

Their Silver Wedding Journey — Volume 2 eBook

Their Silver Wedding Journey — Volume 2 by William Dean Howells

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Contents

Their Silver Wedding Journey — Volume 2 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	6
Page 1.....	7
Page 2.....	9
Page 3.....	11
Page 4.....	13
Page 5.....	14
Page 6.....	16
Page 7.....	18
Page 8.....	19
Page 9.....	20
Page 10.....	21
Page 11.....	22
Page 12.....	24
Page 13.....	26
Page 14.....	28
Page 15.....	30
Page 16.....	32
Page 17.....	34
Page 18.....	36
Page 19.....	38
Page 20.....	40
Page 21.....	41
Page 22.....	43



[Page 23..... 45](#)

[Page 24..... 47](#)

[Page 25..... 49](#)

[Page 26..... 51](#)

[Page 27..... 53](#)

[Page 28..... 54](#)

[Page 29..... 55](#)

[Page 30..... 56](#)

[Page 31..... 58](#)

[Page 32..... 60](#)

[Page 33..... 62](#)

[Page 34..... 64](#)

[Page 35..... 66](#)

[Page 36..... 67](#)

[Page 37..... 69](#)

[Page 38..... 71](#)

[Page 39..... 73](#)

[Page 40..... 75](#)

[Page 41..... 77](#)

[Page 42..... 79](#)

[Page 43..... 80](#)

[Page 44..... 82](#)

[Page 45..... 84](#)

[Page 46..... 86](#)

[Page 47..... 88](#)

[Page 48..... 90](#)



[Page 49..... 92](#)

[Page 50..... 94](#)

[Page 51..... 96](#)

[Page 52..... 98](#)

[Page 53..... 100](#)

[Page 54..... 102](#)

[Page 55..... 104](#)

[Page 56..... 106](#)

[Page 57..... 108](#)

[Page 58..... 110](#)

[Page 59..... 112](#)

[Page 60..... 114](#)

[Page 61..... 116](#)

[Page 62..... 118](#)

[Page 63..... 120](#)

[Page 64..... 122](#)

[Page 65..... 124](#)

[Page 66..... 126](#)

[Page 67..... 128](#)

[Page 68..... 129](#)

[Page 69..... 130](#)

[Page 70..... 131](#)

[Page 71..... 133](#)

[Page 72..... 134](#)

[Page 73..... 135](#)

[Page 74..... 137](#)



[Page 75..... 138](#)

[Page 76..... 140](#)

[Page 77..... 142](#)

[Page 78..... 143](#)

[Page 79..... 145](#)

[Page 80..... 147](#)

[Page 81..... 149](#)

[Page 82..... 151](#)



Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
By William Dean Howells		1
PART II.		1
XXVI.		1
XXVII.		5
XXVIII.		8
XXIX.		12
XXX.		18
XXXI.		20
XXXII.		26
XXXIII.		31
XXXIV.		35
XXXV.		37
XXXVI.		40
XXXVII.		44
XXXVIII.		48
XXXIX.		51
XL.		55
XLI.		57
XLII.		60
XLIII.		63
XLIV.		65
XLV.		71
XLVI.		73
XLVII.		77
PG EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:		81



Page 1

By William Dean Howells

PART II.

XXVI.

They found Burnamy expecting them at the station in Carlsbad, and she scolded him like a mother for taking the trouble to meet them, while she kept back for the present any sign of knowing that he had staid over a day with the Triscoes in Leipsic. He was as affectionately glad to see her and her husband as she could have wished, but she would have liked it better if he had owned up at once about Leipsic. He did not, and it seemed to her that he was holding her at arm's-length in his answers about his employer. He would not say how he liked his work, or how he liked Mr. Stoller; he merely said that they were at Pupp's together, and that he had got in a good day's work already; and since he would say no more, she contented herself with that.

The long drive from the station to the hotel was by streets that wound down the hill-side like those of an Italian mountain town, between gay stuccoed houses, of Southern rather than of Northern architecture; and the impression of a Latin country was heightened at a turn of the road which brought into view a colossal crucifix planted against a curtain of dark green foliage on the brow of one of the wooded heights that surrounded Carlsbad. When they reached the level of the Tepl, the hill-fed torrent that brawls through the little city under pretty bridges within walls of solid masonry, they found themselves in almost the only vehicle on a brilliant promenade thronged with a cosmopolitan world. Germans in every manner of misfit; Polish Jews in long black gabardines, with tight corkscrew curls on their temples under their black velvet derbys; Austrian officers in tight corsets; Greek priests in flowing robes and brimless high hats; Russians in caftans and Cossacks in Astrakhan caps, accented the more homogeneous masses of western Europeans, in which it would have been hard to say which were English, French or Italians. Among the vividly dressed ladies, some were imaginably Parisian from their chic costumes, but they might easily have been Hungarians or Levantines of taste; some Americans, who might have passed unknown in the perfection of their dress, gave their nationality away in the flat wooden tones of their voices, which made themselves heard above the low hum of talk and the whisper of the innumerable feet.

The omnibus worked its way at a slow walk among the promenaders going and coming between the rows of pollard locusts on one side and the bright walls of the houses on the other. Under the trees were tables, served by pretty bareheaded girls who ran to and from the restaurants across the way. On both sides flashed and glittered the little shops full of silver, glass, jewelry, terracotta figurines, wood-carvings, and all the idle frippery of watering-place traffic: they suggested Paris, and they suggested Saratoga,

and then they were of Carlsbad and of no place else in the world, as the crowd which might have been that of other cities at certain moments could only have been of Carlsbad in its habitual effect.

