible and yet perfectly sage. Harry could not have really objected to a word I said, but all the same it drove Gaston crazy. I have never had a chance before, you know, because all these years, what with having babies and



the fuss and time that takes, and Harry never leaving me for a moment, and glaring at every other man who came near, I did not know how enjoyable a little fencing could be. And when the rest did come back I only talked to Daniel Latour on purpose to tease Gaston, and I really amused myself.



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Lots more people came to luncheon, and though it is in the wilds of the country, what we would call, they were all in lovely afternoon dresses, as if it were town and the height of the season. But we were so merry at lunch. A general conversation is far more bright and entertaining than at home.

After lunch we walked in the woods, and I can never tell you of the beauty of it, with the scent of Spring in the air, and the quaint wild flowers. It is their last Sunday down here; they go off to Europe next week.

Shoals more visitors for tea, among them a little bride who had already got her husband to heel. She talked all the time of what *she* was going to do and he did not speak a word. But it is only in that sort of way they are very emancipated, it seems, for while they are actually married they are as good as gold, as far as looking at anyone else is concerned. It is when they come to Europe they have flirtations like us. But as I said before, there would not be any zest, because you can get a divorce and marry the man so easily it makes it always *une affaire de jeune fille*.

Now I must dress for dinner, so good-bye, dear Mamma.

Kisses to my angels.

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

PLAZA HOTEL, NEW YORK

PLAZA HOTEL. NEW YORK, *Tuesday*.

DEAREST MAMMA,—I have a theatre and dance to tell you of in this letter. To begin with, the theatres themselves are far better built than ours; everyone can see, and there is no pit, and the boxes are in graduated heights so that you have not to crane your neck,—but the decorations in every one we have yet been to are unspeakable. This one last night had grouped around the proscenium what looked exactly like a turkey's insides (I hope you aren't shocked, Mamma!). I once saw the marmiton taken out at Arrachon, when I was a little girl and got into the kitchen,—just those awful colours, and strange long, twisted, curled-up tuby-looking things. They are massed on the boxes, too, and were, I suppose, German "Art Nouveau."

I always think Art Nouveau must have been originated by a would-be artist who got drunk on absinthe after eating too much pate de foie gras in a batard-Louis XV. room, then slept, then woke, and in a fit of D.T. conceived it. He saw impossible flowers and almost rats running up the furniture, and every leg and line out of balance and twisted; and fancy, if one could avoid it, putting it in a theatre! The play itself was very well



acted, but, as is nearly always the case here, unless it is a lovely blood-and-shooting, far West play, the heroine is drawn to be a selfish puny character, full of egotism and thinking of her own feelings. The men were perfectly splendid actors, but they distracted my eye so with their padded shoulders it quite worried me. The hero was a small person, and when he appeared in tennis flannels his shoulders were sloping, and in proportion to his little body; but when the coat got on again they were at least eight inches wider, and, as he lifted his arms to clasp his lady, one saw where the padding ended; it was absolutely ridiculous and made me laugh in a serious place.



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When one looks down at the audience, the women not being in evening dress gives the coup d'oeil a less festive note, but I think people in theatres look perfectly awful anywhere, don't you, Mamma? One wonders where they come from.

This was a play about "Graft," which as far as I can understand means,—supposing you wanted to be elected a member of the Government, you could agree with some large contractor, who had influence over countless votes, to get the order for him to put up a public building which millions had been voted for; and instead of making it of solid marble, to face it and fill it up with rubbish, and you and he would pocket the difference. I think that would be "graft," and there seems to a lot of it about, judging from the play and the papers; and we were told some of the splendid buildings in San Francisco showed all these tricks when they fell down in the earthquake. I should hate to live in an earthquake country, shouldn't you, Mamma? It could interrupt one in such awkward or agreeable moments,—and one would feel one ought to be ready and looking as attractive as possible all the time. It would be so wearing.

I think English people are stodgy and behind-hand about things. Why don't they come here and take a few hints before they build any more theatres? You can't think how infinitely better these are to see in.

The difference in the comic operas to ours is, they have no refinement or colours or subtleties to please the eye—all is gaudy and blatant. The "Merry Widow," for instance, could make one weep, it is so vulgar and changed, especially the end. But if the people prefer it like that the managers are quite right to let them have what they want.

After the theatre we went, a huge party, to sup at such a funny place which was all mirrors; and a man at the next table, who was perhaps a little beyond "fresh," got perfectly furious thinking another man was staring at him, and wanted to get up and fight him. The lady next him pulled his sleeve, and had to keep telling him, "Hush, Bob, hush! Can't you see it's yourself?" "Certainly not!" shouted the man, so loud we could not help hearing. "I'll fight anyone who says I am that ugly mug!" and he gesticulated at the reflection and it gesticulated back at him. It was the funniest sight you can imagine, Mamma, and it was not until the lady meekly demanded if the person he saw sitting by the "ugly mug" resembled her that he could be convinced, and he got to go on quietly with his supper. And all the rest of the time he kept glancing at the glass and muttering to himself like distant thunder, just as Agnes does when things displease her.



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In Paris, at the restaurants one goes to, there is only the one class—unless, of course, one is doing Montmartre, but I mean the best ones bourgeois would not think of thrusting themselves in; and in London there is only the Ritz and Carlton where one goes, and it is the rarest thing certainly at the Ritz to see any awful people there. But here, heaps of the most ordinary are very rich and think they have the best right, which of course they have if they pay, to enter the most select places; so the conglomeration even at Sherry's sometimes is too amusing, and at the mirror place, which society would only go to as a freak, the company is beyond description. But they all seem such kindly, jolly people, all amusing themselves, and gay and happy. I like it, and the courtesy and fatherly kindness of the men to the women is beautiful, and a lesson to the male creatures of other nations. I have not yet seen an American man who is not the cavalier servante of his wife and sisters and daughters. And what flowers they send one! Everything is generous and opulent.

The dance was such fun, a bal blanc, as only young people were asked, and they all come without chaperones, so sensible, and all seemed to have a lovely romp, and enjoy themselves in a far, far greater degree than we do. It was more like a tenants' ball or a children's party, they seemed so happy; and towards the end lots of the girls' hair became untidy and their dresses torn, and the young men's faces damp and their collars limp.

The house was a perfectly magnificent palace, far up on Fifth Avenue, which has been built so lately that the taste is faultless; but it was a rather new family gave the dance, whom Valerie has not yet received. She thinks she will next year, because the daughter is so lovely and admired, and everyone else knows them.

At the beginning of the evening some of the girls looked beautiful, but as a rule much too richly dressed, like married women; only when even the most exquisite creatures get hot and dishevelled the charm goes off—don't you think so, Mamma? It is more like France than England, as there is very little sitting out; one just goes to the buffet. And there is always the cotillon; but the favours and flowers are much better than anyone would have in Paris. The girls must get quite rich in trinkets at the end of a season.

We are told a real ball, where the married women are, is much more range, and one does not see people get so untidy. But all the balls are over now, so we shall not be able to judge.

What struck us most was the young people seemed much more familiar with each other than we should ever allow them to be; just like playful brothers and sisters, not a bit loverish, but almost as if it could develop into what they call "rough-housing" in a minute, although it never did at the dance.

"Rough-housing" is throwing your neighbour's bread across the table at someone else, and he throwing his table napkin back at you, and yelling and screaming with mirth; and

it often ends with being mauled and pulled about, and water being poured down someone's neck.



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The Spleists had a young people's tea last week, which I have not had time to tell you of, where they did all this. They flung themselves about, and were as natural and tiresome as baby puppies are, barking and bouncing and eating up people's shoes.

Fancy, Mamma, when Ermytrude grows up, my allowing her to pour water down a man's neck, and to be mauled and fought with in consequence! But I am sure they are all as innocent and lighthearted as the young puppies whose behaviour theirs resembles; so it may be a natural outlet for high spirits, and have its good side, though we could not possibly stand it.

The whole tenue in moving, of the girls, is "fling about," even in the street, but no other nation can compare to them in their exquisitely spruce, exquisitely soigne appearance, and their perfect feet and superlatively perfect boots, and short tailor dresses. To see Fifth Avenue on a bright day, morning or afternoon, is like a procession of glowing flowers passing. Minxes of fifteen with merry roving eyes, women of all ages, *all* as beautifully dressed as it is possible to be, swinging along to the soda-water fountain shops where you can get candy and ice cream and lovely chocolates. No one has that draggled, too long in the back and too short in the front look, of lots of English women holding up their garments in a frightful fashion. Here they are too sensible; they have perfect short skirts for walking, and look too dainty and attractive for words. Also there are no old people much—a few old women but never any old men. I suppose they all die off with their hard life.

But isn't human nature funny, Mamma, and how male creatures' instincts will break out sometimes even in a country like this, where sex does not "amount to much." We are told that now and then the most respectable father of a family will "side track," and go off on a jaunt with a glaringly golden-haired chorus lady! But one thing is better than with us, the eldest sons don't defy fate and marry them! When he gets to fifteen I shall begin to have nightmares in case Hurstbridge should bring me home a Gaiety daughter-in-law, though probably by then there will be such numbers of Birdie and Tottie and Rosie Peeresses, that I shall have got used to it, unless, of course, the fashion changes and goes back to the time Uncle Geoffrey talks of, when those ladies found their own world more amusing.

There is not much romance here. I don't see how they ever get in love. How could one get in love with a young man whom one romped with and danced with, till his face became dripping, and his collar limp; whom one saw when one wanted to without any restrictions, and altogether treated like a big brother? I suppose getting "crazy" about a person is as near being in love as they know. Each country has its ways, but I like romance.

Their astounding adaptability is what strikes one—the women's I mean. The ones who have been to Europe only on trips even, have all acquired a more reserved tone and gentler voices, while the girls who went to school in Paris or have lived in England are

wonders of brilliant attraction. I do not know if any of those would make a noise and rough-house. They would be clever enough to choose their time and place if they did.



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The children skate on roller skates along the streets, and on the asphalt paths of the parks. There is a delightful happy-go-lucky-way about everything. In the country trains cross the roads with no gates to keep people off the track, and in every branch of life you have to look out for yourself and learn self-reliance.

We are so amused because Octavia is considered to have “an English accent,” and mine not so strong, the papers say. What can an “English accent” be, Mamma? Since English came from England and is till spoken as we do, there would be some logic in saying “an American accent,” but what can an “English” one be! One might as sensibly remark upon a Frenchman from Paris having a French accent, or a German from Berlin.

I suppose it must be the climate which obliges people to make such disagreeable throat-clearing noises. In any public place it is absolutely distressing, and makes one creep with disgust.

At all the restaurants we have been to, the food is most excellent, and they have such delightfully original dishes and ways of serving things. There are not such quantities of “coloured gentlemen” as one supposed, about; and they don’t have them even for servants in the big hotels, but at a smaller one, where Southern people go, and we went to call on some-one, there were lots of them; and they have such gentle voices and good manners I like them.

Yesterday Octavia and I went to a “department store” to buy, among other things, some of their lovely ready-made costumes to take out West with us, and it was so amusing; the young ladies at the ribbon counter were chatting with the young ladies at the flowers, divided by a high set of drawers, so they had to climb up or speak through the passage opening. Presently after we had tried to attract their attention, one condescended to serve us, while she finished her conversation with her friend round the corner perfectly indifferent as to our wants, or if we bought or not! The friend surveyed us and chewed gum. But when we got to the costume salon, they were most polite. Two perfect dears attended to us, and were so sympathetic as to our requirements, and talked intelligently and well on outside subjects. Octavia and I felt we were leaving old friends when we went. Why should you be rude measuring off ribbons, and polite showing clothes?

To-morrow we go to Philadelphia to stay with Kitty Bond, who as you know isn’t so colossally rich as the rest, but just as nice as Valerie; and they have a house which has been there for a hundred years, so it will be interesting to see the difference.

The Vicomte has been good and docile. I have not had to keep him in order once, but he comes round all the time, and when he thinks people are looking he gazes devotedly at Octavia, and everyone thinks he is her affair. Isn’t it intelligent of him, Mamma?



I am glad you have not scolded me about Harry and our quarrel in your last letter; but there is no use your being angry with him and saying he behaved like a brute. He did not, a bit, because it really was my fault, principally; only it's all just as well, as I should never have been allowed to come here if it had not happened, and I am enjoying myself and seeing the world.



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Good-bye, dearest Mamma. Best love from,

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

RINGWOOD, PHILADELPHIA

RINGWOOD, PHILADELPHIA, *Wednesday.*

DEAREST MAMMA,—I think you would like this place better than New York if you came to America. It is much quieter and less up-to-date, and there is the most beautiful park; only you have to get at it by going through the lowest slums of the town, which must rather put one off on a summer day, and it is dominated by a cemetery on a high cliff above it, so that as you drive you see the evidences of death always in front of you; and one of the reporters who came to interview us said it made “a cunning place to take your best girl on Sunday to do a bit of a spoon!!” Are they not an astonishing people, Mamma? So devoid of sentiment that they choose this, their best site, for a cemetery! and then spend their gayest recreation hours there!! I couldn’t have let even Harry make love to me in a cemetery. Of course it must be only the working class who go there, as a jaunt, not one’s friends; but it surprised me in any case.

Kitty’s house is the sweetest place, rather in the country, and just made of wood with a shingle roof; but so quaint, and people look at it with the same sort of reverence we look at Aikin’s Farm, which was built in fourteen hundred, you remember? This one was put up before the revolution, in Colonial days, and it has a veranda in front running up with Ionic pillars all in wood like a portico. Inside it is just an English home—do you hear, Mamma? I said *home!* because it is the first we have seen. And it came as some new thing, and to be appreciated, to find the furniture a little shabby from having been in the same place so long; and the pictures most of them rather bad, but really ancestors; and the drawing-room and our bedrooms lovely and bright with flowery chintzes, fresh and shiny, no tapestry and wonderful brocade; and the table-cloths plain, and no lace on the sheets, nor embroideries to scratch the ear. It shows what foolish creatures of habit we are, because in the other houses there has been every possible thing one could want, and masterpieces of art and riches and often beauty; but just because Kitty’s house is like a home, and has the indescribable atmosphere of gentle owners for generations, we like it the best! It is ridiculous to be so prejudiced, isn’t it?

Jim Bond says they are too poor to go to Europe more than once in three years, and they only run over to New York to stay with Valerie now and then, and sometimes down South or camping out in the summer, so they spend all the time at Ringwood, and there is not a corner of the garden or house they do not tend and love. Jim is a great gardener, so Octavia and he became absorbed at once. He has not got much business

to do, and only has to go in to Philadelphia about once a week, so his time is spent with Kitty and books



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and horses and the trees and flowers; and if you could see the difference it makes, Mamma, in a man! His eyes do not have a bit the look of a terrier after a rat, and he does not always answer literally to everything you say, and if you speak about books or art or anything of other countries, he is familiar with it all, and listens and isn't bored, and hardly attending, so anxious to get his anecdote in, as lots of them were in New York. But on the other hand the Americans would never be the splendid successful nation they are if they were all peaceful and cultivated like Jim Bond; so all is as it should be, and both kinds are interesting.

Kitty is a darling, an immense sense of humour, perfectly indifferent about dress, and as lanky and unshaped a figure as any sporting Englishwoman; when she comes to stay with us at Valmond she only brings two frocks for even a big party! But she is like Octavia, a character, and everyone loves her, and would not mind if she did not wear any clothes at all. You must meet her the next time, Mamma. She did not tremendously apologize because the hot water tap in my bath-room would not run (as Mrs. Spleist did when one of the twenty electric light branches round my bed-room would not shine); she just said, "You must call Ambrosia" (a sweet darkie servant) "and she will bring you a can from the kitchen."

She sat on the floor by the wood fire in the old-fashioned grate, and made me laugh so I was late for dinner. They had a dinner party for us, because they said it was their duty to show us their best, as we had seen a little of New York; and it was a delightful evening. Several of the men had moustaches, and they were all perfectly at ease, and not quite so kind and polite as the others, and you felt more as if they were of the same sex as Englishmen, and you quite understood that they could get in love. The one at my right hand was a pet, and has asked us to a dinner at the Squirrels Club to-night, and I am looking forward to it so. The women were charming, not so well dressed as in New York, and perhaps not so pretty, or so very bright and ready with repartee as there, but sweet all the same. And I am sure they are all as good as gold, and don't have divorces in the family nearly so often. That was the impression they gave me. One even spoke to me of her baby, and we had quite a "young mother's conversation," and I was able to let myself go and talk of my two angels without feeling I should be a dreadful bore. It was, of course, while the men stayed in the dining-room, which they did here just like England.

The Squirrels Club is as old as Kitty's house, and is such a quaint idea. All the members cook the dinner in a great kitchen, and there are no servants to wait or lay the table, or anything, only a care-taker who washes up. We are to go there about seven—it is in the country, too—and help to cook also; won't it be too delightful, Mamma! Octavia says she feels young again at the thought. I will finish this to-morrow, and tell you all about it before the post goes.



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Thursday._

I am only just awake, Mamma. We had such an enchanting evening last night, and stayed up so late I slept like a top. We drove to the club house in motors, and there were about six or seven women beside ourselves and ten or twelve men all in shirt-sleeves and aprons, and the badge of the Club, a squirrel, embroidered on their chests. I don't know why, but I think men look attractive in shirt-sleeves. Sometimes at home in the evening, if I am dressed first, I go into Harry's room to hurry him up, and if I find him standing brushing his hair I always want him to kiss me, when his valet isn't there, he looks such a darling like that; and he always does, and then we are generally late. But I must not think of him, because when I do I just long for him to come back, and to rush into his arms, and of course I have got to remain angry with him for ages yet.

How I have wandered from the delightful squirrels! Well, the one who asked us was called Dick Seton, and as I told you he is a pet, and a *young man!* That is, not elderly, like the business ones we met in New York, and not a boy like the partners at the dance, but a young man of thirty, perhaps, with such nice curly light hair and blue eyes, and actually *not married!* Everything of this age is married in New York.

There was a huge slate in the kitchen with who was to do each course written up, and it looked so quaint to see in among the serious dishes:

"Cutting Grouts for Soup"—the Countess of Chevenix assisted by Mr. Buckle.

"Hollandaise Sauce"—The Marchioness of Valmond, Mr. Dick Seton.

And we did do ours badly, I am afraid, because there was a nice low dresser in a cool gloomy place, and we sat down on that, and my assistant whispered such lovely things that we forgot, and stirred all wrong, and the head cook came and scolded us, and said we had spoilt six eggs, and he should not give us another job; we were only fit to arrange flowers! So we went to the dining-room, and you can't think of the fun we had. The Club house is an old place with low rooms and all cosey. Octavia was in there—the dining-room—helping to lay the cloth, as she had been rather clumsy, too, and been sent away, and her young man was as nice as mine; and we four had a superb time, as happy as children, but Tom was nothing but a drone, for he sat with Kitty in a window seat behind some curtains, and did not do a thing.

My one said he had never seen such a sweet squirrel as me in my apron, and I do wish, Mamma, we could have fun like this in England; it is so original to cook one's dinner! And when it came in, all so well arranged, each member knowing his appointed duties, it was excellent, the best one could taste. And everybody was witty and brilliant, and nobody wanted to interrupt with their story before the other had finished his. So the time simply flew until it came to dessert, and there were speeches and toasts,



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and Octavia and I as the guests of honour each received a present of a box of bonbons like a huge acorn; but when we opened them, out of mine there jumped a darling little real squirrel, quite tame and gentle, and cuddled up in my neck and was too attractive, so I purred to it of course and caressed it, for the rest of the time; and Mr. Dick said it was not fair to waste all that on a dumb animal, when there were so many deserving talking squirrels in the room, and especially himself. I have never had such an amusing evening. Even the quaint and rather solemn touch pleased me, of the first toast being said between two freshly lighted candles, to those members who were dead. The club dates from Colonial times, too, so there must have been a number of them, and if their spirits were there in the room they must have seen as merry a party as the old room had ever witnessed.

Dear, polite, courteous gentlemen! And I wish you had been with us, Mamma. I came a roundabout way back alone with my “partner-in-sauce” as we called him, in his automobile, an open one, and we just tore along for miles as fast as we could, and though he was driving himself, he managed to say all sorts of charming things; and when we got back to Kitty’s more people came, and we had an impromptu dance and then supper, and all the servants had gone to bed, so we had to forage for things in the pantry, and altogether I have never had such fun in my life, and Octavia, too.

To-day we go back to New York and then out West, so good-bye, dearest Mamma. I will cable you from each stopping place, and write by every mail.

Fond love to my babies.

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

PLAZA HOTEL, NEW YORK

BACK IN NEW YORK, PLAZA HOTEL.

DEAREST MAMMA,—All our preparations are made, and we start for the West by Niagara Falls, which I have always wanted to see. The Vicomte is coming with us, and our charming Senator, Elias P. Arden. So I am sure we shall have an agreeable time. “Lola” and the husband have already started, and will join us at Los Angeles from San Francisco; and the Senator says he is “in touch” with Mr. Renour, and he hopes he will “be along” by the time we get to the private car.

These few days in New York have confirmed our opinion of everyone’s extraordinary kindness and hospitality. All their peculiarities are just caused by being so young a



nation; they are quite natural; whatever their real feelings are come out. As children are touchy, so are they, and as children boast, so do they, and just as children's hearts are warm and generous, so are theirs. So I think this quality of youth is a splendid one, don't you, Mamma?

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Valerie's set are practically the same as ours at home in their tone, and way of living, and amusements, so I have not told you anything special of them, the only difference being we never worry in the least about what people think of us, and when we talk seriously it is of politics, and they of Wall Street affairs, which shows, doesn't it, that such things are more interesting to them than the making of laws. We have not heard politics talked about in any class in New York. Attacks on the President often, because he is said to have interfered with trusts by probing their methods, which gets back to the vital point of dollars and cents. People will speak for and against him for hours, but not from a political point of view, and abstract political discussions we have never heard.

I have not yet grasped the difference between "Democrat" and "Republican," and so I don't know if it is just the same as at home, that whichever is Radical wants to snatch each one for his own hand and does not care a rush about the nation; while whichever is Conservative cares nothing for personal advancement—having arrived there already—so has time and experience to look ahead and think of the country.

If you had a delicate baby, Mamma, would not you rather give it into the hands of a thoroughly trained nurse than an ignorant aspiring nursery maid taking her first place, who was more likely to be thinking of the head nurse's wages she was going to get than her duties to the child? That is how I look upon the parties at home, but here I expect it is more as the Whigs and Tories were, each equal in class and experience, only holding different views. I should like to have a peep about five hundred years ahead. I am sure the ignorant nurse-maids will have killed our baby by then, and we shall be a wretched down-trodden commune, while they will be a splendidly governed aristocratic nation under one autocratic king!

I have not told you a thing about the Park, or the general aspect of the houses; we are rushed so it is hard to write. But the Park is a perfectly charming place, as nice as the Bois, and much nicer than our attempt that way, and everyone who goes there seems to be out on a holiday. Fifth Avenue runs beside it like our Park Lane, beginning at Fifty-ninth Street, and about every five years people have to move further up, because of the encroaching shops. So it hardly seems worth while to spend millions on building white marble palaces which may be torn down or converted in so short a time. Nothing is allowed to last. Heaps of the mansions are perfectly beautiful in style, and many simple as well, which is always the prettiest; but you can meet Francois Premier Castles, and Gothic Halls, and all sorts of mixed freaks, too, in half an hour's walk, and it seems to me a pity they can't use their rollers and just cart these into the side streets. But if I were rebuilding Valmond House I would get an American architect to do it for me, and on the American principle, that is, I should get him to study all the best they have done and then "go one better!"



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Unless you are quite in the poor parts every creature in the streets is spruce and well dressed; men and women have that look of their things being brushed and ironed to the last state of perfection. And if it is the fashion in Paris to have hats two feet across they will have them a yard; but as they all have the same, one's eye gets accustomed to it, and it does not look ridiculous.

The longer one stays the more one admires that extraordinary quality of "go"—a mental alertness and lucidity they have immeasurably beyond European nations; very few people are intellectual, but all are intelligent and advancing. No one browses like such hundreds do at home, and all are much more amusing companions in consequence.

Last night we went to see China Town with Valerie's brother and some other young men, and two or three women. Valerie would not come because she has done it before and it bores her, and no American woman deliberately does what she finds wearisome. They are sensible. First we dined at the Cafe Lafayette, which is almost down town, and near Washington Square, and then started in automobiles which we left in the Bowery. One always thought that was a kind of cut throat Whitechapel, did not one? But it is most quiet and respectable, so is China Town, and I am sure we need not have had the two detectives who accompanied us.

Outside there is nothing very lurid to look at. The Mayor met us at the opening of the street, a most entertaining character of what would answer to our Coster class I suppose. He spoke pure Bowery-Irish-Coster-American slang, which the detectives translated for us. It was about this: That he had seen English Lords before, and they weren't half bad when you knew 'em, and he took a particular fancy to Octavia because he said "her Nobs" (his late wife, or one of them) had red hair, too, and "ginger for pluck." He had several teeth missing, lost in fights, I suppose, and a perfectly delicious sense of humour. I wish we could have understood all he said, but our host insinuated it was just as well not! He led us first to "the theatre"—a den underground, with the stage still lower at one end, where a Chinese play was going on. The atmosphere was an unbelievable mixture of heat and smell. And wouldn't you hate to be a Chinese woman, Mamma, packed away in a sort of pen at one corner with all the other women and children and not allowed to sit with the men. We went in there, too, for as long as we could stand it. The audience were too quaint, not in their national dress, but ordinary clothes and pigtailed; you couldn't have been sure they were human beings, or of what sex.

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The play seemed to a thrilling one as far as we could see; they had just got to a part where the whole company were going to be beheaded. One of our party felt faint from the heat, and no wonder, so we continued our travels. We descended a kind of ladder near the door, into the bowels of the earth; and I was glad it was almost pitch dark, because Gaston was just below me and made the greatest fuss of the necessity of putting each of my feet safely on the steps for me; and once towards the bottom I am sure he kissed my instep, but as it might have been a bundle of tow which was sticking out on the last step, brushing against me, I did not like to say anything to him about it. We crossed some kind of rat hole rooms in utter darkness, and here one respectful brotherly arm, and one passionate, *entreprenant* one came round my waist! And while in my right ear the voice of Valerie's brother said kindly, "I'm obliged to hold on to you or you'll have an awful fall"—in my left Gaston was whispering, "Je vous adore, vous savez; n'allez pas si vite!" So I had to be very angry with him, and clung to Valerie's brother, who toward the end of the evening got into being quite a cousin instead of an aunt or father.

We had been burrowing under the auditorium, and presently found ourselves in a large cellar where a Chinese was cooking on a brazier an unspeakable melange of dog, fish, and rat for the actors' supper, with not a scrap of ventilation anywhere!! Finally, up some steps, we emerged behind the scenes, and saw all the performers dressing—rows of false beards and wonderful garments hanging all around the walls; the most indescribable smell of opium, warm eastern humanity, and grease paint, and no *air*! A tiny baby was there being played with by its proud father. Their lung capacity must be quite different to ours, because if we had not quickly returned I am sure some of us would have fainted. I felt strangely excited; it had a weird, fierce effect. What a fatal mysterious nation the Chinese! Unlike any others on earth. I did not much care who held me going back. I only wanted to rush to the open air, and when we had climbed up again and got outside in the street, we all staggered a little and could not speak.

When breath returned, further down the street, we recommenced burrowing into a passage to the opium den, and this was a most wonderful and terrible sight; a room with a stove in it, not more than ten feet square and about eight feet high, no perceptible ventilation but the door, which the detective put his foot in to keep a little open; a raised platform along one side of the place, and on it four Chinamen lying in different stages of the effects of opium. The first one's eyes were beginning to glaze, the pipe had fallen from his hand, and he was staring in front of him, and clutching some sheets of paper with Chinese writing on them in one hand, a ghastly smile of extraordinary bliss on his poor thin face.



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He was “happy and dreamin’,” the detective told us. I do wonder what about, don’t you, Mamma? The next had just begun to smoke, and was angry at our entrance because we let in some air! The detectives made him give us the pipe to smell, and we watched the way it was smoked, the man looking sullen and fierce and resentful, crouching like a beast ready to spring. So Valerie’s brother and Gaston both thought it their duty to take care of me. The next man was half asleep, also smoking, and the fourth what they call “quite sick.” He was the most dreadful of all, as he might have been a corpse except for the rising and falling of his chest. The Mayor told us, with the most amusing reflections upon this serious subject, that he would lie like that for forty-eight hours and then wake. A fearful looking creature crouched by the stove, cooking some more dog, or preparing something for the opium; and a glaring piece of scarlet cloth hung down from a rail at the top. There were some wicked long knives lying about, and the whole thing, lit up by the light of one lantern, was a grim picture of horror I shall never forget and hope never to see again. And this is called pleasure! What a mercy, Mamma, our idea of joy is different. I am glad to have seen these strange things, but I never want to again.

Everyone’s head swam from the smell of the opium, and Tom said he was rather sorry he had let us go there because of that; but Octavia told him not to be ridiculous; experience is what we had come to America for, and this is one of the sights.

After that we just had fun, going to a joss-house to have our fortunes told, where a quaint priest and acolyte went through all sorts of comic mysteries, and finally paired Octavia off with one of the detectives for her fate! (Tom was furious!) and me with Valerie’s brother, and Gaston looked in despair at that! Then after buying curiosities at the curio shop, we returned to the automobiles and went to Delmonico’s to supper. But the opium had got into our brains I think, for we could only tell gruesome stories, and all felt “afraid to go home in the dark!”

And now, Mamma, in case you have been worrying over us going into awful places, I may as well tell you that at the end of supper our host informed us that the whole show of the opium den had been got up for our benefit, and was not the real thing at all!!! But whether this is true or no I can’t say; if it was “got up” it was awfully well done, and I don’t want to see any realler.

We can’t get enough “drawing-rooms” on the train for everybody to-morrow, so Octavia and I shall have one, and the senator and either Tom or the Vicomte the other, and whoever is left out will have to sleep in the general place. I believe it is too odd, but I will tell you all about it when I have seen it.—If Harry writes to you and asks about me, just say I am enjoying myself awfully, and say I am thinking of becoming a naturalised American! That ought to bring him back at once. I have been dying to cable and make it up with him, but of course as I have determined not to, I can’t. I am sorry to hear Hurstbridge got under the piano and then banged the German Governess’s head as she

tried to pull him out; but what can you expect, Mamma? His temper is the image of Harry's.



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Kiss the angels for me, both of them!

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

NIAGARA

NIAGARA.

DEAREST MAMMA,—We got here this morning after such a night!—The sleeping cars are too amusing. Picture to yourself the arrangement of seats I told you about going to the Spleists, with a piece put in between to make into a bed, and then another bed arranged on top, these going all down each side and just divided from the aisle by green curtains; so that if A. likes to take a top berth and B. an underneath one, they can bend over their edges, and chat together all night, and no one would know except for the bump in the curtains. But fancy having to crouch up and dress on one's bed! And when Octavia and I peeped out of our drawing-room this morning we saw heaps of unattractive looking arms and legs protruding, while the struggle to get into clothes was going on.

A frightful thing happened to poor Agnes. Tom's valet, who took our tickets, did not get enough, not understanding the ways, and Tom and the senator and the Vicomte had tossed up which two were to have the drawing-room, and Tom lost; so when Hopkins, who is a timid creature, found a berth did not mean a section, he of course gave up his without saying anything to Tom, and as the conductor told him there was not another on the train he wandered along and at last came to Agnes's. She had a lower berth next our door, and was away undressing me. Hopkins says he thought it was an unoccupied one the conductor had overlooked, so he took it, and when Agnes got back and crawled in in the dark she found him there!! There was a dreadful scene!! We heard Hopkins scream, and I believe he ran for his life, and no one knows where he slept.

Agnes said it was too ridiculous and "*tres mauvais gout*" on his part to make such a fuss over "*un petit accident de voyage.*" "*Je puis assurer Madame la Marquise,*" she said, "*que s'il etait reste c'eut ete la meme chose. Son type ne me dit rien!*" At the same time she does not think these trains "*comme il faut!*"

We were just in time for an early breakfast when we arrived at this hotel, and the quaintest coloured gentlemen waited on us; they were rather aged, and had a shambling way of dragging their feet, but the most sympathetic manners, just suited to the four honeymoon pairs who were seated at little tables round. That was a curious coincidence, wasn't it, Mamma, to find four pairs in one hotel in that state. None of the bridegrooms were over twenty-five, and the brides varied from about eighteen to twenty-



eight; we got the senator to ask about them, and one lot had been married a week, and they each read a paper propped up against their cups, and did not speak much, and you would have thought they were quite indifferent; but from where I sat I could see their right and left hands clasped under the table! Another pair with



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a dour Scotch look ate an enormous meal in solemn silence, and then they went off and played tennis! Their wedding took place three days ago!! The third had been there a fortnight, and seemed very jaded and bored, while the last were mere children, and only married yesterday! She was too sweet, and got crimson when she poured out his tea, and asked him if he took sugar? I suppose up till now they had only been allowed nursery bread and milk.

I don't believe I should like to have had my honeymoon breakfasts in public, would you, Mamma? Because I remember Harry always wanted—but I really must not let myself think of him or all my pride will vanish, and I shall not be able to resist cabling.