Page 2

“Do you like it?” asked Burnamy, as if he owned the place, and Mrs. March saw how simple-hearted he was in his reticence, after all. She was ready to bless him when they reached the hotel and found that his interest had got them the only rooms left in the house. This satisfied in her the passion for size which is at the bottom of every American heart, and which perhaps above all else marks us the youngest of the peoples. We pride ourselves on the bigness of our own things, but we are not ungenerous, and when we go to Europe and find things bigger than ours, we are magnanimously happy in them. Pupp’s, in its altogether different way, was larger than any hotel at Saratoga or at Niagara; and when Burnamy told her that it sometimes fed fifteen thousand people a day in the height of the season, she was personally proud of it.

She waited with him in the rotunda of the hotel, while the secretary led March off to look at the rooms reserved for them, and Burnamy hospitably turned the revolving octagonal case in the centre of the rotunda where the names of the guests were put up. They were of all nations, but there were so many New Yorkers whose names ended in berg, and thal, and stern, and baum that she seemed to be gazing upon a cyclorama of the signs on Broadway. A large man of unmistakable American make, but with so little that was of New England or New York in his presence that she might not at once have thought him American, lounged toward them with a quill toothpick in the corner of his mouth. He had a jealous blue eye, into which he seemed trying to put a friendly light; his straight mouth stretched into an involuntary smile above his tawny chin-beard, and he wore his soft hat so far back from his high forehead (it showed to the crown when he took his hat off) that he had the effect of being uncovered.

At his approach Burnamy turned, and with a flush said: “Oh! Let me introduce Mr. Stoller, Mrs. March.”

Stoller took his toothpick out of his mouth and bowed; then he seemed to remember, and took off his hat. “You see Jews enough, here to make you feel at home?” he asked; and he added: “Well, we got some of ’em in Chicago, too, I guess. This young man”—he twisted his head toward Burnamy—“found you easy enough?”

“It was very good of him to meet us,” Mrs. March began. “We didn’t expect—”

“Oh, that’s all right,” said Stoller, putting his toothpick back, and his hat on. “We’d got through for the day; my doctor won’t let me work all I want to, here. Your husband’s going to take the cure, they tell me. Well, he wants to go to a good doctor, first. You can’t go and drink these waters hit or miss. I found that out before I came.”

“Oh, no!” said Mrs. March, and she wished to explain how they had been advised; but he said to Burnamy:



“I sha’n’t want you again till ten to-morrow morning. Don’t let me interrupt you,” he added patronizingly to Mrs. March. He put his hand up toward his hat, and sauntered away out of the door.

Page 3

Burnamy did not speak; and she only asked at last, to relieve the silence, "Is Mr. Stoller an American?"

"Why, I suppose so," he answered, with an uneasy laugh. "His people were German emigrants who settled in Southern Indiana. That makes him as much American as any of us, doesn't it?"

Burnamy spoke with his mind on his French-Canadian grandfather, who had come down through Detroit, when their name was Bonami; but Mrs. March answered from her eight generations of New England ancestry. "Oh, for the West, yes, perhaps," and they neither of them said anything more about Stoller.

In their room, where she found March waiting for her amidst their arriving baggage, she was so full of her pent-up opinions of Burnamy's patron that she, would scarcely speak of the view from their windows of the wooded hills up and down the Tepl. "Yes, yes; very nice, and I know I shall enjoy it ever so much. But I don't know what you will think of that poor young Burnamy!"

"Why, what's happened to him?"

"Happened? Stoller's happened."

"Oh, have you seen him, already? Well?"

"Well, if you had been going to pick out that type of man, you'd have rejected him, because you'd have said he was too pat. He's like an actor made up for a Western millionaire. Do you remember that American in 'L'Etranger' which Bernhardt did in Boston when she first came? He, looks exactly like that, and he has the worst manners. He stood talking to me with his hat on, and a toothpick in his mouth; and he made me feel as if he had bought me, along with Burnamy, and had paid too much. If you don't give him a setting down, Basil, I shall never speak to you; that's all. I'm sure Burnamy is in some trouble with him; he's got some sort of hold upon him; what it could be in such a short time, I can't imagine; but if ever a man seemed to be, in a man's power, he does, in his!

"Now," said March, "your pronouns have got so far beyond me that I think we'd better let it all go till after supper; perhaps I shall see Stoller myself by that time."

She had been deeply stirred by her encounter with Stoller, but she entered with impartial intensity into the fact that the elevator at Pupp's had the characteristic of always coming up and never going down with passengers. It was locked into its closet with a solid door, and there was no bell to summon it, or any place to take it except on the ground-floor; but the stairs by which she could descend were abundant and stately; and on one landing there was the lithograph of one of the largest and ugliest hotels in



New York; how ugly it was, she said she should never have known if she had not seen it there.

The dining-room was divided into the grand saloon, where they supped amid rococo sculptures and frescoes, and the glazed veranda opening by vast windows on a spread of tables without, which were already filling up for the evening concert. Around them at the different tables there were groups of faces and figures fascinating in their strangeness, with that distinction which abashes our American level in the presence of European inequality.

Page 4

“How simple and unimpressive we are, Basil,” she said, “beside all these people! I used to feel it in Europe when I was young, and now I’m certain that we must seem like two faded-in old village photographs. We don’t even look intellectual! I hope we look good.”

“I know I do,” said March. The waiter went for their supper, and they joined in guessing the different nationalities in the room. A French party was easy enough; a Spanish mother and daughter were not difficult, though whether they were not South-American remained uncertain; two elderly maiden ladies were unmistakably of central Massachusetts, and were obviously of a book-club culture that had left no leaf unturned; some Triestines gave themselves away by their Venetian accent; but a large group at a farther table were unassignable in the strange language which they clattered loudly together, with bursts of laughter. They were a family party of old and young, they were having a good time, with a freedom which she called baronial; the ladies wore white satin, or black lace, but the men were in sack-coats; she chose to attribute them, for no reason but their outlandishness, to Transylvania. March pretended to prefer a table full of Germans, who were unmistakably bourgeois, and yet of intellectual effect. He chose as his favorite a middle-aged man of learned aspect, and they both decided to think of him as the Herr Professor, but they did not imagine how perfectly the title fitted him till he drew a long comb from his waistcoat pocket and combed his hair and beard with it above the table.