I find the senator too attractive. He does not speak much generally, and never boasts of anything he has done. We have to drag stories out of him, but he must have had such a life, and I am sure there is some tragedy in his past connected with his wife. He has such a whimsical sense of humour, and yet underneath there is a ring of melancholy sometimes. I know he and I are going to be the greatest friends. Gaston is getting seriously in love, which is perfectly ridiculous; he almost threatened to throw himself into the falls when we went to look at them; but fortunately I said only the very curly-haired could look well when picked up drowned, so that put him off.

I was not half so impressed with the falls as I ought to have been. They don't seem so high as in the pictures, and the terrible buildings on one side distract one so it seems as if even the water can't be natural, and must be just arranged by machinery. But it was fun going under them, and those oilskin coats and caps are most becoming. You go down in a lift and then walk along passages scooped out of the rock until you are underneath the volume of water, which pours over in front of you like a curtain. It was here Gaston suggested his suicide, and all because I had told the senator that he was to arrange for us to have a drive alone in the afternoon, and he overheard in the echo the place makes. I had never asked him to drive alone he said, and I said, certainly not, the senator and I would talk philosophy, whereas he would make love to me, I knew, and it would not be safe. That pacified him a good deal, and as I had been rather unsympathetic and horrid all the morning, I was lovely to him for the rest of the day; and he is really quite a dear, Mamma, as I have always told you.

Octavia says she thinks it rather hard my grabbing everybody like this, and she had wanted the senator for herself on our trip, so we have agreed to share him, and Tom says it is mean no one has been asked for him. So the senator has wired to "Lola" to bring two cousins to meet us at Los Angeles. He says they are the sweetest girls in the world, and would keep anyone alive. I am rather longing to get there and begin our fun. After the falls we did the rapids, and they impressed me far more deeply; they are rushing, wicked-looking things if you like, Mamma, and how anyone ever swam them I can't imagine. The spring is all too beautiful, only just beginning, and some of the

bends of the river and views are exquisite. I felt quite romantic on the way back, and allowed Gaston to repeat poetry to me. We are just starting to get on to Chicago, so good-bye, dear Mamma.



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Love from your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

P.S.—Octavia says she thinks I am leading Gaston on, but I don't, do you, Mamma? Considering I stop him every time he begins any long sentence about love—what more can I do, eh?

CHICAGO.

CHICAGO.

DEAREST MAMMA,—We had such an interesting dinner on the train the night we left Niagara, and here we are. A millionaire travelling also, whom the senator knew, joined us for the meal, so we sat four at one table, and Gaston and Octavia alone at the other side. He was such a wonderful person, the first of just this kind we have met yet, although we are told there are more like him in Pittsburg and Chicago.

He was thick-set everywhere, a bull neck and fierce moustache and bushy eyebrows, and gave one the impression of sledge-hammer force. The whole character seemed to be so dominated and obsessed by an immense personal laudation, that his conversation created in our minds the doubt that qualities which required so much vaunting could really be there. It was *his* wonderful will which had won his game, *his* wonderful diplomacy, *his* wonderful knowledge of men, *his* clever perception, *his* supreme tact; in short, *his* everything in the world. The slightest show of a contrary opinion to anything he said was instantly pounced upon and annihilated. I do wonder, Mamma, if two of his sort got together what their conversation would be about? Would they shout one another down, each saying he was perfect, and so end in thunder or silence? Or would they contradict each other immediately and come to blows, or would they realise it was no use boasting to one of their own species, and so talk business or be quiet?

We, being strangers, were splendid victims for him, and I am sure he spent a dinner of pure joy. After each speech of self appreciation he would look round the table in a triumphant challenging way, and say, "Say, senator, isn't that so?" and the dear senator, with a twinkle in his grey eye, would reply:

"Why, certainly, Governor." (He was a governor of some place once, the senator knew.)

Finally he got on to his marvellous cleverness in the training of the young. He had no children himself, he said, but he had "raised" two young men in his office, and as a proof of their wonderful astuteness from his teaching, "I give you my word, Ma'am," he said, "either of them could draw a contract now for me, out of which I could slip at any moment!!!"



Isn't that a superb idea, Mamma! And the complete frankness with which it was said! What we would call sharp practice he considered "smart," and no doubt that is the way to get rich; for when he had gone on to the smoking car, the senator told us he was five times a millionaire, and really a good fellow underneath.

"We've got to have all sorts to make a nation, and he's the kind of machine that does the rough-hewing," he said. "He did no bragging when he was under dog; he just bottled it up and pushed on, but it was that spirit which caused him to rise. Now he's made good, won his millions, and it bursts out."—(It certainly did!)



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The Senator always sees straight. He said also: "He rough-hews everything he handles, including his neighbours' nerves; he has no mercy or pity or consideration for anyone serving him, and yet he's the kindest heart towards children and animals, and the good he does to them is about the only thing he don't brag about."

It interested me immensely, but Tom had got so ruffled that I am sure even his sense of humour could not have kept him from contradicting Craik Purdy, his name is—Craik V. Purdy, I mean!

The Senator told us lots more about him and his methods, succeeding by sheer brute force and shouting all opposition down. Don't you wish, Mamma, we had some like him at home to deal with the socialists? These men are the real autocrats of the world, even though America is a republic. But wouldn't it be frightful to be married to a person like that! Octavia, who even in the noise of the train had heard some of it, asked the Senator what the wife was like, and he told us she had been a girl of his own class who had never risen with him, and was a rare exception in American women, who rise quicker than the men as a rule.

"She's been every sort of drawback to him," he said, "and yet he is almighty kind to her and covers her with diamonds; and she is a dullish sort of woman with a cold in her head."

Octavia said at once that was the kind she wanted to see in Chicago. Of what use to meet more charming and refined people like in New York or Philadelphia. She wanted to sample the "rough-hewn." And we both felt, Mamma, one must have a nice streak in one to go on being kind to a person who has a continual cold in her head.

The Senator said he would arrange a luncheon party for us in Chicago unlike anything we had had in any place yet, and it is coming off to-morrow. But first I must tell you of Detroit, where we stopped the night before last, and of our arrival here. The whole train goes over in a ferry boat from the Canadian to the American side and dinner and screaming tram cars under the window are the only distinct memories I have after our arrival, until next day, when we took a motor and went for a drive.

Detroit is really the most perfectly laid out city one could imagine, and such an enchanting park and lake,—infinitely better than any town I know in Europe. It ought to be a paradise in about fifty years when it has all matured. That is where the Americans are clever, in the beautiful laying-out of their towns; but then, as I said, they have not old debris to contend with, though I shall always think it looks queer and unfinished to see houses standing just in a mown patch unseparated from the road by any fence. I should hate the idea of strangers being able to peep into my windows.

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We left about twelve, after being interviewed by several reporters in the hall of the hotel. These halls are apparently meeting places for countless men, simply crammed like one could have imagined a portico in the Roman days,—not people necessarily staying there, but herds of others from outside. The type gets thicker as one leaves New York. It reminds one of a funny man I once saw in the pantomime who put on about six suits, one after another, growing gradually larger, though no taller or fatter—just thick. All these in the hall were meaty, not one with that lean look of the pictures of “Uncle Sam,” but more like our “John Bull,” only not portly and complacent as he is, but just thick all over, at about the three coat stage; thick noses, thick hair, thick arms, thick legs, and nearly invariably clean-shaven and keen looking. The Senator said they were the ordinary business people and might any of them rise to be President of the Republic. We are perfectly overcome with admiration and respect for their enormous advancing and adaptive power, because just to look at we should not call these of the Senator’s class. But think what brains they must have, and what vitality; and those things matter a great deal more than looks to a country.

The Senator said the type would culminate in Chicago, and gradually get finer again out in the far West. And he seemed right, from the impression we got of the crowd in this hotel. It was rather like a Christmas nightmare, when everyone had turned into a plum pudding, or those gingerbread men the old woman by the Wavebeach pier used to sell. Do you remember, Mamma? Perfectly square and solid. They are ahead of Detroit, and at the six coat stage here. Probably all as good as gold, and kind and nice and full of virtues; but for strangers who don’t know all these things, just to look at, they make one think one is dreaming.

Do you suppose it is, if they have to be so much among pork and meat generally, perhaps that makes them solid? We did not know a soul to speak to, nor did the Senator either, though he said he was acquainted with many nice people in Chicago; so perhaps they were just travellers like us after all, and we have no right to judge of a place by them.

We supped—we had arrived very late—and watched the world in from the theatres. We don’t know of what class they were, or of what society, only they were not the least like New York. The women were, some of them, very wonderfully dressed, though not that exquisite Paris look of the New Yorkers, and they had larger hats and brighter colours; and numbers of them were what the Senator calls “homely.” We were very silent,—naturally, we did not like to say our thoughts aloud to the Senator, an American; but he spoke of it to us himself.

He said his eye, accustomed to the slender lean cowboys and miners, found them just as displeasing as he was sure we must. “Lordy,” he said, “they look a set of qualifying prize-fighters gorged with sausage-meat, and then soaked in cocktails.” And though that sounds frightfully coarse to write, Mamma, it is rather true. Then he added, “And

yet some of the brightest brains of our country have come from Chicago. I guess they kept pretty clear of this crowd.”



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One of the strangest things is that no one is old, never more than sixty and generally younger; the majority from eighteen to thirty-five, and also, something we have remarked everywhere, everyone seems happy. You do not see weary, tired, bored faces, like in Europe, and no one is shabby or dejected, and they are all talking and drinking and laughing with the same intent concentrated force they bring to everything they do, and it is simply splendid.

To-morrow we are going to drive about and see everything. The aristocracy live in fine houses just outside the town, we are told, and the Senator has arranged with Mr. Craik Purdy for us all to go and have lunch with him in his mansion. This is the party he promised us, which would be different to what we had seen before, and we are looking forward to it. And there is one thing I feel sure: even if they are odd, we shall find a generous welcome, original ideas, and kind hearts; and the more I see the more I think these qualities matter most.

Now I must go to bed, dearest Mamma.

You haven't heard from Harry, I suppose? Because if you have you might let me know.

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

GOING WEST

In the train going West.

DEAREST MAMMA,—Forgive this shaky writing, but I had no time before we left, and I feel I must tell you at once about our luncheon at the Purdy Castle, in case anything gets dulled in my memory. It was a unique experience. We spent the morning seeing the town, an immense busy place with colossal blocks of houses, and some really fine architecture, all giving the impression of a mighty prosperous and advancing nation, and quite the best shops one could wish for, not too crowded, and polite assistants—even at the ribbon counter!

Octavia and I made ourselves look as smart as we could in travelling dresses, because there would be no time to change after the lunch; we had to go straight to the train. I always think it is such impertinence imposing your customs upon other nations when you are travelling among them, like the English people who will go to the Paris restaurants without hats, and one Englishwoman we met at a party at Sherry's in New York in a draggled tweed skirt and coat, when all the other women were in long afternoon dresses. One should do as one's hosts do, but we could not help it this time and did not look at all bad considering.

However, when we got there we felt we were indeed out of it! But I must begin from the very door-step.



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We drove a little way beyond the town to rows of dwelling mansions more or less important and growing in magnificence until we arrived at one inside some gates, a cross between a robber's castle on the stage, and a Henri III. chateau, mixed with a "little English Gothic." Huge, un-nameable animals were carved on top of the gates. Tom said the fathers of them must have been "gazeekas," and their mothers "slithy toves," out of "Through the Looking-glass." They were Mr. Purdy's crest, we suppose. Then came a short gravel path and a robber's castle, nail-studded door. All the downstairs windows had the shutters shut, so we were rather nervous ringing the bell in case there had been a death since our invitation came; but the door was opened immediately by a German butler—one of those people one sees at sea-side hotels, who have come over to learn English, with a slow sort of walk and stentorian breathing.

The hall was full of pictures in the widest gold frames, all sorts: landscapes, portraits, cats, dogs, groups of still life, good, bad, and indifferent massed together on a wall covered with large-patterned scarlet and gilt Japanese leather paper. Guarding the doors and staircase were imitation suits of armour on dummy men, standing under some really beautiful Toledo blades crossed above their heads. Then, through crimson plush curtains with gold applique Florentine patterned borders, we were ushered into the drawing-room.

It was so original! Think, Mamma, of a sarcophagus for a drawing-room! Stone walls and floor, tombstone mantelpieces (mixed Gothic), really good Persian rugs, and the very most carved, brand new gilt Louis Philippe suite of furniture, helped out by mammoth armchairs and sofa, covered in gold brocade. These had the same shape and look for furniture as the men in the hotel hall had for men, so colossally stuffed out and large. The Vicomte said, "Dieu! Un salon d'Hippopotames!" It was a glorious sunny day, but from the hall onwards all daylight had been excluded, and the drawing-room was a blaze of electric light, flashing from countless gilt branches; while the guests to meet us were drawn up on the hearth rug, the women in full restaurant evening dress, a little décollete, and hats, and glittering with jewels.

Octavia and I felt miserably cheap creatures. Mr. Craik V. Purdy, simply gorgeous about waistcoat and watchchain, presented us to his wife, a short, red-haired woman (I do dislike red hair, don't you, Mamma?). She was very stout, but I don't understand why she was such a "drawback." She had the jolliest face and laugh, even if her voice was the voice of the Lusitania's siren.

The customs are so quaint! She introduced us to each guest (not the guests to us!) and they each repeated our names after her like this:



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“Lady Chevenix and Lady Valmond, I want to present you to Mrs. Colonel Prodgers.” Then Mrs. Colonel Prodgers repeated, “Lady Chevenix, Lady Valmond,” and so on all down the line, until our poor names rang in our heads; and Tom and the Senator and the Vicomte just the same. The company were about seven women besides our hostess, and only three young, the others verging on forty; and all the men were husbands, whom the wives spoke of as “Mr.” So and So when they mentioned them—just as the townspeople do when they come out to the Conservative meetings or bazaars at home; and the husbands did the same. But they do this in New York even, unless in the very highest set; no man is spoken of by his wife as “Bob” or “Charlie” or “my husband;” always “Mr.” So and So.

Is it not odd, Mamma, that they who are so wonderfully quick and adaptive should not have noticed that this is a purely middle class peculiarity? Mr. Purdy had just time to tell us he had paid \$40,000 for a large Dutch picture hanging against the Gothic stone of one panel of the wall, and \$50,000 for a Gainsborough on the next (yes, Mamma, a beautiful powdered lady in a white robe was smiling down with whimsical sorrow upon us). Then luncheon was announced and we went in.

The dining-room had been decorated, he told us, a year or two ago, when taste was even different to what it is now! And he was thinking of altering it and having it pure Louis XIV. At present it was composed of saddle-bag coverings, varnished mahogany and a stencilled fleur-de-lys wall with crossed battle-axes upon it, between pictures and some china plates, while the table was lit by two huge lamps from the ceiling, shaded by old gold silk shades with frills. It was as gay as possible, and the time flew. Here the implements to eat with were more varied and numerous than even at the Spleists, and the tablecloths more lacy, and quantities of gold dishes full of almonds and olives and candies and other nice things, were by one’s plate, and one could eat them all through the meal. Everyone else did, so we did, too, Mamma! and I think it is a splendid idea. Our host spent his time in telling, first Octavia, then me, of his fortune and possessions, and how there was no picture in Europe he could not buy if he wished it, and he intended to start a gallery. Octavia said he was quite right, as he evidently had a most original taste; and he was delighted.

The cold in the wife’s head could be heard quite plainly even where we were, and the host shouted so kindly: “Say, Anabel, be careful of that draught.”

Fancy an English husband bothering to think of a draught after a catarrh had been there for fifteen years!

I admired her diamond dog collar and splendid pearls, and he replied with open-hearted pride, “They came from Tiffany’s in New York, Ma’am. I don’t hold with buying foreign goods for American ladies; Mrs. Purdy has got as first-class stones as any Princess in the world, and they are every one purchased in America!”



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The man at my other hand was very young, but even so a husband. I asked him how it was all the men were married, and he said he “didn’t kinder know”; it was a habit they dropped into on leaving college; but for his part he though perhaps it was a pity not to be able to have a look round a little longer. And then he said thoughtfully, “I guess you’re right. I don’t recollect many single men. Why, there’s not one here!”

And I said we had found it like that everywhere; they all seemed married except in Philadelphia.

“But you see we can quit if we want to,” he added, “though we don’t start out with that idea.” And probably they don’t, but I think it must give an underneath, comforting sort of feeling to know, when you are trotting up the aisle, or walking across the drawing-room to a lovely rigged-up altar to swear fidelity to the person who is waiting for you there, that if he annoys you in a fortnight, you can get free; and all the experience gained, and not a stain upon your character. I do wish we were half as sensible in England.