The wine wrought with the Transylvanians, and they all jargoned together at once, and laughed at the jokes passing among them. One old gentleman had a peculiar fascination from the infantile innocence of his gums when he threw his head back to laugh, and showed an upper jaw toothless except for two incisors, standing guard over the chasm between. Suddenly he choked, coughed to relieve himself, hawked, held his napkin up before him, and—

“Noblesse oblige,” said March, with the tone of irony which he reserved for his wife’s preoccupations with aristocracies of all sorts. “I think I prefer my Hair Professor, bourgeois, as he is.”

The ladies attributively of central Massachusetts had risen from their table, and were making for the door without having paid for their supper. The head waiter ran after them; with a real delicacy for their mistake he explained that though in most places the meals were charged in the bill, it was the custom in Carlsbad to pay for them at the table; one could see that he was making their error a pleasant adventure to them which they could laugh over together, and write home about without a pang.

“And I,” said Mrs. March, shamelessly abandoning the party of the aristocracy, “prefer the manners of the lower classes.”

“Oh, yes,” he admitted. “The only manners we have at home are black ones. But you mustn’t lose courage. Perhaps the nobility are not always so baronial.”



Page 5

"I don't know whether we have manners at home," she said, "and I don't believe I care. At least we have decencies."

"Don't be a jingo," said her husband.

XXVII.

Though Stoller had formally discharged Burnamy from duty for the day, he was not so full of resources in himself, and he had not so general an acquaintance in the hotel but he was glad to have the young fellow make up to him in the reading-room, that night. He laid down a New York paper ten days old in despair of having left any American news in it, and pushed several continental Anglo-American papers aside with his elbow, as he gave a contemptuous glance at the foreign journals, in Bohemian, Hungarian, German, French, and Italian, which littered the large table.

"I wonder," he said, "how long it'll take 'em, over here, to catch on to our way of having pictures?"

Burnamy had come to his newspaper work since illustrated journalism was established, and he had never had any shock from it at home, but so sensitive is youth to environment that, after four days in Europe, the New York paper Stoller had laid down was already hideous to him. From the politic side of his nature, however, he temporized with Stoller's preference. "I suppose it will be some time yet."

"I wish," said Stoller, with a savage disregard of expressed sequences and relevancies, "I could ha' got some pictures to send home with that letter this afternoon: something to show how they do things here, and be a kind of object-lesson." This term had come up in a recent campaign when some employers, by shutting down their works, were showing their employees what would happen if the employees voted their political opinions into effect, and Stoller had then mastered its meaning and was fond of using it. "I'd like 'em to see the woods around here, that the city owns, and the springs, and the donkey-carts, and the theatre, and everything, and give 'em some practical ideas."

Burnamy made an uneasy movement.

"I'd 'a' liked to put 'em alongside of some of our improvements, and show how a town can be carried on when it's managed on business principles."

"Why didn't you think of it?"

"Really, I don't know," said Burnamy, with a touch of impatience.

They had not met the evening before on the best of terms. Stoller had expected Burnamy twenty-four hours earlier, and had shown his displeasure with him for loitering



a day at Leipsic which he might have spent at Carlsbad; and Burnamy had been unsatisfactory in accounting for the delay. But he had taken hold so promptly and so intelligently that by working far into the night, and through the whole forenoon, he had got Stoller's crude mass of notes into shape, and had sent off in time for the first steamer the letter which was to appear over the proprietor's name in his paper. It was a sort of rough but very full study of the Carlsbad city government, the methods of taxation, the municipal ownership of the springs and the lands, and the public control in everything. It condemned the aristocratic constitution of the municipality, but it charged heavily in favor of the purity, beneficence, and wisdom of the administration, under which there was no poverty and no idleness, and which was managed like any large business.

Page 6

Stoller had sulkily recurred to his displeasure, once or twice, and Burnamy suffered it submissively until now. But now, at the change in Burnamy's tone, he changed his manner a little.

"Seen your friends since supper?" he asked.

"Only a moment. They are rather tired, and they've gone to bed."

"That the fellow that edits that book you write for?"

"Yes; he owns it, too."

The notion of any sort of ownership moved Stoller's respect, and he asked more deferentially, "Makin' a good thing out of it?"

"A living, I suppose. Some of the high-class weeklies feel the competition of the ten-cent monthlies. But 'Every Other Week' is about the best thing we've got in the literary way, and I guess it's holding its own."

"Have to, to let the editor come to Carlsbad," Stoller said, with a return to the sourness of his earlier mood. "I don't know as I care much for his looks; I seen him when he came in with you. No snap to him." He clicked shut the penknife he had been paring his nails with, and started up with the abruptness which marked all his motions, mental and physical; as he walked heavily out of the room he said, without looking at Burnamy, "You want to be ready by half past ten at the latest."

Stoller's father and mother were poor emigrants who made their way to the West with the instinct for sordid prosperity native to their race and class; and they set up a small butcher shop in the little Indiana town where their son was born, and thrived in it from the start. He could remember his mother helping his father make the sausage and head-cheese and pickle the pigs' feet, which they took turns in selling at as great a price as they could extort from the townspeople. She was a good and tender mother, and when her little Yawcup, as the boys called Jacob in mimicry after her, had grown to the school-going age, she taught him to fight the Americans, who stoned him when he came out of his gate, and mobbed his home-coming; and mocked and tormented him at play-time till they wore themselves into a kindlier mind toward him through the exhaustion of their invention. No one, so far as the gloomy, stocky, rather dense little boy could make out, ever interfered in his behalf; and he grew up in bitter shame for his German origin, which entailed upon him the hard fate of being Dutch among the Americans. He hated his native speech so much that he cried when he was forced to use it with his father and mother at home; he furiously denied it with the boys who proposed to parley with him in it on such terms as "Nix come arouse in de Dytchman's house." He disused it so thoroughly that after his father took him out of school, when he was old enough to help in the shop, he could not get back to it. He regarded his father's business as part of his



national disgrace, and at the cost of leaving his home he broke away from it, and informally apprenticed himself to the village blacksmith and wagon-maker. When it came to his setting up for himself in the business he had chosen, he had no help from his father, who had gone on adding dollar to dollar till he was one of the richest men in the place.