Just think of it, Mamma! I could have divorced Harry by now for quarrelling with me. I might then marry someone else, divorce him, and then presently make up with Harry and have the fun of getting married all over again. Just imagine what stories we could then tell one another! I could say “My intermediate husband never did such and such,” or, “Jack would not have spoken in that tone; he made love quite differently;” and so on, and Harry could say, “You are far sweeter than Clara; I am glad we have returned to one another.” Don’t you think it is a splendid plan? Or are you ridiculously old fashioned like most English people, who think their worn out old laws the only ones in the universe?

I hope I am not being impertinent, Mamma, to you, but really, after being in America for a while, where everything is so progressive, I get impatient with our solidity of thought. It is quite as wearisome to contemplate, as the Chicago solid body is unattractive to look at.

When we got back the Senator told us that the very young man I had been talking to had had a quarrel with his wife, and they were actually settling the divorce proceedings when Mr. Purdy’s invitation to meet the English travellers came the evening before, and they had sent off the lawyers and made it up to be able to come, and now they may go on happily for another two years, he says!

Our host told us all sorts of interesting things of his greatness, and how acquired. He is really a wonderful person, almost a socialist in politics, and a complete autocrat in his life and methods. Tom and the Vicomte sat at each side of the hostess, of course, and they told us she practically did not hear a word they said, she was so anxious that the servants should do their duty and ply them with food.



“Mr. Purdy would never forgive me if you didn’t get just what you fancy,” she said; and however quaint the idea, the spirit which prompted it was so kind; they said they just gorged everything which was put in front of them, to please her.



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“An admirable woman, and first class wife,” Tom told Octavia afterwards; so she said she would ask Mr. Purdy to arrange a divorce and they would have an exchange, she becoming Mrs. Purdy and Mrs. Purdy Countess of Chevenix for a while; but Tom would not agree to that. Men are selfish, aren't they, Mamma?

After lunch we were taken to see the pictures in the hall and different rooms, and some of them were really beautiful, and I have no doubt in a few years' time, when Mr. Purdy has travelled more, and educated his eye, he really will collect a gallery worth having, and eliminate the atrocities. His feeling was more to have a better collection than anyone else in Chicago, or indeed America, rather than the joy of the possession of the exquisite pictures themselves. But even this spirit gets together lovely things, which will benefit future, and more highly cultured people; so it all has good in it.

They were so kind we could hardly get away to catch our train, and we have promised to go again if ever we pass this way. The women after lunch talked among themselves, and were deeply intent and confidential when we got back to the drawing-room after seeing the pictures; but they made way for us and were most agreeable. All of them had set views on every subject, not any hesitation or indecision, and they all used each other's names in every sentence. They were full of practical common sense, and rigid virtue; and did not worry about intellectual conversation.

At this moment the Vicomte has peeped in to call Octavia and me to dinner; we were resting in our drawing-room. So I must stop. I will post this to-morrow when we get to a big station.

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

Morning.

P.S.—These sleeping cars are really wonderful. Such a thing happened last night! But it shows how comfortable the beds are, and how soundly people can sleep. At the station where we stopped after dinner, two couples got in, an uncle and nephew, married to an aunt and niece; only the uncle's wife was the niece, and the nephew's the aunt, a plain elderly person with a fierce commanding glance and a mole on her upper lip, while he was a nice-looking boy with droopy grey eyes. The train was very crowded, and they could only get two single berths—lower ones, but they are quite wide enough for two people to sleep in at a pinch. It appears the husbands went off to smoke while the wives undressed and got into bed, and when they returned the coloured conductor showed them to their places, naturally thinking, as they were the same name, the old ones were a pair and the young ones another. And fancy, Mamma, they never found out till the morning, when the whole car was awakened by the old lady's yells! And the old gentleman flew out like Hopkins and wanted to nearly murder the conductor. But it



was not the least his fault, was it? And the nephew, such a nice, generous fellow, gave the poor nigger twenty-five dollars to make up for being roughly handled. The niece still slept on through all this noise, and Tom, who was passing at the time the old gentleman lifted the curtains to climb in there, said she looked the sweetest thing possible with her long eyelashes on her cheek.



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The four had the next table to us at lunch, and they seemed all at sixes and sevens with one another, the elderly lady glaring at her young husband, and the uncle frowning at the niece, while the nephew had just the look of Hurstbridge when Mademoiselle scolds him unjustly. It was dreadful for them, wasn't it, Mamma? and not a soul to blame.

Still in the train.

DEAREST MAMMA,—You can't think what interesting country we are going through. We woke yesterday morning and peeped out about five to see the most perfect desolation one could imagine,—much more grim than the Egyptian desert: vast unending plains of uneven ground, with a rough dried drab grass in splotches, and high scrub. Not a bird or animal in all these hundreds of miles, only desolation; generally perfectly flat, but here and there rising ground and rough hills. The Senator says it is the end of the ranch country, but we have seen no sign of cattle or any beast, and what could they eat? At long intervals we have passed a few board shanties like card houses grouped together near the track; just fancy living there, Mamma! Even with the nicest young man in the world it would be a trial, wouldn't it? And those Mormons crossed it all in waggons! And we are finding it quite long in a train! It is still going on, and now the surface is a little different; low hills are sticking up just like elephants' backs, and the same colour; no ranches are here or any living thing. We get into our drawing-room, all of us, and the Senator tells us stories of his young days, too exciting, they must have been, when he came through here before all the railway was built. No wonder he is so splendid a character now, having had to be so strong and fearless all his life. Every word he says is interesting, and perfectly vivid and true; and his views on every subject that is discussed are common-sense and exact. He has no prejudices, and is not touchy. He can see his own nation's faults as well as ours, and his first thought is to appreciate the good qualities.

He says there is a very grave danger to the country in the liberty of the press, which has a most debasing influence by printing all the sensational news, and encouraging the interest in these things in the youthful mind. It must bring a paltry taint into the glorious freedom of the true American spirit, but that will right itself. He says: "They are too darned sane to suffer a scourge when once they begin to see its fruits." And while the rest were in the observation car after tea he talked to me of happiness. Happiness, he said, was the main and chief object in life, and yet nine-tenths of the people of the world throw it away for such imitation pleasure; and you can't often catch it again once you have lost it.



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I asked him what the greatest was, and he said perfect happiness was to be close to the woman you loved. If that was impossible there were several substitutes of a secondary sort—your children, ambition, success, and even rest. Then his eyes grew all misty and sad, and he looked out on the desert, and at that moment we were passing a group of a few shanties close to the rails. They were tumbled down and deserted, and nearby lay the skeleton of a horse. “It was in just such a place as that, only a good bit farther west, I first saw my Hearts-ease,” he said. “The boys called her ‘Hearts-ease’ because she was the sweetest English flower, drifted out to the mines with the people who had adopted her.” He paused, and I slipped my hand into his, he looked so sad, and then he told me all the story, Mamma, and it has touched me so, I tell it to you.

He had gone to this small rough camp, about thirty miles short of the Great Eagles, with only ten cents in his pocket, from the ranch where he had been a cowboy. He had ridden for days, and there his horse had died. He crept up half dead, carrying his saddle bags, and these people, “human devils,” he called them, who owned Hearts-ease, let him come in and lie in a shed. They kept a sort of a gambling den, all of the most primitive, and the worst rogues of the world congregated there in the evenings.

Hearts-ease was about sixteen, and they looked upon her as a promising decoy-duck, but she was “just the purest flower of the prairies,” he said, and so they beat and starved her in consequence, for not falling in with their views.

That night when he lay in the straw, she crept out of some corner where she slept, and warned him not to remain, if he had gold in the bags, or they would certainly murder him before morning; and she gave him some water, and half her wretched supper, because he had been too tired to eat when he arrived. Then he told her he was only a poor cowboy, hoping to get on to the Great Eagles Camp and make his fortune; and they stayed there talking till dawn, and she bathed his poor feet, all bleeding from his long tramp, and must have been too sweet and adorable, Mamma. And when the morning came and her adopted parents found he was still there and had only ten cents to pay with, they tried to make him leave, and beat Hearts-ease before his eyes, which made him so mad he got out his gun (that means revolver) and would have shot the man, only Hearts-ease clung to him, and begged him not to. Then they called in some more brutes, who had been drinking and gambling all night in the bar, and overpowered him, and threw him out, and the girl, too, and said he might take her to hell with him, they would shelter her no more. And one of the brutes said he would fight him for her, and they made a ring and the brute tried to get his pistol off first; but it hit another man, and before he could shoot again, the Senator fired and wounded him in the side; and as he fell, and the others, angry at



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his hitting one of them, all began to quarrel together, the Senator and the girl slipped away, and ran and hid in the scrub. If you could have heard him telling all this, Mamma, in the dying light, his strong face and quiet voice so impressive! I shall never forget it. Well, the girl had brought some bread in a handkerchief, which he had not eaten, and they shared that together, and when it was dark they slept under the stars; and “by then I’d just grown to love her,” he said, and “we were quite content to die together if we couldn’t push on to the big camp; but we meant to make an almighty try.”

They did get there, finally, and the sheriff married them, and here his voice broke a little and was so low I could hardly hear him. There were no two people ever so happy, he said. He built a little shack of boards not twelve feet long, “way up on the mountain,” and she kept it like a new pin, and was dainty and sweet and loving, and when he came in from the mines she would run to meet him “as gentle as a fawn,” and he never wanted to go to the saloons or drink like the other men, “though I was always pretty handy with my gun,” he said, “and had been through the whole ugly show.”

And presently he began to make a little money and would contrive to give her small things for the house; it gave her more pleasure than anything in the world to make it pretty, so that the little shed was the admiration of all the other miners’ wives. And once he was able to buy some flower seeds, and she grew a pansy in a pot because there is no green thing in that barren land, and she tended it and watched it as it came through the earth, and no one was so joyous as she. “It hurts me to look at pansies even now,” he said; and I was glad, Mamma, it was getting dark, because I felt the tears coming in my eyes. They were perfectly happy like this for about three years, and then Lola was born and they were happier still; but before that she used to take him up on the mountains, above their shack, to look down at the camps, and watch the stars, and she always used to see things in the future—how they would be very rich, and he would be a great man. “And this is where blood tells,” he said. “She was nothing but the love-child of some young English lord, drifted out to our land with her servant-girl mother. And she’d spent all her life in gambling hells among rogues, but her soul was the daintiest lady angel that ever walked this earth, though she could hardly read or write, and all the stars were her friends, and even a rattlesnake wouldn’t have wounded her.” Mustn’t she have been a darling, Mamma? She had hair like gold, and little ears, pink as sea shells, and big blue eyes and a flower for a mouth. No wonder he loved her so. He said her baby was even more pleasure to her than the pansy had been, and they both were “just kind of foolish over it.” Well, when Lola was about three months old a gang of desperadoes came to the camp, and among them the man



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the Senator had wounded for his wife. Before the Senator came in from the mine Hearts-ease heard the other miners' wives talking of this, and how this man had boasted he would kill him. She knew her husband was unarmed, having left his gun behind him that day because his second one was broken, and he would not leave her with none in the shack; quite unsuspectingly he returned with his comrades, and went into a bar to have a drink on his way back, as he often did to hear the news of the day. And when Hearts-ease could not find him on the road, she ran down there, carrying the gun and the baby, to warn him and give him his weapon, and got into the saloon just as the desperado and his following entered by another door.

The enemy called out to the Senator that he meant to "do for him this time," and as Hearts-ease rushed up to her husband with no fear for herself, holding out the gun, the brute fired and shot her through the heart, and she fell forward with Lola, dead in the Senator's arms. "And then the heavens turned to blood," he said, "and I took the gun out of her dead clasp and killed him like a dog." But by this time, Mamma, I really was crying so I could hardly hear what he said. No wonder his eyes have a sad look sometimes, or his hair is gray.

We neither of us spoke for a while. I could only press his strong kind hand. Then he recovered his voice, and went on as if dreaming: "It all came true what she prophesied. I am rich beyond her uttermost fancyings, and I've sampled pretty well most all the world, but I've always tried to do the things she would have liked me to do. I guess you've wondered at my dandy clothes, and shiny finger nails. Well, it's just to please her—if she's looking on." Wasn't he a man worth loving, Mamma! And of course she did not mind dying for him, and how happy and glad she must be now, if she is "looking on." Somehow the whole story has made me so long for Harry, that I have been perfectly miserable all the evening, and if you think you could cable to him and tell him to come back I think perhaps you might, and I will say I am sorry.

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

SAN FRANCISCO.

San Francisco.

Dearest Mamma,—I have just got a letter from Jane Roose about having heard of Mrs. Smith's being on the ship with Harry. Has it come to your ears, too? What on earth could a woman like that want to be going to Zanzibar for, unless she was hunting some man who was going to hunt lions? I call it most extraordinary, don't you? And probably



that is what these papers meant by saying he had gone to India with a fair haired widow, and I was so silly I never suspected a thing. Well, if he thinks it will annoy me he is very much mistaken. I don't care in *the least*, and am amusing myself *awfully* with Gaston, and you can tell him so; and as for cabling to him, as I think I asked you to in my last letter,



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don't dream of it! Let him enjoy himself if he can. But how any man could, with that woman, old enough to be his mother! I suppose she has taken some lovely clothes. She always has that sort of attraction, and no doubt she is pouring sympathy into his ears in the moonlight about my unkindness. It makes me feel perfectly sick that anyone can be such a fool as Harry to be taken in by her;—having got away from her once, to go back again.

No doubt it was she prompted him to be so horrible to me (he behaved like a perfect brute you know, Mamma, and I never did a thing). It is only because I can't bear him to be made a fool of that I mind in the least, otherwise I am perfectly indifferent. He can play with whom he chooses, it is nothing to me. Gaston is devoted to me, and although I should not think of divorcing Harry, No matter what he does, because of letting that odious woman become Marchioness of Valmond, still it is nice to know someone else would absolutely die for you, isn't it, even though I don't want to marry him—Gaston, I mean—We arrived here last night. We have come all round this way because now we are about it Octavia felt we ought to see Salt Lake City and San Francisco, and go down the coast to Los Angeles. Then we shall have done this side of America thoroughly. We only rushed through everywhere, of course, but got a general coup d'oeil. Crossing the great Salt Lake was wonderful. It seemed like being at sea on a bridge, and I could not help wondering what it would be like if the lake were rough. You can't think of anything so intelligent as the way that Brigham Young laid out Salt Lake City, seeing far ahead; he planned splendid avenues, and planted trees, and even though lots of them still have only mud roads, and little board shanties down them, they are there all ready for the time when the splendid houses are built, and tram cars and electric light everywhere; and such green and beautiful rich looking country! No wonder, after the desert it seemed the promised land.

I should hate to be a Mormon, wouldn't you, Mamma? Worse than being a Chinee and having to sit at the theatre penned up with only females. Think of sharing a man with six other women, and being a kind of servant. It is natural they look cowed and colourless,—the ones we saw; at least they were pointed out to us. But really it seems much honester to call them wives openly than to be like—but no, I won't speak of it any more. Only *I* will never share a man with another woman! Not the least little scrap of him; and if Harry thinks I will he is mistaken. To have six husbands is a much better plan; that, at least, would teach one to be awfully agreeable, and to understand the creatures' different ways; but a man to have six wives is an impossible idea,—specially as now it is not necessary, the way they behave. I wish I had got Jane's letter sooner, Mamma, because I could have amused myself more with Gaston than I have. I feel I have lost some opportunities, snubbing him all the time.



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San Francisco is perfectly wonderful. Imagine colossal switchbacks going for miles, and other switchbacks crossing them like a chess board, and you have some idea of the way of the streets; hills as steep as staircases, and the roads straight up and down, not zigzag, just being obliged to take the land as it comes; some persons in the beginning, I suppose, having ruled the plan on flat paper without considering what the formation was like, and then insisting on its being ruthlessly carried out.

When we arrived at the station, Octavia and I were put into a two horse fly because it was very windy and cold. It always is, we are told, and the motors for hire were all open. So we started to go to Fairmount, the big hotel right up on the hill. At first it was a sort of gradual slope past such sad desolation of levelled houses, with hardly the foundations left. The results of the earthquake and the fire are so incredible that you would think I was recounting travellers' tales if I described them, so I won't. Presently the coachman turned his two strong fat horses to the right, up one of the perpendicular roads, to get to our destination, but they would have none of it! They backed and jibbed and got as cross as possible, and he was obliged to continue along the slope, explaining to us that there was another turning further on which they might be persuaded to face. But when we got there it was just the same, no whipping or coaxing could get them to sample it. They backed so violently that we nearly went over into the cellars of a ruin at the corner, and the man asked us to get out, as he said it was no use, none of his horses would face these streets. And to go on to a gradual hill was miles further along, and he advised us to walk, as the hotel was only about six hundred yards away!! So in the growing night Octavia and I, clutching our jewel cases, were left to our own devices. We really felt deserted, as now that nearly everything in this neighbourhood is in ruins there are no people about much, and it felt like being alone in a graveyard, or Pompeii after dark. We almost expected bandits and wolves or jackals. We started, holding on our hats and feeling very ill-tempered, but we had not got a hundred yards on our climb, when a motor tore down upon us, and Gaston and the Senator jumped out; they had been getting quite anxious at our non-arrival and come to look for us. Tom, of course, being an English husband, was sure nothing had happened; and when we got there we found him having a cocktail and smoking a cigar calmly in the hotel.