Page 7

Jacob prospered too; his old playmates, who had used him so cruelly, had many of them come to like him; but as a Dutchman they never dreamt of asking him to their houses when they were young people, any more than when they were children. He was long deeply in love with an American girl whom he had never spoken to, and the dream of his life was to marry an American. He ended by marrying the daughter of Pferd the brewer, who had been at an American school in Indianapolis, and had come home as fragilely and nasally American as anybody. She made him a good, sickly, fretful wife; and bore him five children, of whom two survived, with no visible taint of their German origin.

In the mean time Jacob's father had died and left his money to his son, with the understanding that he was to provide for his mother, who would gladly have given every cent to him and been no burden to him, if she could. He took her home, and cared tenderly for her as long as she lived; and she meekly did her best to abolish herself in a household trying so hard to be American. She could not help her native accent, but she kept silence when her son's wife had company; and when her eldest granddaughter began very early to have American callers, she went out of the room; they would not have noticed her if she had staid.

Before this Jacob had come forward publicly in proportion to his financial importance in the community. He first commended himself to the Better Element by crushing out a strike in his Buggy Works, which were now the largest business interest of the place; and he rose on a wave of municipal reform to such a height of favor with the respectable classes that he was elected on a citizens' ticket to the Legislature. In the reaction which followed he was barely defeated for Congress, and was talked of as a dark horse who might be put up for the governorship some day; but those who knew him best predicted that he would not get far in politics, where his bull-headed business ways would bring him to ruin sooner or later; they said, "You can't swing a bolt like you can a strike."

When his mother died, he surprised his old neighbors by going to live in Chicago, though he kept his works in the place where he and they had grown up together. His wife died shortly after, and within four years he lost his three eldest children; his son, it was said, had begun to go wrong first. But the rumor of his increasing wealth drifted back from Chicago; he was heard of in different enterprises and speculations; at last it was said that he had bought a newspaper, and then his boyhood friends decided that Jake was going into politics again.



Page 8

In the wider horizons and opener atmosphere of the great city he came to understand better that to be an American in all respects was not the best. His mounting sense of importance began to be retroactive in the direction of his ancestral home; he wrote back to the little town near Wurzburg which his people had come from, and found that he had relatives still living there, some of whom had become people of substance; and about the time his health gave way from life-long gluttony, and he was ordered to Carlsbad, he had pretty much made up his mind to take his younger daughters and put them in school for a year or two in Wurzburg, for a little discipline if not education. He had now left them there, to learn the language, which he had forgotten with such heart-burning and shame, and music, for which they had some taste.

The twins loudly lamented their fate, and they parted from their father with open threats of running away; and in his heart he did not altogether blame them. He came away from Wurzburg raging at the disrespect for his money and his standing in business which had brought him a more galling humiliation there than anything he had suffered in his boyhood at Des Vaches. It intensified him in his dear-bought Americanism to the point of wishing to commit lese majesty in the teeth of some local dignitaries who had snubbed him, and who seemed to enjoy putting our eagle to shame in his person; there was something like the bird of his step-country in Stoller's pale eyes and huge beak.

XXVIII.

March sat with a company of other patients in the anteroom of the doctor, and when it came his turn to be prodded and kneaded, he was ashamed at being told he was not so bad a case as he had dreaded. The doctor wrote out a careful dietary for him, with a prescription of a certain number of glasses of water at a certain spring and a certain number of baths, and a rule for the walks he was to take before and after eating; then the doctor patted him on the shoulder and pushed him caressingly out of his inner office. It was too late to begin his treatment that day, but he went with his wife to buy a cup, with a strap for hanging it over his shoulder, and he put it on so as to be an invalid with the others at once; he came near forgetting the small napkin of Turkish towelling which they stuffed into their cups, but happily the shopman called him back in time to sell it to him.

At five the next morning he rose, and on his way to the street exchanged with the servants cleaning the hotel stairs the first of the gloomy 'Guten Morgens' which usher in the day at Carlsbad. They cannot be so finally hopeless as they sound; they are probably expressive only of the popular despair of getting through with them before night; but March heard the salutations sorrowfully groaned out on every hand as he joined the straggling current of invalids which swelled on the way past the silent shops and

Page 9

cafes in the Alte Wiese, till it filled the street, and poured its thousands upon the promenade before the classic colonnade of the Muhlbrunn. On the other bank of the Tepl the Sprudel flings its steaming waters by irregular impulses into the air under a pavilion of iron and glass; but the Muhlbrunn is the source of most resort. There is an instrumental concert somewhere in Carlsbad from early rising till bedtime; and now at the Muhlbrunn there was an orchestra already playing; and under the pillared porch, as well as before it, the multitude shuffled up and down, draining their cups by slow sips, and then taking each his place in the interminable line moving on to replenish them at the spring.

A picturesque majority of Polish Jews, whom some vice of their climate is said peculiarly to fit for the healing effects of Carlsbad, most took his eye in their long gabardines of rusty black and their derby hats of plush or velvet, with their corkscrew curls coming down before their ears. They were old and young, they were grizzled and red and black, but they seemed all well-to-do; and what impresses one first and last at Carlsbad is that its waters are mainly for the healing of the rich. After the Polish Jews, the Greek priests of Russian race were the most striking figures. There were types of Latin ecclesiastics, who were striking in their way too; and the uniforms of certain Austrian officers and soldiers brightened the picture. Here and there a southern face, Italian or Spanish or Levantine, looked passionately out of the mass of dull German visages; for at Carlsbad the Germans, more than any other gentile nation, are to the fore. Their misfits, their absence of style, imparted the prevalent effect; though now and then among the women a Hungarian, or Pole, or Parisian, or American, relieved the eye which seeks beauty and grace rather than the domestic virtues. There were certain faces, types of discomfort and disease, which appealed from the beginning to the end. A young Austrian, yellow as gold, and a livid South-American, were of a lasting fascination to March.