As we have come this way we have picked up Lola sooner. I must call her that, Mamma, although I dislike using peoples' Christian names, but Mrs. Vinerhorn is so long, and everyone calls her Lola, and the Senator wished it; he wants us to be friends. He and I have been even more intimate since he told me his story. I am deeply attached to him; he is a sort of father and yet not—much nicer, really;



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and the best friend I have in the world, except you, Mamma, and one I would rather tell anything to. He is a perfect dear; we all love him. The two cousins, who were promised Tom, live here and came to dinner; such amusing girls, they would make any party merry, and we had the most gay and festive evening; and one of the Senator's secretaries has joined the party also, a very nice worthy young fellow whom the girls bully. Columbia and Mercedes are the girls' names, and they are both small and dark and pretty. They are both heiresses, and wonderfully dressed. Their two mothers were the Senator's sisters, and "raised" somewhere down South, where he originally came from. But the girls have been educated in New York with Lola.

The crowd in this hotel are totally different looking to Chicago. Some have moustaches, and some even look like sportsmen, and as if they led an idle life and enjoyed it; and a few of the women are lovely, pure pink and white, and golden haired, and that air of breezy go-aheadness which is always so attractive. And all of them seem well dressed, though naturally one or two freaks are about, as in every country.

The food was as excellent as in all the places, and rather more varied—dishes with wonderful salads and ices; and after dinner we sat in the hall and made plans, and Gaston said such entreprenant things in my ear that I was obliged to be really angry with him. So to pay me out he sulked, and then devoted himself to Mercedes. Men are really impossible people to deal with, aren't they, Mamma? So ridiculously vain and unreasonable. I shall be glad to see Mr. Renour again; he was quite different; respectful and yet devoted, not wanting to eat one up like Gaston, and I am *sure* incapable of treating me like Harry has. I suppose by now they have got right up into Africa. I wonder if she is going to shoot lions, too, or be a shikari or cook his food. I am sure she would look hideous roughing it without her maid. Her hair has to be crimped with tongs, and she has to have washes for her complexion, and things. You know, Mamma, though I don't care a bit, the whole affair has upset me so that the dear Senator noticed I was not quite myself after the post came in, and asked me if there was anything else I wanted that he could do for me. And when I told him only to teach me to be a brazen heartless creature, as hard as nails, he held my hand like I held his, and pressed it, and said we should soon be in the sunshine where the winds did not blow.

"You are too broad gauge to want things like that," he said; "those bitter thoughts are for the puny growths."

And I suddenly felt inclined to cry, Mamma; I can't think why. So I came up to bed;—and I am homesick and I want Hurstbridge and Ermytrude, and what's the good of anything?

Your affectionate daughter,



ELIZABETH.

ON THE PRIVATE CAR



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On the private car.

DEAREST MAMMA,—My spirits have quite recovered; you can't imagine the fun we are having! We only stayed the day in San Francisco to look round at those Golden Gates and other things. The astonishing pluck of the people, reconstructing the whole town with twenty storey houses on the old sites! One would think they would be afraid of their being earthquaked again, but not a bit, and the city part is nearly all re-made. Everything being brand new is naturally not so interesting as the results of the tragedy, but you have read all about it so often there is no use my telling you. We were shown one of the "graft" buildings, and one wonders how they were able to put it up without people seeing the tricks at the time. There are numbers of ways to get rich, aren't there?

Finally the whole party started for Los Angeles, passing down the coast. A company of ten, five drawing-rooms were naturally impossible; indeed we could only get two, so this time Octavia and I insisted upon sleeping under the green curtains and let the girls have our drawing-room, because we wanted to see what it was like. They said they often travelled like that, and did not mind a bit; but we insisted, and we felt quite excited when bed-time came! Lola and the husband had the other drawing-room, and the Senator and Tom the section next to us on one side, and the Vicomte and secretary the one on the other, so we were well guarded.

We laughed so tremendously undressing;—Lola let us take off the outside things with her and Agnes and Wilbor helping made so many remarks and fuss, we sent them off to their berths, and crept in dressing-gowns to our section, which was fortunately by the door. Of course Gaston was waiting to know if he could be of any use, because he said I would remember he could be a "tres habile" lady's maid years ago on the Sauterelle! But we would not let him tuck us up, and so he got into his own and peeped out through the curtains while Tom and the Senator saw we were all right.

I had the top of ours, so had Gaston of theirs, and ever so many times he tapped on the division. I do hope the other people thought it was a mouse; but when he began to give terrible sighs, and at last exclaimed, "Sapristi!" they must have wondered what was the matter. He was so dreadfully tiresome and restless, the poor secretary could not get a wink of sleep, he told me to-day; and at last fearing he was ill he climbed up and offered him some brandy. He must be a very good man, the secretary said, because he found him kneeling with his forehead pressed against the division which separated him from me, evidently saying his prayers. Aren't the French odd? And when I asked him next day how he had slept he looked at me with eyes of the deepest reproach and said I had taken care he could not sleep; just as though it was I who was troublesome and snored! Wasn't it crazy of him, Mamma? And since he has devoted himself entirely to Mercedes, and I am perfectly thankful, as very soon at the first mining town we are expecting Mr. Renour!



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We have two tables of four for meals, and whichever two have been naughty we put at a little one by themselves; and it is generally Tom and Columbia. They are getting on splendidly, and Octavia is so pleased, as she was afraid Tom might grow bored and give up the trip and go straight on to Mexico: Englishman can't stay long without killing things, can they, Mamma, and they never think about their wives' pleasure, as the Americans do. The dear Senator divides himself between Octavia and me, and when she has the secretary she gets him to give her information about the country, and we are all as happy as possible. Mr. Renour is bringing a friend with him, so that will make twelve. The coast is pretty, but I can't describe scenery, especially as all of this has been done dozens of times before, and also, though it is beautiful, it is rather of a sameness; and half the time, having been so long in the train we did not look out, there are such a number of amusing things to do in a party like this.

Lola's husband is a poor creature; how she adores him as she does is a mystery; he simply "don't amount to anything;" only he is beautifully dressed, like an Englishman, and has as nice socks as Harry. The Senator, without asking me any questions, has soothed me so that I am not feeling as cross as I was, though I am determined not to go near Harry again for months and months. When we get back, if he is still in Africa with that creature, I shall take the children for a voyage round the world. He shall see he can't behave like a brute to me with impunity. But yesterday morning when that silly little Vinerhorn wore a shirt of Charvet's of exactly the same silk as I chose Harry last in Paris, a nasty feeling came in my throat, and I seemed to see his blue eyes flashing angry flames at me like when we said good-bye.

Just think, Mamma, all these years since I have been married I have never so much as looked at anyone else. He has kept me knowing hardly anything more of the world than I did then. But I am not going to *stay* stupid I can assure you! If he can go off to Africa with Mrs. Smith, why can't I play with Mr. Renour?

(I am tired of Gaston, really.)

The second night in the train was quite peaceful. We went to bed before they came in from smoking, and Octavia had the top berth and heard nothing, so I suppose the Vicomte said his prayers with his forehead glued against the other side. And when we arrived at Los Angeles there was the private car. It is so comfortable. The salon at the end has an observation veranda on it, and at night three berths let down in it for three of the men, and in the dining-room three others can sleep. The Senator has a tiny place to himself. The Vinerhorns, who never will be separated, have one cabin, and Tom and Octavia the other. Octavia says she likes experiences, and she had no idea Tom could be so handy, for Wilbor and Agnes and all the valets have been sent on to the



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Osages City in an ordinary train and he had to dress her. I am in the larger compartment with the two girls, and we have only one enormous bed for the three of us! And it does seem quaint, Mamma, sleeping with women. I felt quite shy at first; then we laughed so we could not get to sleep. They are perfect angels and do everything for me, and make me so vain admiring my hair being so long and curly. Columbia brushed it for half an hour last night, and we were just in the middle of it when we pulled up at a small station, on the beginning of the mining world, and to our surprise Mr. Renour and his friend got in. We heard the noise and the greetings and all peeped out to see, and the Senator, sans gene, brought them down the passage to say how do you do.

Mr. Renour does look a pet! He was (and still is to-day) in miner's dress, and it is corduroy trousers tucked into high-laced boots and a grey flannel shirt with a shallow turn down collar which has been turned up again, looking like a Lord Palmerton, or someone of that date; a loose tie and a corduroy Norfolk jacket, all a sort of earth colour except the tie, which is blue. The friend is the same, and they both have queer American-looking sort of sombrero greenish felt hats, and the friend hasn't even a tie.

We were glad to see them, at least I was. We were all in dressing-gowns, with our hair down, and the girls pretended to hide behind me and be coy, and we played the fool just like children. It was fun, Mamma, and think of the faces of Harry's two aunts, the Duchess and Lady Archibald, if they could have seen me being so undignified. But here no one has any nasty thoughts, they are all happy and natural and innocent as kittens, and I am enjoying myself.

Gaston is frightfully jealous of the newcomers, but he is too much of a polished gentleman to be disagreeable over it; it is only the English who have remained savages in that respect, showing their tempers as plainly as a child would do. If you remember, Harry had a thunderous face before we were married, whenever I teased him, and since, my heavens! If people even look a good deal in a restaurant he is annoyed. But I don't mind so much, because my time has always been taken up with him making love to me himself. It is the cold ones who are jealous just from vanity that are insupportable, as it is not that they love the woman so much themselves as because they think it is "dam cheek" (forgive me, Mamma) for any other man to dare to look at *their* belongings? Now American men don't seem jealous at all; they are so kind they are thinking of the woman's pleasure, not their own. Really, I am sure in the long run they must be far nicer to live with—not a tenth part as vain as Englishmen.

The most jolly looking, jet-black old nigger in white duck livery brought us our coffee in the morning. His face is a full moon of laughter. No one could feel gloomy if he were near, and his voice, like a little child's, is as sweet as a bird, and such delightful phrasing. He has been with the Senator for fifteen years and couldn't live "way from de

car.” His name is Marcus Aurelius, and I am sure he is just as great a philosopher as the Emperor was.



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The girls have known him since they were babies, of course, and it is such fun to hear him talking to them, a mixture of authority, worshipping affection, and familiarity, which I believe only old niggers can have.

“A pretty sight to see dem tree young ladies as happy as birds in dar nests;” we heard him telling Gaston just outside, when he met on his way to the bath (there are two lovely bath-rooms).

So Gaston said he was sure the coffee-pot was heavy and he could not hold so many plates, and he would with pleasure help him with our breakfast. But Tom, who joined them, said Marcus Aurelius must not set fire to tinder, and that he was the only one of the party who could be considered suitable to be morning waiter, being my cousin and a married man. We were so entertained beyond the open door, and were quite surprised at Gaston’s silence, until we saw his face reflected in the looking glass, where he had been gazing at us all the time through the crack! What a mercy on a picnic of this kind that we all look so lovely in bed! We felt it our duty to scream, and then Marcus Aurelius shut the door. Are you fearfully shocked at my being so schoolgirlish, Mamma? Don’t be, I shall get old directly I get back home, and it is all the infectious gaiety of these dear merry girls.

Everybody was ready for breakfast, and we had rather a squash to get seated, and had to be very near. Mr. Renour was next me, and he is simply delightful in a party; and the friend, Octavia says, is exactly her affair, as she is past thirty, and he is a charming boy of twenty-two.

There is a nigger cook and he makes such lovely corn cakes and rolls and agreeable breakfast dishes, and we were all so hungry.

Mr. Renour had been down to this other place on business, and there waited to board us sooner.

The country seemed to grow more desolate and grim as we went on. After breakfast we sat outside in the observation car together, and he told me all about it, and the way they prospect to find the ore. And everything one hears makes one respect their pluck and endurance more. He asked me to call him Nelson; he said Mr. Renour was so “kinder stiff” and he wasn’t used to it, so I did, but the good taste which characterizes everything about him made him never suggest he should be familiar with me. He was just as gentle and dear as anyone could be, and seemed to be trying to efface the remembrance in my mind that he had ever rather made love to me.

Life had always been so kind to him, he said, even though from a child he had always had to work so hard. He said the Senator was the biggest man he had ever seen (meaning by that the biggest soul), and it was owing to his help and encouragement and splendid advice, that he had been able to stand out against the other sharks who

wanted to get the shares of his mine when at one moment he was a “bit shaky”; and now all was well, and he would soon be many times



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a millionaire. Then I asked him what he would do with it, and he said, "I'll just make those nearest to me happy and then those further off; and then I'll set my brains to devise some scheme to benefit my country; and p'r'aps you'd help me," he said. "You great ladies in England think so much of the poor and suffering. I don't want just to put my name on big charities; p'r'aps you'd suggest something which could be of value?"

His whole face is so fine and open, Mamma, and his lithe, sinewy figure reminds me of the Ludovici Mars; not quite so slender as Harry and Tom, but just as strong, and those balanced lines of rugged strength are quite as beautiful. I wonder what one of the meaty Easterners would look beside him, if they could both have nothing on and be made in bronze!

"I think I'd like to marry an English girl," he said at last. "Our women are very beautiful and very smart, but yours have a tenderness which appeals to me. I could do with a mighty lot of love when once I took one for my own." Then he said he had always kept his ideal of a woman, and when he found her she should have him, "body and heart and soul." And think, Mamma, what a fortunate woman she would be, wouldn't she?

He is quite different here to in France or on the boat; he has a quiet dignity and ease, and that perfect calm of a man of the world on his own ground. I think there must be something Irish about him, too, for he has a strain of sentiment and melancholy which can come directly after his most brilliant burst of spirits. We stayed there talking for about an hour undisturbed, and then the Senator opened the door and joined us.

"You are as quiet as mice, my children," he said, "what have you been doing?"

And Nelson looked up at him, his eyes full of mist.

"Just dreamin'," he said. "All on a bright spring morning."

And now I must stop, Mamma, for this must be posted at the next station to catch the mail.

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

OSAGES CITY

THE GRAND HOTEL,
OSAGES CITY,
Wednesday.



Dearest Mamma,—We arrived here last night and I am still enjoying myself more than I can say, and just after I wrote yesterday such an interesting thing happened. At lunch the Senator told us about a strange character who abides in these parts—an almost outlaw who has done such wild things and gets his money from heaven knows where. He is supposed to have murdered several men, and every incredible story fit for pirates of the Spanish Main has been tacked on to him—only of the land, not the sea. He is called “Ruby Mine Bill;” isn’t that a nice name! And no one cares to “run up against him,” because he is such a wonderful shot and does not hesitate to practise a little when things annoy him.

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Octavia and I said we simply longed to see him, and Nelson, who had been talking to Lola (I have not said much of Lola, because she is really so in love with her husband she is not a great deal of use to other people), joined in the conversation, and said he had heard “Ruby-Mine-Bill” was expected in the town he (Nelson) had joined us at, and it was possible we might meet him at the next station where the trains would pass each other. We were thrilled, and crowded into the observation veranda as we got near, on the chance of catching a glimpse of him. We drew up on a rough track; it is a sort of junction with several lines, and the train from Osages was drawn up on the one farthest off, and both the Senator and Nelson exclaimed, because on its observation car there he was.

They shouted out, “Say, Bill, is that you?” And from among the four or five men who were leaning over the balcony one who looked like a respectable country piano tuner, or a plumber out for Sunday, called out, “You bet!” and began to come down the steps.

“Move along, Bill, and be introduced to some English ladies,” the Senator said; so with an easy slogging stride he came over, and the Senator presented him to us. He had a moustache and was most mild looking and about thirty-four. He was dressed in ordinary clothes, with a bowler hat, only no waistcoat, and a great leather belt round his waist. He expressed himself as proud to meet us, and when he heard I was married, too, his eyebrows went up in the most comic way. “Guess they pair in the kid pens over there,” he said! He was standing below us on the track, with his hands in both his trouser pockets, while he looked up at us with gentle grey eyes.