What most troubled him, in his scrutiny of the crowd, was the difficulty of assigning people to their respective nations, and he accused his years of having dulled his perceptions; but perhaps it was from their long disuse in his homogeneous American world. The Americans themselves fused with the European races who were often so hard to make out; his fellow-citizens would not be identified till their bad voices gave them away; he thought the women's voices the worst.

At the springs, a line of young girls with a steady mechanical action dipped the cups into the steaming source, and passed them impersonally up to their owners. With the patients at the Muhlbrunn it was often a half-hour before one's turn came, and at all a strict etiquette forbade any attempt to anticipate it. The water was merely warm and flat, and after the first repulsion one could forget it. March

Page 10

formed a childish habit of counting ten between the sips, and of finishing the cup with a gulp which ended it quickly; he varied his walks between cups by going sometimes to a bridge at the end of the colonnade where a group of Triestines were talking Venetian, and sometimes to the little Park beyond the Kurhaus, where some old women were sweeping up from the close sward the yellow leaves which the trees had untidily dropped overnight. He liked to sit there and look at the city beyond the Tepl, where it climbed the wooded heights in terraces till it lost its houses in the skirts and folds of the forest. Most mornings it rained, quietly, absent-mindedly, and this, with the chili in the air, deepened a pleasant illusion of Quebec offered by the upper town across the stream; but there were sunny mornings when the mountains shone softly through a lustrous mist, and the air was almost warm.

Once in his walk he found himself the companion of Burnamy's employer, whom he had sometimes noted in the line at the Muhlbrunn, waiting his turn, cup in hand, with a face of sullen impatience. Stoller explained that though you could have the water brought to you at your hotel, he chose to go to the spring for the sake of the air; it was something you had got to live through; before he had that young Burnamy to help him he did not know what to do with his time, but now, every minute he was not eating or sleeping he was working; his cure did not oblige him to walk much. He examined March, with a certain mixture of respect and contempt, upon the nature of the literary life, and how it differed from the life of a journalist. He asked if he thought Burnamy would amount to anything as a literary man; he so far assented to March's faith in him as to say, "He's smart." He told of leaving his daughters in school at Wurzburg; and upon the whole he moved March with a sense of his pathetic loneliness without moving his liking, as he passed lumberingly on, dangling his cup.

March gave his own cup to the little maid at his spring, and while she gave it to a second, who dipped it and handed it to a third for its return to him, he heard an unmistakable fellow-countryman saying good-morning to them all in English. "Are you going to teach them United States?" he asked of a face with which he knew such an appeal would not fail.

"Well," the man admitted, "I try to teach them that much. They like it. You are an American? I am glad of it. I have 'most lost the use of my lungs, here. I'm a great talker, and I talk to my wife till she's about dead; then I'm out of it for the rest of the day; I can't speak German."

His manner was the free, friendly manner of the West. He must be that sort of untravelled American whom March had so seldom met, but he was afraid to ask him if this was his first time at Carlsbad, lest it should prove the third or fourth. "Are you taking the cure?" he asked instead.



Page 11

"Oh, no. My wife is. She'll be along directly; I come down here and drink the waters to encourage her; doctor said to. That gets me in for the diet, too. I've e't more cooked fruit since I been here than I ever did in my life before. Prunes? My Lord, I'm full o' prunes! Well, it does me good to see an American, to know him. I couldn't 'a' told you, it you hadn't have spoken."

"Well," said March, "I shouldn't have been so sure of you, either, by your looks."

"Yes, we can't always tell ourselves from these Dutch. But they know us, and they don't want us, except just for one thing, and that's our money. I tell you, the Americans are the chumps over here. Soon's they got all our money, or think they have, they say, 'Here, you Americans, this is my country; you get off;' and we got to get. Ever been over before?"

"A great while ago; so long that I can hardly believe it."

"It's my first time. My name's Otterson: I'm from out in Iowa."

March gave him his name, and added that he was from New York.

"Yes. I thought you was Eastern. But that wasn't an Eastern man you was just with?"

"No; he's from Chicago. He's a Mr. Stoller."

"Not the buggy man?"

"I believe he makes buggies."

"Well, you do meet everybody here." The Iowan was silent for a moment, as if, hushed by the weighty thought. "I wish my wife could have seen him. I just want her to see the man that made our buggy. I don't know what's keeping her, this morning," he added, apologetically. "Look at that fellow, will you, tryin' to get away from those women!" A young officer was doing his best to take leave of two ladies, who seemed to be mother and daughter; they detained him by their united arts, and clung to him with caressing words and looks. He was red in the face with his polite struggles when he broke from them at last. "How they do hang on to a man, over here!" the Iowa man continued. "And the Americans are as bad as any. Why, there's one ratty little Englishman up at our place, and our girls just swarm after him; their mothers are worse. Well, it's so, Jenny," he said to the lady who had joined them and whom March turned round to see when he spoke to her. "If I wanted a foreigner I should go in for a man. And these officers! Put their mustaches up at night in curl-papers, they tell me. Introduce you to Mrs. Otterson, Mr. March. Well, had your first glass, yet, Jenny? I'm just going for my second tumbler."



He took his wife back to the spring, and began to tell her about Stoller; she made no sign of caring for him; and March felt inculpated. She relented a little toward him as they drank together; when he said he must be going to breakfast with his wife, she asked where he breakfasted, and said, "Why, we go to the Posthof, too." He answered that then they should be sure some time to meet there; he did not venture further; he reflected that Mrs. March had her reluctances too; she distrusted people who had amused or interested him before she met them.



Page 12

XXIX.

Burnamy had found the Posthof for them, as he had found most of the other agreeable things in Carlsbad, which he brought to their knowledge one by one, with such forethought that March said he hoped he should be cared for in his declining years as an editor rather than as a father; there was no tenderness like a young contributor's.

Many people from the hotels on the hill found at Pupp's just the time and space between their last cup of water and their first cup of coffee which are prescribed at Carlsbad; but the Marches were aware somehow from the beginning that Pupp's had not the hold upon the world at breakfast which it had at the mid-day dinner, or at supper on the evenings when the concert was there. Still it was amusing, and they were patient of Burnamy's delay till he could get a morning off from Stoller and go with them to the Posthof. He met Mrs. March in the reading-room, where March was to join them on his way from the springs with his bag of bread. The earlier usage of buying the delicate pink slices of Westphalia ham, which form the chief motive of a Carlsbad breakfast, at a certain shop in the town, and carrying them to the cafe with you, is no longer of such binding force as the custom of getting your bread at the Swiss bakery. You choose it yourself at the counter, which begins to be crowded by half past seven, and when you have collected the prescribed loaves into the basket of metallic filigree given you by one of the baker's maids, she puts it into a tissue-paper bag of a gay red color, and you join the other invalids streaming away from the bakery, their paper bags making a festive rustling as they go.

Two roads lead out of the town into the lovely meadow-lands, a good mile up the brawling Tepl, before they join on the right side of the torrent, where the Posthof lurks nestled under trees whose boughs let the sun and rain impartially through upon its army of little tables. By this time the slow omnibus plying between Carlsbad and some villages in the valley beyond has crossed from the left bank to the right, and keeps on past half a dozen other cafes, where patients whose prescriptions marshal them beyond the Posthof drop off by the dozens and scores.

The road on the left bank of the Tepl is wild and overhung at points with wooded steeps, when it leaves the town; but on the right it is bordered with shops and restaurants a great part of its length. In leafy nooks between these, uphill walks begin their climb of the mountains, from the foot of votive shrines set round with tablets commemorating in German, French, Russian, Hebrew, Magyar and Czech, the cure of high-well-borns of all those races and languages. Booths glittering with the lapidary's work in the cheaper gems, or full of the ingenious figures of the toy-makers, alternate with the shrines and the cafes on the way to the Posthof, and with their shoulders against the overhanging cliff, spread for the passing crowd a lure of Viennese jewelry in garnets, opals, amethysts, and the like, and of such Bohemian playthings as carrot-eating rabbits,

worsted-working cats, dancing-bears, and peacocks that strut about the feet of the passers and expand their iridescent tails in mimic pride.

Page 13

Burnamy got his charges with difficulty by the shrines in which they felt the far-reflected charm of the crucifixes of the white-hot Italian highways of their early travel, and by the toyshops where they had a mechanical, out-dated impulse to get something for the children, ending in a pang for the fact that they were children no longer. He waited politely while Mrs. March made up her mind that she would not buy any laces of the motherly old women who showed them under pent-roofs on way-side tables; and he waited patiently at the gate of the flower-gardens beyond the shops where March bought lavishly of sweetpease from the businesslike flower-woman, and feigned a grateful joy in her because she knew no English, and gave him a chance of speaking his German.

“You’ll find,” he said, as they crossed the road again, “that it’s well to trifle a good deal; it makes the time pass. I should still be lagging along in my thirties if it hadn’t been for fooling, and here I am well on in my fifties, and Mrs. March is younger than ever.”

They were at the gate of the garden and grounds of the cafe at last, and a turn of the path brought them to the prospect of its tables, under the trees, between the two long glazed galleries where the breakfasters take refuge at other tables when it rains; it rains nearly always, and the trunks of the trees are as green with damp as if painted; but that morning the sun was shining. At the verge of the open space a group of pretty serving-maids, each with her name on a silver band pinned upon her breast, met them and bade them a ‘Guten Morgen’ of almost cheerful note, but gave way, to an eager little smiling blonde, who came pushing down the path at sight of Burnamy, and claimed him for her own.

“Ah, Lili! We want an extra good table, this morning. These are some American Excellencies, and you must do your best for them.”

“Oh, yes,” the girl answered in English, after a radiant salutation of the Marches; “I get you one.”

“You are a little more formerly, to-day, and I didn’t had one already.”

She ran among the tables along the edge of the western edge of the gallery, and was far beyond hearing his protest that he was not earlier than usual when she beckoned him to the table she had found. She had crowded it in between two belonging to other girls, and by the time her breakfasters came up she was ready for their order, with the pouting pretence that the girls always tried to rob her of the best places. Burnamy explained proudly, when she went, that none of the other girls ever got an advantage of her; she had more custom than any three of them, and she had hired a man to help her carry her orders. The girls were all from the neighboring villages, he said, and they lived at home in the winter on their summer tips; their wages were nothing, or less, for sometimes they paid for their places.

“What a mass of information!” said March. “How did you come by it?”



Page 14

“Newspaper habit of interviewing the universe.”

“It’s not a bad habit, if one doesn’t carry it too far. How did Lili learn her English?”

“She takes lessons in the winter. She’s a perfect little electric motor. I don’t believe any Yankee girl could equal her.”

“She would expect to marry a millionaire if she did. What astonishes one over here is to see how contentedly people prosper along on their own level. And the women do twice the work of the men without expecting to equal them in any other way. At Pupp’s, if we go to one end of the out-door restaurant, it takes three men to wait on us: one to bring our coffee or tea, another to bring our bread and meat, and another to make out our bill, and I have to tip all three of them. If we go to the other end, one girl serves us, and I have to give only one fee; I make it less than the least I give any three of the men waiters.”

“You ought to be ashamed of that,” said his wife.

“I’m not. I’m simply proud of your sex, my dear.”