“Will you show our ladies how you can shoot, Bill?” the Senator asked, and Octavia and I implored him to be kind and do so. “Runs rather fine,” he said, spitting slowly to some distance; “reckon she’s about levantin, but I never refuse ladies’ requests.” Nelson had rushed to the dining saloon and was back as he spoke with two empty bottles. “Bill’s” train was just going to move, already making groaning noises. He put his hand under his coat in a leisurely way and pulled out his “gun” (you can be arrested immediately for wearing one concealed)! Then his train gave a snort and got slowly in motion, so he was obliged to run. He turned his head over his shoulders and looked back as Nelson flung one bottle in the air—bang! It went into atoms on the ground, and then, as he had almost reached the steps, running at full speed now, the Senator flung the other. It was high up, the most difficult shot even facing it, but tearing as fast as one could in the opposite direction to jump on to a moving train, it was a rather remarkable feat to be able to hit it, with just a glance backwards, wasn’t it, Mamma?! And no wonder people don’t care to “run up against him!” As the scraps of the bottle fell, he bounded on the steps and was dragged in by



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his companions, while with cheers from both trains and waving of hats we steamed our different ways. Tom was transported with admiration. How those things please English men, don't they? And I am sure he thought far more of "Ruby-Mine-Bill" than all the clever people we had met in New York. And certainly skill of this sort does affect one. The Senator can shoot like that. Nelson told us. "He's had some near squeaks in his life and come off top; and everyone in this country knows him."

The land along which we were passing, and indeed what has been ever since we entered the mining country, is the most bleak and desolate on the earth, I should think; not a living thing or blade of grass except once when we passed a stream where low bushes bordered it; only barren hills with a little scrub on them and a rough stony surface. What courage to have started exploring on such places!

We passed one or two smaller camps on the way to Osages, with board shanties and a shaft here and there sticking up from the earth. "All going on," the Senator said. I can't tell you, Mamma, the fun we had in the car; the party is so harmonious, and Nelson and the friend such amusing people to keep it going. The friend is too attractive, that long lean shape like Tom, and the same assurance of manner. Octavia says she has not enjoyed herself so much for years.

Towards evening we arrived at Osages, and a most wonderful wind-swept town it is. Imagine a bare plain of rubbly, stony ground, with a few not very high hills round it, with shafts piercing them, and then dotted all about on the outskirts with tents; then board houses of one story high, looking rather like sheds for gardeners' tools, and then in the middle a few stone and frame habitations, and standing out among the rest the Nelson building, a hideous structure of grey stone making the corner of a block. We got from the train and climbed into motors; to see them seemed strange in such a wild; we ought to have been met by a Buffalo Bill stage coach;—but there they were. It was a gorgeous sunset, but a wind like a mistral cutting one in two, and such clouds of dust, that even driving to the hotel our hair all looked drab coloured. The hall was full of miners, some of them in what is as near an approach to evening dress as is permitted; that is, ordinary blue serge or flannel suits, with sometimes linen collars and ties; the others in the dress I have already told you about that Nelson wears. Nearly all were young, not twenty per cent. over forty, and none beyond fifty, and they were awfully nice-looking and strong, and couldn't possibly have bruised if you hit them hard!

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We raced through and up to our rooms, and can you believe it, Mamma, each bedroom had a splendid bath room, and all as modern as possible; there was not a sign of roughing it. The Senator said we were not really to dress as in the East—only “sort of Sunday.” He was greeted by everyone with adoring respect that yet had a casual ease in it, and when we were all bathed and combed and tidy we found he had a dinner party awaiting us—two women and about six men. The women were so nice and simple, but we naturally had not much chance to speak to them—the men were next us, superintendents of mines, and owners, and selected ones who have “made good.” They were such characters, and seemed to bring a breezy delightful atmosphere with them. The Eastern America seemed as far away as England; much farther really, because all these people have exactly the casual, perfectly sans gene manners of at home: not the “I’m as good as you, only one better,” but the sort that does not have to demonstrate because the thought has never entered its head. You know Octavia’s and Tom’s and Harry’s manner, Mamma;—well, just the same; I can’t describe it any other way. It is the real thing when you are not trying to impress anyone, just being you, and what you are. I can only say even if their words are astonishing slang and their grammar absent, they are the most perfect gentlemen, with the repose and unconsciousness of the original Clara Vere de Vere. They had all the extraordinary thoughtful kindness and chivalry which marks every American towards women, but they weren’t a bit auntish or grandmammaish. The sex is the same as in England, and as far as that quality I told you about, Mamma, you remember, they all seemed to have it; and going to Australia alone with them would have been a temptation, though I am sure they have none of them that wicked way of improving every possible occasion like Frenchmen and Englishmen; I mean, you know, some Englishmen, as I am sure, for instance, Harry is doing at the present moment over that horrible Mrs. Smith.

We had such fun at dinner. The one on my right was a lovely creature, about six foot six tall, with deep-set eyes and a scar up from one eyebrow into his thick hair, got, the Senator told us afterwards, in one of the usual shooting frays.

“We’ve been so mighty quiet, Nelson,” this man said leaning across the table to Mr. Renour, “since you went East. A garden for babes. Not a single gun handled in six months. Don’t rightly know what’s took us.” The girls at once said they would love to see some shooting and a twinkle came in one or two eyes, so I am sure they will try to get some up for us before we leave.

The restaurant was wonderful—this rough place miles in a desert and yet decent food! And think of the horrible, tasteless, pretentious mess cooking we have to put with in hotels in England anywhere except London. Whatever mood one might be in coming to America, even if it were fault finding and hostile, one would be convinced of their extraordinary go ahead ability, and be filled with respect for their energy. As for us who have grown to just love them we can’t say half what we feel.



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Tom is perfectly happy. He understands every word of their slang, he says, and they understand him; and Octavia says it is because they are all sportsmen together, and have the same point of view. It won't be us who have to make Tom stay away from the tarpons, he wants to himself now. Gaston, too, has risen to the occasion, and is being extra agreeable. I had a teeny scene with him in the lift as we came down. We were the last two. He reproached me for my caprice—years of devotion he said, did not count with me as much as “Ce Mineur with the figure of a bronze Mercury” (that is how he aptly described Nelson). He could bear it no more, and intended to cut me from his heart, and throw it at the feet of Mercedes. I said I thought it was an excellent place for it, and would please everyone, and he had my kindest blessing. He was so hurt. “Could I but have seen you minded!” he said, “my felicity would be greater,” so I promised I would bring tears somehow to my eyes, if that would satisfy him. Then, as he has really a sense of humour, Mamma, even if he is in an awkward position, between two loves, we both burst into peals of laughter; and he caught and kissed my hand, and said we would ever be friends and he adored me. So I said, “Bless you, my children,” and saw he sat by Mercedes at dinner, and all is smooth and happy, and Gaston is placed; and now I can really amuse myself with Nelson, who is more attractive than ever, to say nothing of a new one who had a roguish eye, and teeth as white as Harry's, who peeped at me from across the table. But I must get on with the evening. Octavia and I wanted to see everything, gambling saloons, dance halls, fights, whatever was going, and as Lola has done it all before, she said she would stay with the girls, and have a little mild flutter in the saloon of the hotel at roulette while our stalwart cavaliers escorted us “around.” Gaston, too, remained behind with them; the Senator manoeuvred this, because he said, it was not wise to be with people who were quarrelsome, and Gaston is that now and then with his Latin blood.

We went first to a gambling saloon. Think of a huge room with no carpet and a horseshoe kind of bar up the middle, with every sort of drink on it; and up at the end and round the sides gambling tables of all kinds of weird games that I did not understand, and can't explain—except roulette. There were hundreds of men in there, of all sorts, miners in their miners' dress; team drivers, superintendents—every species. If one said “gambling hell” in Europe it would sound as if it meant a most desperate place, with people drunk, and impossible to go into, but here not at all! Naturally, Octavia and I looked remarkable, although we were dressed in the plainest clothes, and yet not a soul stared or was the least rude. The only thing that was horrid was their spitting on the floor, but we tried not to see that. Otherwise not a soul was drunk or rude or anything but courteous. And such interesting types! Massed together one could judge of them, and the remarkable thing was there was no smell, like there would have been in any other country where workmen in their ordinary clothes were grouped together;—only tobacco smoke.

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They were some of them playing very high, and it looked so quaint to see a rough miner putting \$500 on a single throw. We had a sheriff among our party. There was to have been a raid of the state police on this particular saloon, for some new rule which had been made, but the sheriff quietly said the law might wait a night; as they were showing round some English ladies! Now, don't you call that exquisite courtesy, Mamma? And what a sensible sort of administration of law, knowing its suitable time like that, the essence of tact and good taste, I call it; but I can't say in every way what darlings all these Westerners are. Our escort presented numbers of them to us, and without exception they had beautiful manners, the quiet ease of perfect breeding. It is upsetting all Octavia's theories, and she is coming round to Mrs. Van Brounker-Courtfield's view that it is the life a man leads more than blood even, which tells; and there they are fighting the earth for the ore with great courage and endurance and hard manual labour, and so it produces finer expressions of faces, and lithier forms than using your brains to be sharper in business than your neighbour.

All the time Nelson and the man with the roguish eye stood on either side of me, and the Senator moved from Octavia backwards and forwards, and when we got outside they both held my arms, not with the least familiarity, but the gentle protective respect they might have to an aged queen, or you, Mamma; and it was just as well, because the sidewalks were up on sort of sleepers, and were all uneven, and in some places a board worn through, so one could have a bad fall by oneself. And it was very agreeable, but I noticed that Nelson held mine rather tight, and that his arm trembled. I suppose he was still feeling the vibration of the train. I hope you picture it all—us walking through these quaint streets, surrounded by a crowd of great big men. And neither Octavia nor I have ever walked in a street before at night, so it did seem fun.

After this we went to the large dance hall. It was too interesting, and I simply longed to dance. I must describe it to you, Mamma, because of course you have never heard of anything of this sort before. It was a very large board room, like a barn with a rail across the front end of it, and a gate; and in the front part a drinking bar, the musicians at the other end on a platform, and beyond the rail and gate a beautiful dance floor, while at the side were boxes where one could retire to watch the dancing—all rough boards and gaudy cretonne curtains. The lady partners were not in evening dress, just blouses and skirts, and it seemed the custom for the man to pay the proprietor for each dance, take his lady through the gate, and when it was over escort her to the bar to have a drink. It could only have been very innocent refreshment, as no one seemed the least drunk or offensive. The bar part was crowded with every type of the mining camp, two-thirds of them splendid



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faces and figures, just glorious men; the other third, dwindling gradually to a rather brutal typed Mexican; and even though their dress was the rough miner's, with great boots, all were freshly shaven and smart, and all had a "gun" in their belt, although it is against the law to wear one concealed. But grim death lurks near all the time. Numbers were presented to us, and in no court in Europe could one find more courtly ease of manner or sans gene. Octavia and I are "crazy" about them.

There is no class here; it is the real thing, and the only part we have seen yet of America where equality is a fact. That is, it is the man who counts, not any money or position, only his personal merit; and the Senator says if they are "yellow dogs" they sooner or later get wiped out. It is a sort of survival of the fittest, and don't you think it is a lovely plan, Mamma? And how I wish we had it in England. What heaps could be cleared away and never be missed!

There was a Master of Ceremonies who called out the dances, and not more than ten or twelve couples were allowed to dance each time, two-steps and walses, and without exception it is the finest dancing I have ever seen,—the very poetry of Motion. Nothing violent or rude, or like a servants' ball at home, although they held their partners a little more clasped than we do, and the woman's hands both on the man's shoulders, and sometimes round his neck. (Tom says he means to introduce this style at Chevenix the next ball they have. Think of the face of the County!) But in spite of their funny holding, or perhaps on account of it, there is a peculiar movement of the feet, perfect grace and rhythm and glide, which I have never seen at a real ball. One could understand it was a pure delight to them, and they felt every note of the music. They treated Octavia and me with the courtesy fit for queens, and some of them told us delightful things of shootings and blood-curdling adventures, and all with a delicious twinkle in the eye, as much as to say, "We are keeping up the character of the place to please you." We did enjoy ourselves. The Senator says this quality of perfect respect for women is universal in the mining camps. Any nice woman is absolutely safe among them. I think there ought to be mining camps to teach men manners all over Europe. You will feel I am exaggerating, Mamma, and talking a great deal about this, but it is so marked and astonishing; all have that perfect ease and poise of well born gentlemen (the Harry manner, in fact) completely without self consciousness. I suppose they get drunk sometimes, and probably there are riotous scenes here, but I can only tell you of what we saw, and that was people happy, and behaving as decorously as at a court ball.



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Just before we left three or four really villainous looking men came in, and instantly there seemed to be a stir of some sort; and Nelson and the Senator stood very close to me, and while apparently doing nothing got us near the door, and we all strolled out, and then they spoke rather low to one another while they never let go of my arms. Awkward customers, the Senator told us, and when these bad spirits were “around” things often ended in a row. It was tiresome it did not happen, wasn’t it? Both Octavia and I felt we should have loved to see a really exciting moment! To-morrow we go down the great Osages mine, which belongs to Nelson and the Senator, and then to a dinner party in one of the shacks, and the next day we start for the real wild, because this is civilisation, and we are going to a quite young camp called Moonbeams, miles across the desert. We shall have to leave the car, at the end of the railway, and go in rough kinds of motors. It sounds too exciting, and the Senator says there they can show us the real thing and we are not to mind roughing it. We are so looking forward to it, and if you are writing to Harry—but, no, do not mention me. By now he must have found out Mrs. Smith has things which aren’t attractive in a tent.

Tell Hurstbridge I will bring him a “gun,” and Ermytrude a papoose doll.

Love from,

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

Still Osages City.

DEAREST MAMMA,—I must write each day, because I have so much to say, if I didn’t I should get all behind.—I don’t believe you would like going into a mine a bit!

We seemed to drive through unspeakable dust to a banked-up, immense heap of greyish green earth, with some board houses on it, and a tall shaft sticking out; and in one of these houses we changed, or rather dressed up in overcoats and caps, and were each given a dip candle. Then we went to the lift. But it wasn’t a nice place, with a velvet sofa, but just about three boards joined together to stand on, with a piece of iron going up the centre to a cross-bar overhead; no sides or top. And this hung in what looked mid-air.

Mercedes and I got in first, with Nelson and the Vicomte beyond us, with their arms tight round us, and our hands clinging to the cross-bar of iron above. Then we began to descend into the bowels of the earth. It felt too extraordinary: a slightly swaying motion, and not close to the sides as even in the most primitive lift, seeing or rather feeling space beyond. Nelson held me so tight I could hear his heart thumping like a sledge hammer. It felt very agreeable, and I am sure I should have been terribly

frightened otherwise. Mercedes did not seem to mind, either, and from what I know of Gaston, he wasn't making the least of the occasion.

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Finally, about eight hundred feet down, we stopped, and got out on to firm ground and waited for the others, who came in batches of four. The air was pumped in, I suppose, from somewhere, because just here it was cool, and not difficult to breathe. We had such fun, but Nelson was rather pale and silent, I don't know why. When everyone was there we started on our explorations, and seemed to walk miles in the weirdest narrow passages, in single file, on a single board sometimes, each carrying our light. We climbed ladders and had to cross narrow ledges on the edge of the abysses, and it was altogether most interesting to learn the different sounds the rock with ore in it made when hammered on, to the earth rock. They broke off some with a pickaxe to give to each of us. "High grade," he called, and even the scraps about as big as my two hands which I have now, they say will produce about sixteen dollars' worth of gold; so is not this wonderful riches, Mamma? What a great and splendid country, and how puny and small seem the shallow little aims of towns and cities, when here is this rich earth, waiting only to be explored. There, in the strange light of the dip candles, and everyone chaffing, Nelson and the Senator seemed to stand out like two giants, and there was something aloof in their faces, and apart from the rest. If one searched the world, Mamma, one could not find two nobler men.

At last we climbed into two great caverns out of which they had taken the finest gold, nineteen thousand dollars to a ton of rock. The miners (I am sure not the lovely courtly creatures we saw last night, but some low other ones) stole so much that now they have to be searched as they leave the mine. We hated to hear that. They could conceal about twenty dollars' worth a day on themselves each, and so it got to be called "high grading." Isn't that a nice word, and what heaps of "highgraders" there are in different walks of life! Pilfering brains and ideas and thoughts from other people!

They were blasting in the shaft below and the fumes came up and made us all a little faint, so we decided to come to the earth's surface without going down about two hundred feet lower, which we could have done. In one long gallery we came upon a single miner working away in a cul-de-sac, with, it seemed, absolutely no air. Think of the courage and endurance it must take to continue this, day after day! I do admire them. Then they have the knowledge that if they like to chance things and go off with an "outfit"—two donkeys, which are called "burros"—carrying their tools, they can prospect in the desert and peg out their own claims, and all have the possibility of becoming millionaires. It is a wonderful and rugged life.



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Gaston must have said something definite to Mercedes in the dark for they both looked conscious when we came into daylight; but we have not heard anything yet. Octavia's friend is quite devoted to her, and Tom is getting a little jealous; so good for him, he won't be so absolutely casual in future, I hope. And if, Mamma, I had not an underneath feeling of I don't know what about Harry and that Smith creature, I could be awfully happy, as I find Nelson an attentive dear; but there it is, just as I am beginning to feel frolicsome, a recollection rushes over me of them together in Africa, and a sick sensation comes up, and I feel I could play the devil if I had the chance—and I believe I would if it were someone else; but Nelson seems too fine to trifle with. Heigh ho! I now know that Harry is really rather like these miners, only he has not got such good manners, but just the same absolutely fearless unconscious assurance and nerve and pluck. I suppose that is why I love him so much—I mean I did love him, Mamma, because, of course, I don't now; I am quite indifferent, as you know.

On our way back to lunch we took a drive round the city. There is not a blade of living thing rowing but the sage brush. It is a desolation beyond description, and clouds of dust. But everything seems alive and there is no gloom or depression. The hotel was full of bustle and movement, and groups of men were talking together as if some news had come in, and the Senator presently told us that there had been rather a row at the dance hall after we left, and the four villainous looking men we had seen had "done a bit of shootin,'" but no one was hurt much, and they had left to-day for no one knows where. He says this class of desperadoes are like a pestilence; whenever they descend trouble of sorts brews, and the chief of them is a man called Curly Grainger—the "lowest yellow dog out of hell."

In the afternoon we paid some calls on the ladies who had dined with us, and you can't think what dear little homes they have, looking like chicken houses outside, and inside cosey and comfortable; and they were all so kind and hospitable and made us feel welcomed and honoured. And these are real manners, Mamma—that politeness which comes from the heart.

We were allowed to dress as in New York for our dinner party, given by Octavia's friend at his shack, and to see the girls and Lola, and indeed us all, looking like Paris fashion plates in dainty clothes and feathered hats seemed so quaint; but when we got inside it was not out of place.

Such a person of refinement he must be! The outside was made of boards like the rest, but inside it had bookcases and comfortable chairs and cosey sofas, and the nice look of a man's room who is no fool and reads books and thinks thoughts. There were several more lovely creatures whom we had not met before, altogether about eighteen the party was, and as the dining-room only held ten, naturally the rest



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sat on boxes, and the table was elongated with a packing case. But the fun we had! As delightful as the evening with the Squirrels; each of these pets out-doing the other in remarkable Western phrases and stories, and all with that whimsical fine sense of humour that can see the fun even in themselves. I wish I could remember the sentences, but they are too difficult, only they had not to be translated or explained; they were simply the most unusual English applied in that crisp exact fashion that is an art in itself, meaning *exactly* what is necessary to present an idea. The whole entertainment was cooked for, and waited on by, a most delightful coloured lady called Cassandra, who chewed gum and joined in the conversation.

Fancy the consternation and horror of Mrs. Spleist or Mrs. Craik V. Purdy, if either had been the hostess of such a party! They would have apologised the whole time. It was all enchanting.

“Now, Mr. Johnson,” Cassandra said (our host’s name is Burke Johnson), “why yo go for to put all de peas in dat great heap on yo plate? Didn’t I tell yo to be careful? Dey won’t go ’round.” And she looked like a reproving mother to a greedy boy, showing her splendid teeth in a grin. We were so amused. But when the subjects interested her she would pause with a dish in the air and give her opinion in the friendliest way, not the least impertinently, but as some fond, privileged Nanny might at a children’s party.

“Fact is, you spoil Mr. Johnson, Cassandra,” Nelson said; “you feed him too well and keep him too snug.” Then she tossed her head, “Mr. Johnson is my care, Mr. Nelson,” she said; “you can talk ’bout that to some other coloured lady,” and her laugh rang out like a silver bell.

I cannot give you any idea, Mamma, of how perfectly delightful all these people are.

After dinner we played a game of poker in the sitting-room, not for high stakes, only just chaff and fun, and Tom made outrageous love to Columbia, who answered him with the cleverest parries. American girls are miles ahead of us in brilliant repartee. Then someone played the piano and we all sang songs, and from the kitchen where Cassandra was washing up the dishes, came the most melodious second in that sweet perfect harmony which the negroes seem so well to understand.

Placed carelessly among some books on a table by the side of the piano were two revolvers (I must call them “guns” here, because that is their name) and I did such a silly thing without thinking, so unaccustomed are we at home to realise anything could be loaded that was casually lying about. I picked one up and examined the tracing on the barrel, never noticing that it was pointing straight up at my head, until I felt Nelson’s iron grip upon my wrist, while he took it from my hand. His face was white as death. “My God!” he said, “my God, quit touching that!” Then he walked quickly to the door and



opened it and looked out on the night. There was no hall, the sitting-room is straight on the street. He took a great deep breath and came back again, and then he laughed, "Guess I'm a pretty fool," he said; "I've had them pointed direct at me with the finger on the trigger, too, and never turned a hair, but, by the Lord, to see your flower face close to that grim thing makes me kind of sick." It moved me deeply, Mamma; I wonder why?



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The whole company walked home with us, but I clung on to the Senator's arm and let my other be held by the one with the roguish smile of the night before; and Nelson seemed to be extraordinarily gay as he strode beside Octavia, though when we said goodnight, just outside my room, his eyes were full of mist.

I don't feel the least sleepy, and I am sitting here in the rocking-chair thinking of all our trip, and the different impressions it has made, and how deeply I admire and respect this wonderful people. As soon as they have grown out of being touchy, and rounded off their edges, they will have no equals on earth. This great vast country we have come through seems like the great vast brains of the men from here who are the real nation builders. The successful schemers and business men are remarkable, too, but these are the ones who make for splendour and glory and noble ideas. They are like strong pure air blowing away migraines; and yet the business men also are to be respected; it requires such indomitable pluck in either case, only this kind of outdoor pluck makes male creatures turn more into the things which women love.

There was one point I did not remember to tell you about in its place, and that was the rather pathetic spectacle the boys are, in numbers of families in the East,—tied to their mothers' apron strings, treated like girls and taken constantly to Europe with or without a tutor; little, blase grandfathers driving motor cars and dressing in grown up clothes. I longed to send them all to Eton and let them get flogged and have to fag and be turned into children first, and then men. I asked the fourteen year old Spleist boy to get me down a branch of blossom far up on an apple tree, and for the world he wouldn't have rubbed his patent leather boots, even if he had known how to hold on to reach so high. All the children are old, more or less, and wearied with expensive toys and every wish gratified. Only that they are more surrounded with servants and governesses or go to school, numbers and numbers are like "Matilda" on the ship. Out here there don't seem to be any children, or hardly any, but those there are, I expect, are like everything else in the West, free and growing. But there is one quality which seems exclusively American, West or East, unbounded hospitality and kindly feeling, and ever and always I shall think of them all as dear friends.

Perhaps I shall not be able to post a letter again for some days, Mamma, but good-night now, and fond love from,

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

CAMP OF MOONBEAMS

NEVADA HOTEL,



CAMP OF MOONBEAMS.

DEAREST MAMMA,—When you hear of all I have to tell you you will wonder I can write so quietly. But I will make myself, and keep everything in its place, so that you get a clear picture.



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We started early yesterday morning in the private car, for a junction, or terminus (I am not sure which) called Hot Creek,—everyone in the best of spirits after a send off from all our friends. Marcus Aurelius's face to welcome us on board was enough to rejuvenate anyone, simply a full moon of black and white smiles, and I am sure he is the first person Mercedes has confided her love affair to, for he seems to watch over her and Gaston like a *deus ex machina*.

Nelson and I sat out on the observation veranda again, and he told me many things of all this land, and how often the poor adventurers coming out West will climb on to the irons under the trains, and then cling for countless miles, chancing hideous death to be carried along; and how, sometimes, they will get lost and die of starvation. And just then, in the grimmest country of absolutely arid desert valley, between highish barren hills, we saw a beautiful lake of blue water with green trees reflected in it, and when I looked at Nelson his eyes were sad. Nothing could have seemed more cool or refreshing; it made one long to jump out of the train and go and bathe, for now, though still early in the spring, it is getting very hot. "It is nothing but a mirage," Nelson said. "There is no water there and no trees. It comes and goes in this part of the desert according to the state of the atmosphere, and it has been the cause of many a poor fellow's end." How treacherous, Mamma! How cruel of Nature to treat her children so! And then he put his head back and pulled his hat over his eyes.

"A mirage," he said, like one dreaming. "Guess it's often like life." And then he told me of the curious effect it had had upon his imagination the first time he had seen it, when alone with his burros, prospecting; how it seemed to say to him to make a reality of green and prosperity out of the parched world, and how his thoughts always returned there when he had successes, and he dreamed of a day when he should rest a little by just such a lake. "To rest my soul," he said, "if I have any; to rest it with someone I should love."

And, as once before, the Senator broke in upon us with his cheery, charming voice, "Guess you two are talking like high-flown poet coons," he said, "and there is breakfast to be thought of, and happy things like that." And then as Nelson went in front he stepped back and put his kind hand under my chin, and raised it and looked straight into my eyes.

"Little daughter," he said, "little friend, p'raps your heart's aching for someone over the sea, but don't make his heart ache, too, now. Promise me." And of course I won't, Mamma, and of course I promised. Isn't it a queer world? And all mirage, as Nelson said. Well, now let us get on and laugh and be gay. An eleven o'clock breakfast was our usual fun; you can't imagine such a well arranged party, never a jar or disagreement, like, I am sure, we should be having if there were Englishwomen. In a flock Americans are infinitely more agreeable to deal with. I expect it is in the blood, having had to spend such quantities of time, all women together, while the men are away.



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The moment we finished our food we drew up at our destination, and in this wilderness there was a telegraph station and a few shanties, but it could all be lit by electric light! The most strong, paintless, hardy looking automobiles were awaiting us, into which we climbed, a very close pack. The maids and valets had all been left behind at Osages—think of asking Agnes to really rough it, even if there had been room! So we had all to attend to the luggage, and were only allowed a teeny hand bag each, with a nighty and comb and brush in it. Our hair and faces were already grey with dust, and all sense of appearance had been forgotten.

I sat between Lola and Nelson, with the little Vinerhorn and the secretary in front of us, while the Senator was next our chauffeur, whom they addressed as “Bob”—a friend, not an employe. The rest of the party squashed into the other motors and so we started, ours leading over a track, not a road; the sage brush had been removed, that was all, and there were deep ruts to guide us. We flew along with a brilliant blue sky overhead, high hills which presently grew mountainous on either side, and what seemed an endless sea of greenish drab scrub before. Once or twice we passed tired, weary-looking men plodding on foot, and I did wish we could have picked them up and helped them along; but there was not an inch of room. The ruts were so extremely deep that I certainly should have been pitched out but that Nelson held me tight. Mr. Vinerhorn frowned so when he held Lola, too, that he was obliged to leave her alone, and I am sure she must have had a most uncomfortable journey. I suppose this little Randolph has picked up that selfish jealous trait in England with his clothes, only thinking of *his* emotions, not his wife’s comfort, quite unlike kind Americans. After about an hour we began to go up the steepest hills on the winding track, and got among pine trees and great boulders, up and up until the air grew quite chill; and then as we turned a sharp corner the most unique scene met our view. I told you before I can’t describe scenery, Mamma, but I must try this, because it was so wonderful, and reminded me of the pictures in *Paradise Lost* illustrated by Dore, when the Devil looks down on that weird world.

A grey-sand, flat place far below us, about fifty miles across, surrounded by mountains turning blue in their shadows in the afternoon light—it might have been a supremely vast Circus Maximus or giants’ race course, and there was the giant towering above the rest, with a snow cap on his head, peeping from between the lower mountains. It seemed it could not be possible we could descend to there, but we did, the track getting more primitive as we went on, and once on the edge of a precipice we met a waggon and team of eight mules driven by a Mexican with a cracking whip, and getting past might have tried your nerves, but no one notices such things in a country of this sort!



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Every atom of food for Moonbeams has to be drawn over this ninety miles of desert by waggons or mule carts, and every drop of water comes in six miles from the camp. What splendid pluck and daring to wrest gold from the earth under such circumstances! What general would fight an enemy so far from his food supply?

We seemed to be no time being raced and shaken over the flat sand basin, meeting and passing more teams on the way, and twice a petrol and drink station of one board shed, and a man with a jolly Irish face and a gun openly in his belt, to attend to it. We had no breakdowns, and just at sunset got into the one and only street of Moonbeams. But there were no stone houses or anything but sheds of one storey, generally, and more often rows of tents. The Moonbeams is not three months old! So quickly do these places grow when a rush for newly discovered rich gold is made. We had passed quantities of "claims" on the way; piles of stones like little cairns marking their four corners; and I wonder if in five hundred years the socialists of that day will scream and try to demonstrate that the descendants of those brave adventurers have no right to their bit of land, but should give it up to them, who only talk and fume and do no work upon it.

Everyone was in from the mines, which are all close, shafts sticking up from every hill and heaps of broken rock and earth rising like mole hills. The straggling street was full of men, and I should not think in the world there can be a collection of more splendid looking humanity—all young and strong and wholesome. The Senator says life is so impossibly difficult here that only those in the best of health can stand it, and to face such chances requires the buoyancy and hope of youth. Whatever the cause they were all lovely creatures, just like our guardsmen, numbers tall and slender and thin through, and many of them might have been the Eton eleven or Oxford eight, and all with the insouciance and careless grace I have already told you of.

You know what I mean by "thin through," Mamma: that lovely look of narrow hips and slender waist and fine shoulders, not padded and not too square, and looked at sideways not a bit thick; the chest, not the tummy, the most sticking out part, and the general expression of race horses. You would have to melt off layers of hips and other bits of most of the Eastern American, and then alter the set of their bones to get them to resemble any of these. And yet I suppose they are all Americans, too, drifted here from other States; but they look so absolutely different; I expect they are not the conglomeration of all nations who have emigrated, like in New York, but the original pure stock. Or can it be the life after all? In any case it is too attractive, and I wish you could see them, Mamma?



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They welcomed the Senator and his party as friends, and as we went at walking pace they conducted us to the hotel. And it was a hotel!!! Think of one long, long board barn of two storeys high, not finished quite, being built, with kind of little rabbit hole rooms off each side of a long passage on both floors, in some the boards not meeting, so that you can see into the next person's apartment, or into the open air as the case may be, and in all, if a knot is out of the wood, a peep hole! The flimsiest door not fitting, with the number of each room printed on a bit of paper and fastened on with a tack; furniture consisting of a rickety iron bed, a box that has been a packing case for a table, another for a washstand, a rough single chair, sometimes a rocking chair, and all crowned by a looking-glass that makes half your nose in one part of your face, and one eye up in your forehead—too deliciously comic. It was all very clean, except the bed clothes, but we won't speak of them; their recollection shivers me.

Octavia and Tom had one room at the very end, and the rest of our party had to scatter where we could, as numbers were taken, and it was difficult to get even enough to go round. Mine was a very grand one, because it had newspapers pasted on the boards partition, but it was very deceptive, because one could not at once discern the knots and cracks, and anyone might surprise one by poking a finger through in unexpected places. Gaston had the next on my right, and Mercedes and Columbia the one beyond him, and I did wonder, under the circumstances, which of us he would peep at. I felt it would be me, because Mercedes and Columbia being *jeune filles*, and he being a Frenchman, they would be sacred. Nelson and the Senator together had a rather larger one on my left, and that side my newspapers were torn, but I felt no apprehension. The chivalry of American men is temptation proof.

Downstairs there was a bar and gambling saloon in one, with a sort of hall place, a few feet square, but no dining room or any place for food. It was merely a shelter from outside air. One had to trot along the street to another shed called a restaurant, for meals.

How we laughed and the fun we had over it all! Nothing has delighted us so much. Only Randolph Vinerhorn doesn't like it, but he is afraid to say it before the Senator, though I heard him grumbling from across the passage to Lola because he has not got his valet to shave him! Tom, of course, is just as happy as we are. How I *love* an adventure, Mamma! Did you ever? And if you could see Tom in his flannel shirt and his shabbiest old grey suit, and a felt slouch hat, you could not tell him from one of these lovely miners. Octavia says she is getting in love with him again on account of it. Her one unfortunately had to stay in Osages, but the one with the beautiful teeth has come in his place.

We couldn't wash or brush up much because we had only each either a cracked pudding dish or an old cake tin to wash in, but we did our best and started off for our dinner. Three of the most prominent young mine owners had invited us to a feast, and

when we got to the tent in which it was held we found that was the chief restaurant, and lots of miners were already there at different tables.