“Women do nearly everything, here,” said Burnamy, impartially. “They built that big new Kaiserbad building: mixed the mortar, carried the hods, and laid the stone.”

“That makes me prouder of the sex than ever. But come, Mr. Burnamy! Isn’t there anybody of polite interest that you know of in this crowd?”

“Well, I can’t say,” Burnamy hesitated.

The breakfasters had been thronging into the grove and the galleries; the tables were already filled, and men were bringing other tables on their heads, and making places for them, with entreaties for pardon everywhere; the proprietor was anxiously directing them; the pretty serving-girls were running to and from the kitchen in a building apart with shrill, sweet promises of haste. The morning sun fell broken through the leaves on the gay hats and dresses of the ladies, and dappled the figures of the men with harlequin patches of light and shade. A tall woman, with a sort of sharpened beauty, and an artificial permanency of tint in her cheeks and yellow hair, came trailing herself up the sun-shot path, and found, with hardy insistence upon the publicity, places for the surly-looking, down-faced young man behind her, and for her maid and her black poodle; the dog was like the black poodle out of Faust. Burnamy had heard her history; in fact, he had already roughed out a poem on it, which he called Europa, not after the old fable, but because it seemed to him that she expressed Europe, on one side of its civilization, and had an authorized place in its order, as she would not have had in ours. She was where she was by a toleration of certain social facts which corresponds in Europe to our reverence for the vested interests. In her history there, had been officers



and bankers; even foreign dignitaries; now there was this sullen young fellow Burnamy had wondered if it would do to offer his poem to March, but the presence of the original abashed him, and in his mind he had torn the poem up, with a heartache for its aptness.



Page 15

"I don't believe," he said, "that I recognize-any celebrities here."

"I'm sorry," said March. "Mrs. March would have been glad of some Hoheits, some Grafs and Grafins, or a few Excellenzes, or even some mere well-borns. But we must try to get along with the picturesqueness."

"I'm satisfied with the picturesqueness," said his wife. "Don't worry about me, Mr. Burnamy."

"Why can't we have this sort of thing at home?"

"We're getting something like it in the roof-gardens," said March. "We couldn't have it naturally because the climate is against it, with us. At this time in the morning over there, the sun would be burning the life out of the air, and the flies would be swarming on every table. At nine A. M. the mosquitoes would be eating us up in such a grove as this. So we have to use artifice, and lift our Posthof above the fly-line and the mosquito-line into the night air. I haven't seen a fly since I came to Europe. I really miss them; it makes me homesick."

"There are plenty in Italy," his wife suggested.

"We must get down there before we go home."

"But why did nobody ever tell us that there were no flies in Germany? Why did no traveller ever put it in his book? When your stewardess said so on the steamer, I remember that you regarded it as a bluff." He turned to Burnamy, who was listening with the deference of a contributor: "Isn't Lili rather long? I mean for such a very prompt person. Oh, no!"

But Burnamy got to his feet, and shouted "Fraulein!" to Lili; with her hireling at her heels she was flying down a distant aisle between the tables. She called back, with a face laughing over her shoulder, "In a minute!" and vanished in the crowd.

"Does that mean anything in particular? There's really no hurry."

"Oh, I think she'll come now," said Burnamy. March protested that he had only been amused at Lili's delay; but his wife scolded him for his impatience; she begged Burnamy's pardon, and repeated civilities passed between them. She asked if he did not think some of the young ladies were pretty beyond the European average; a very few had style; the mothers were mostly fat, and not stylish; it was well not to regard the fathers too closely; several old gentlemen were clearing their throats behind their newspapers, with noises that made her quail. There was no one so effective as the Austrian officers, who put themselves a good deal on show, bowing from their hips to favored groups; with the sun glinting from their eyeglasses, and their hands pressing their sword-hilts, they moved between the tables with the gait of tight-laced women.



“They all wear corsets,” Burnamy explained.

“How much you know already!” said Mrs. March. “I can see that Europe won’t be lost on you in anything. Oh, who’s that?” A lady whose costume expressed sarcasm at every point glided up the middle aisle of the grove with a graceful tilt. Burnamy was silent. “She must be an American. Do you know who she is?”



Page 16

“Yes.” He hesitated, a little to name a woman whose tragedy had once filled the newspapers.

Mrs. March gazed after her with the fascination which such tragedies inspire. “What grace! Is she beautiful?”

“Very.” Burnamy had not obtruded his knowledge, but somehow Mrs. March did not like his knowing who she was, and how beautiful. She asked March to look, but he refused.

“Those things are too squalid,” he said, and she liked him for saying it; she hoped it would not be lost upon Burnamy.

One of the waitresses tripped on the steps near them and flung the burden off her tray on the stone floor before her; some of the dishes broke, and the breakfast was lost. Tears came into the girl’s eyes and rolled down her hot cheeks. “There! That is what I call tragedy,” said March. “She’ll have to pay for those things.”

“Oh, give her the money, dearest!”

“How can I?”

The girl had just got away with the ruin when Lili and her hireling behind her came bearing down upon them with their three substantial breakfasts on two well-laden trays. She forestalled Burnamy’s reproaches for her delay, laughing and bridling, while she set down the dishes of ham and tongue and egg, and the little pots of coffee and frothed milk.

“I could not so soon I wanted, because I was to serve an American princess.”

Mrs. March started with proud conjecture of one of those noble international marriages which fill our women with vainglory for such of their compatriots as make them.

“Oh, come now, Lili!” said Burnamy. “We have queens in America, but nothing so low as princesses. This was a queen, wasn’t it?”

She referred the case to her hireling, who confirmed her. “All people say it is princess,” she insisted.

“Well, if she’s a princess we must look her up after breakfast,” said Burnamy. “Where is she sitting?”

She pointed at a corner so far off on the other side that no one could be distinguished, and then was gone, with a smile flashed over her shoulder, and her hireling trying to keep up with her.