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Ours was a long one in the middle and much grander than the rest, because it had a bit of marbled white oil cloth on it for a cloth. The dears all the people were, and the kind generous spirit to ask us to a feast when food was so scarce and expensive! And fancy, Mamma, in the middle was a bouquet of yellow daisies, and they were worth their weight in gold—yellow daisies brought over ninety miles of desert, and how many hundred miles of train!

None of the people at the other tables took the slightest notice of our party; beyond a friendly greeting to those they knew, they did not even glance our way; think of the beautiful manners, and the difference, too, if these had been rough men of any other country in an eating house. I tell you these Westerners are a thing apart for courtesy and respect to women—a lesson to all the world; and the food was not at all awful, and we had the best of champagne! while the tent was lit by electric light, and had a board floor and benches for seats. We were so gay at dinner, and while we were finishing, news came, I do not know how, that the desperado, Curly Grainger, and his comrades, were in the camp. The man next me told me, and I never thought to tell Nelson, who was at my other side, which was foolish, as events proved.

After it, when they had made some speeches to bid us all welcome, we went out to see the sights—principally a private gambling saloon where they were playing extremely high, about seven men intent on poker, some with green shades over their eyes of talc, which gave the strangest livid glow on their faces, and made them look like dead men. After each round a felt-slipped bar-tender would slip in and give them all drinks in small glasses—rum and milk and different things—and I am sure one of the desperadoes was playing, his villainous face was in such contrast to the others.

Their revolvers were all up on a shelf, because, as the proprietor told us, “They so often got to shootin’ one another when they played as high as that,” he found it “more conducive to a peaceable evenin’ if their guns were handed out before they began!” How such things must add to the excitement of a game, Mamma!

The lowest stake was one thousand dollars and some had twenty-five thousand dollars in front of them. There was a queer intent ominous hush, and we watched in silence for a while, and then went to a most quaint sort of theatrical entertainment—songs and dances going on, the most primitive stage at one end, while a bar and drinks were at the other. We only stayed about five minutes, because it did not seem quite the place for girls, although everyone treated us with the most scrupulous respect, instantly hushing their jokes as we approached, and making way for us like courtiers for foreign royalties in a drawing-room. And when we got out in the street there appeared to be some excitement in the air. Hundreds of men were loitering about or talking in groups, and the



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Senator, much to our disappointment, made us go back to the hotel. It was only about half past nine o'clock, and we thought to go to bed an extremely dull proceeding. But we did not like to question or argue, and obediently went upstairs. And when the Senator and Nelson saw us safely in our rooms, with the secretary and Mr. Vinerhorn left to be a sort of guard to us, they all went out again to show Tom more sights.

Everything was perfectly quiet; the hotel is against the mountain and rather away from the main and only regular street.

Then, left to ourselves we felt just like naughty children, obliged to get into some mischief, and when Mercedes suggested we should change all the numbers on the doors, it seemed a nice outlet for us! Octavia had gone to her room, or, she says, she would not have let us, and Lola and her Randolph had retired, too, while the secretary had gone down to the bar, so there was no one to prevent us. It was, of course, very naughty of us, Mamma, and I dare say we deserved all that followed, but it was a funny idea, wasn't it? The only ones we did not change were our own two; everyone else's in the hotel, and there were about thirty-six rooms altogether, we mixed all up and then we scampered in to bed!

There were only little oil lamps here, the electric lights not having been fixed yet, and when I piled all the bed clothes on the floor and rolled myself up in the quilt, I was off to sleep in a minute.

It did not seem very long afterwards when drunken footsteps came up the passage and woke me up, and then a fumbling at the Senator's door and frightful swearing because the key would not fit. The creature, whoever it was, was perfectly furious, and one could hear him muttering "29, yes it's 29," and then fearful oaths, and at last, with a shove, he wrenched down the crazy door and got into the room and I suppose was too sleepy or drunk to notice it was not his own, and retired to the Senator's bed! Because I could hear him snoring next me through the cracked partition.

A little while after, in the still of night air, there was a distant murmur of voices, and then some shots rang out. It was a grim, sinister sound, and in about ten minutes running feet were heard, and two or three men came up the passage. They banged at Lola's door; hers had been 24 and was now 201. They cursed and swore and demanded to come in, and at last a voice said, "I'm Curly Grainger," and then some terrible oaths. "Open this minute, Jim; we've done for two of 'em, but they've got Bill, and you must come and bail him out."

No answer, of course, as Lola was crouching terrified in bed, Randolph just as frightened, I suppose, while even through the Vicomte's room I could hear Columbia and Mercedes giggle, and I, too, for a minute felt inclined to laugh, it seemed too



dramatic to be real. But the voices got menacing and then the excitement began! With the most dreadful language they just kicked down the door, intending to pull “Jim” out of bed, I suppose, and when they saw it was one of the strangers’ rooms, I suppose the idea came to them they might do a little robbery as well.



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Suddenly there was a rush of feet and more men came up the stairs. I got out of bed, wondering what would be best to do, when I heard Lola shriek and a shot in the passage. So I felt I must go to her help and opened the door, and such a scene, Mamma! There were seven of the most awful looking men you ever saw, the ones who, I told you, had come into the dance hall at Osages. Among them Lola and Randolph in night clothes, were already lined up against the wall, with their hands above their heads. While one brute stood at the end of the passage pointing his gun at them, one of the others was rifling their room, others had kicked down the girls' door and one was at the end by Octavia's. None of the other people, miners of sorts, except one man's wife, had come in yet, as it was not more than half past ten o'clock! She was soon pulled out, too, and one brute seized me and roughly threw my hands up while he held a gun to my head. I did feel very frightened, Mamma, but it was all so terribly exciting, it was quite worth while. I wish I had had a revolver. I would have used it in a minute. As it was I just watched from under the brute's arm. Every door was broken down then, and as noiselessly as they could they ransacked each room. If we had attempted to scream they would have shot us dead. The girls were speechless with terror, only Octavia looked a contemptuous tragedy queen in her white nighty, and the miner's wife had a face of petrified rage; she wasn't a bit frightened, either. Then up the stairs ran the secretary and the proprietor's wife, a kind amusing old woman. She had evidently seen this sort of hold up before (it is called a "hold up," Mamma), for she called out: "Don't be afraid, ladies, dears, they won't hurt you if you don't yell"; and then she bolted down the stairs again like a rabbit to get help, while my brute turned his attention from me for a minute to fire after her. She had got past the turn of the stairs, but he caught the secretary in the ankle, and he fell with a groan on the floor.

It was an unpleasant situation, wasn't it, Mamma, six women in nightgowns with their hands above their heads, Randolph an object of misery with his pink silk pyjamas torn, and the secretary lying in a pool of blood, unconscious, by the stairs, while two wretches covered the whole party with their revolvers!

It seemed an eternity before the men had finished ransacking the rooms, swearing terribly at finding so little there; and then they came out and made for the door at the end, which had an outside staircase leading on to the mountain. At last a noise of voices like distant thunder was heard getting nearer and nearer, and before they could kick that door down and escape, Nelson and Tom dashed up the stairs, their revolvers in their hands; and the last coherent thing I remember was seeing Nelson take instant aim and shoot the man who was holding the gun to my head as he had his finger on the trigger to shoot me; and if



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Nelson had given him a second more to aim he would have blown my brains out; but being so quick, Nelson's bullet must have reached him as he fired at me, for his shot went off through the roof. As the brute fell, there seemed to be a general scrimmage, but the rest got off through the end door, which they at last broke down, just as the Senator and the Vicomte and the other miners came up the stairs. Wasn't it thrilling, Mamma? I would not have missed it for worlds, now it is over.

I suppose the bullet which killed my assailant grazed a scrap of my shoulder, or perhaps it was his gun going off did it, anyway I felt it wet. The next instant I was in Nelson's arms, being carried into my room. His face was again like death, and he bent over me.

"My God, have I hurt you?" he said in an agonised voice. "My darling, my lady, my love ——" But I don't feel as if I ought to tell you the rest of his words, Mamma. They burst from him in the anguish of his heart, and he is the dearest, noblest gentleman, and I feel honoured and exalted by his love.

I reassured him as well as I could. I told him I was not really hurt at all, only a little grazed, and I helped him to soak up the blood with my handkerchief, and then for a few minutes I felt faint and can't remember any more.

I don't suppose I could have been stupid for more than five minutes, but when I came to, Octavia was there with a quilt pinned over her nightgown, and she and the Senator were bathing my shoulder, and even that little cut hurt rather and I fear will leave a deep scar.

The poor secretary had his ankle broken, but otherwise was unhurt, and nobody minded at all about the man Nelson had killed. They only wished he had exterminated more of them. And Tom and the Vicomte are having the time of their lives, for as soon as dawn broke they joined the Sheriff with a posse, aided by the state police in pursuit of the escaped desperadoes, and as the *Moonbeams Chronicle* prints it today, "A general round up of bad men is in progress."

Fancy us having the luck to come in for all this, Mamma, and to see the real thing! The Senator had only been joking, he said, when he had promised us that, as all this sort of excitement is a thing of the past in camps, which are generally perfectly orderly now; and he thought by making us go to bed he was causing us to avoid seeing even a little quarrelling in the streets.

None of the dear real miners would have touched us, and by some strange chance not one of the men of our party had heard that the famous desperadoes were arrived in the town. They will all be lynched if they are caught, of course, so I can't help rather hoping they will get away. Perhaps it would be a lesson to them, and I hate to think of any



more people being killed. But, of course, if Nelson had not had the nerve to fire, just like William Tell, the man would have blown my brains out, and as you know, Mamma, I have always despised mawkish sentiment, and I would rather he was dead than me, so I shan't let myself think a thing more about it, only to be deeply and profoundly grateful to Nelson for saving my life.



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We are going back to Osages this afternoon, and now I must stop, dearest Mamma.

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

ON THE PRIVATE CAR AGAIN

On the private car again.

DEAREST MAMMA,—I am writing again today because I thought that perhaps my yesterday's letter might have worried you, and there is nothing in the least to mind about. My shoulder will soon heal, and I shall always feel proud of the scar. It is plastered up and does not hurt much, so don't be the smallest degree anxious. The hotel proprietor and some handy miners who could do carpentering came up while we were away at breakfast, and mended the doors, and everyone laughed and pretended nothing had happened; only Nelson had rather a set face, and after breakfast we climbed up on the steep mountain behind the hotel and watched the world. He never spoke, only helped me over the rough places, until we got high up above the last tent, and there we sat on a crag and looked down at the camp. And I think he is the finest character of a man I have ever known. It is only to you, Mamma, I would tell all this, because you will understand.

It was so hot he had no coat on, only his flannel shirt, and his trousers tucked into his long boots, and the grim gun stuck in his belt. He looked extremely attractive with that felt hat slouched over his eyes. He seemed to be gazing into distance as if alone, and then, after a while, he turned and looked at me, and his eyes were full of pain like a tortured animal, and I felt a wrench at my heart. Then he clasped his hands tight together as though he were afraid he should take mine, and he said the dearest things a man could say to a woman—how the stress of the situation last night had forced from him an avowal of his love for me. "I never meant to tell you, my sweet lady," he said. "I am no weakling, I hope, to go snivelling over what is not for me; and when I comprehended you were married, on the Lusitania, I just faced up the situation and vowed I'd be a strong man."

Then he paused a moment as if his throat were dry: "No one can control his emotion of love for a woman," he went on; "the sentiment he feels, I mean, but the strong man controls the demonstration." He looked away again, and his face was set like bronze. "I love you better than anything on God's earth," he said, "and I want to tell you all the truth, so that you won't feel you can't trust me, or when, if ever I should chance to meet your husband, I can't look him straight in the face. I love you, but I never mean to bother you or do anything in the world but be your best friend." "Indeed, indeed, yes," I

said, and I told him how dreadfully sorry I was if I had hurt him, and how noble and brave he seemed to me.



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“You are my star,” he said, “and I am going to crush this pain out of my heart, and make it just a glad thing that I’ve known you, and something to remember always; so don’t you feel sorry, my lady, dear. It was not your fault. It was nobody’s fault—just fate. And we out in this desert country learn to size up a situation and face it out. But I don’t want you to go away from this happy party of ours with an ache in your tender heart, thinking I am a weakling and going to cry by myself in a corner; I am not. Nothing’s going to be changed, and you can count till death on Nelson Renour.”

I don’t know what I said, Mamma, I was so profoundly touched. What a noble gentleman; how miles and miles above the puny Europeans, setting snares for every married woman’s heart, if she is anything which attracts them. Suddenly all the men I know seemed to turn into little paltry dolls, and Harry with his dear blue eyes flashing at me seemed to be the only reality, except this splendid Western hero; and a great lump came in my throat, and I could not speak. Then he took my hand and kissed it. “We’re through with all our sad talk, my Lady Elizabeth,” he said, the kindest smile in his faithful eyes, “and now I am going to show you I can keep my word, and not be a bleating lambkin.”

We came down the mountain after that, and he told me just interesting things about the camp, and the life, and the wonderful quantities of gold there. And when we got into the restaurant tent where we were to meet the others for lunch, Tom and the Vicomte and the rest had returned after a fruitless search for desperadoes, and underneath I am glad they have got away after all.

The journey back to Hot Creek was too divinely beautiful, in spite of two broken tyres which delayed us. The view this way is indescribably grand and vast—the sunset a pale magenta turning into crimson, and the sky a blue turning to green, the desert grey, and the mountains beyond deepest violet turning to sapphire and peacock blue. Does not it sound as if I were romancing, Mamma! But it was really so, and luminous and clear, so that we could see perhaps a hundred miles, all a vast sea of sage brush. The Senator sat by me this time, and Octavia, while Nelson went in front with the chauffeur, and the Senator held my arm and kept my sore shoulder from getting shaken; and he seemed such a comfort and so strong, and he asked us if we had enjoyed our trip in spite of the catastrophe last night, and we both said we had, and all the more on account of it, because it was lovely seeing the real thing. And he said it was a chance in a thousand, as all the camps were so orderly now, not as in Bret Harte, or as it was in his young days. And he said both Octavia and I would make splendid miners’ wives not to be squeamish or silly over the “carrion” that was shot, and not to have trembling nerves today. We felt so pleased, and only that underneath I can’t help being sad about Nelson, we should all have been very gay.



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It was about nine o'clock when we reached the car and Marcus Aurelius's welcoming smiles, and an appetising supper. And now I am writing to you to post where we stop in the morning. We only stay one day in Osages and then go on our way to the tarpons at last, and the joys of Mexico. It has been all more than delightful, and I do hope the Americans like us as much as we like them; from East to here we have received nothing but exquisite courtesy and kindness, and I can never tell you what a grand and open and splendid nation they are, Mamma, or how little understood in Europe. All their faults are the faults of youth, as I said before; and everyone will admit youth is a gift of the gods.

Now, good-night, dearest Mamma.

Fond love to all,

From your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

Morning.

P.S.—The Senator's mail caught us up at the only station we passed, and in the packets of letters for everyone was another from Jane Roose for me saying more odious insinuations about Mrs. Smith and Harry. I feel perfectly sick, Mamma, and I shan't be good any more. I will never speak to him again, and shall just divorce him, become a naturalized American and marry some lovely millionaire.

Osages again.

DEAREST MAMMA,—I am so fearfully excited I can hardly write. Listen! We got back here late in the afternoon, as we stopped at a place by the way where the Senator had business, and while I was up in my room dressing for dinner, in the worst temper I ever remember, still feeling so furious over Jane Roose's words, a noise of quick footsteps was heard in the passage, and without even a knock someone tried the door, which was naturally locked. Agnes in fear and trembling went to it, as from the tale of the night at Moonbeams, she thought, I suppose, it was another desperado. I was too cross to look round until I heard her scream: "Milor!" and then I saw a vision of Harry in the door way!!! In a grey flannel suit and a slouchy felt hat, looking just like a lovely miner.

Nothing in my life has ever given me such an emotion, Mamma. And do you know I forgot all about injured pride, or Mrs. Smith or anything, and rushed into his arms. We were both perfectly incoherent with passionate joy, and just think! There was not a word of truth in it all! That creature never was on the ship, and Harry only landed in Africa and got a cable from you saying I had started for America and he caught another



steamer that was sailing that night, and gave up his lions and everything, and just flew after me, and when in New York he heard we had gone out West and Gaston was one of the party, he nearly went mad with rage, and as I told you before he would, he came out here with the intention of at least beating me and shooting the Vicomte. But when we had had hundreds of kisses, and I could stay quietly in his arms, we explained everything, and we have both said we are sorry, and I love him a thousand times more than ever, and he says he will never let me out of his sight again for the rest of our lives. And we are crazily happy, Mamma, and I can't write any more, only we are not going on to Mexico, but straight home to Valmond; and please bring Hurstbridge and Ermytrude to meet us at Liverpool when the Lusitania gets in.

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Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZABETH.

P.S.—I quite understand Aunt Maria liking a second honeymoon—even after fifty years!