“We’re all very proud of Lili’s having a hired man,” said Burnamy. “We think it reflects credit on her customers.”

March had begun his breakfast with the voracious appetite of an early-rising invalid. “What coffee!”

He drew a long sigh after the first draught.

“It’s said to be made of burnt figs,” said Burnamy, from the inexhaustible advantage of his few days’ priority in Carlsbad.

“Then let’s have burnt figs introduced at home as soon as possible. But why burnt figs? That seems one of those doubts which are much more difficult than faith.”

“It’s not only burnt figs,” said Burnamy, with amiable superiority, “if it is burnt figs, but it’s made after a formula invented by a consensus of physicians, and enforced by the municipality. Every cafe in Carlsbad makes the same kind of coffee and charges the same price.”



Page 17

“You are leaving us very little to find out for ourselves,” sighed March.

“Oh, I know a lot more things. Are you fond of fishing?”

“Not very.”

“You can get a permit to catch trout in the Tepl, but they send an official with you who keeps count, and when you have had your sport, the trout belong to the municipality just as they did before you caught them.”

“I don’t see why that isn’t a good notion: the last thing I should want to do would be to eat a fish that I had caught, and that I was personally acquainted with. Well, I’m never going away from Carlsbad. I don’t wonder people get their doctors to tell them to come back.”

Burnamy told them a number of facts he said Stoller had got together about the place, and had given him to put in shape. It was run in the interest of people who had got out of order, so that they would keep coming to get themselves in order again; you could hardly buy an unwholesome meal in the town; all the cooking was ‘kurgemass’. He won such favor with his facts that he could not stop in time: he said to March, “But if you ever should have a fancy for a fish of your personal acquaintance, there’s a restaurant up the Tepl, where they let you pick out your trout in the water; then they catch him and broil him for you, and you know what you are eating.”

“Is it a municipal restaurant?”

“Semi-municipal,” said Burnamy, laughing.

“We’ll take Mrs. March,” said her husband, and in her gravity Burnamy felt the limitations of a woman’s sense of humor, which always define themselves for men so unexpectedly.

He did what he could to get back into her good graces by telling her what he knew about distinctions and dignities that he now saw among the breakfasters. The crowd had now grown denser till the tables were set together in such labyrinths that any one who left the central aisle was lost in them. The serving-girls ran more swiftly to and fro, responding with a more nervous shrillness to the calls of “Fraulein! Fraulein!” that followed them. The proprietor, in his bare head, stood like one paralyzed by his prosperity, which sent up all round him the clash of knives and crockery, and the confusion of tongues. It was more than an hour before Burnamy caught Lili’s eye, and three times she promised to come and be paid before she came. Then she said, “It is so nice, when you stay a little,” and when he told her of the poor Fraulein who had broken the dishes in her fall near them, she almost wept with tenderness; she almost winked with wickedness when he asked if the American princess was still in her place.



“Do go and see who it can be!” Mrs. March entreated. “We’ll wait here,” and he obeyed. “I am not sure that I like him,” she said, as soon as he was out of hearing. “I don’t know but he’s coarse, after all. Do you approve of his knowing so many people’s ‘taches’ already?”

“Would it be any better later?” he asked in turn. “He seemed to find you interested.”



Page 18

"It's very different with us; we're not young," she urged, only half seriously.

Her husband laughed. "I see you want me to defend him. Oh, hello!" he cried, and she saw Burnamy coming toward them with a young lady, who was nodding to them from as far as she could see them. "This is the easy kind of thing that makes you Blush for the author if you find it in a novel."

XXX.

Mrs. March fairly took Miss Triscoe in her arms to kiss her. "Do you know I felt it must be you, all the time! When did you come? Where is your father? What hotel are you staying at?"

It appeared, while Miss Triscoe was shaking hands with March, that it was last night, and her father was finishing his breakfast, and it was one of the hotels on the hill. On the way back to her father it appeared that he wished to consult March's doctor; not that there was anything the matter.

The general himself was not much softened by the reunion with his fellow-Americans; he confided to them that his coffee was poisonous; but he seemed, standing up with the Paris-New York Chronicle folded in his hand, to have drunk it all. Was March going off on his forenoon tramp? He believed that was part of the treatment, which was probably all humbug, though he thought of trying it, now he was there. He was told the walks were fine; he looked at Burnamy as if he had been praising them, and Burnamy said he had been wondering if March would not like to try a mountain path back to his hotel; he said, not so sincerely, that he thought Mrs. March would like it.

"I shall like your account of it," she answered. "But I'll walk back on a level, if you please."

"Oh, yes," Miss Triscoe pleaded, "come with us!"

She played a little comedy of meaning to go back with her father so gracefully that Mrs. March herself could scarcely have told just where the girl's real purpose of going with Burnamy began to be evident, or just how she managed to make General Triscoe beg to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. March back to her hotel.

March went with the young people across the meadow behind the Posthof and up into the forest, which began at the base of the mountain. At first they tried to keep him in the range of their talk; but he fell behind more and more, and as the talk narrowed to themselves it was less and less possible to include him in it. When it began to concern their common appreciation of the Marches, they even tried to get out of his hearing.



“They’re so young in their thoughts,” said Burnamy, “and they seem as much interested in everything as they could have been thirty years ago. They belong to a time when the world was a good deal fresher than it is now; don’t you think? I mean, in the eighteen-sixties.”

“Oh, yes, I can see that.”

“I don’t know why we shouldn’t be born older in each generation than people were in the last. Perhaps we are,” he suggested.



Page 19

"I don't know how you mean," said the girl, keeping vigorously up with him; she let him take the jacket she threw off, but she would not have his hand at the little steeps where he wanted to give it.

"I don't believe I can quite make it out myself. But fancy a man that began to act at twenty, quite unconsciously of course, from the past experience of the whole race—"

"He would be rather a dreadful person, wouldn't he?"

"Rather monstrous, yes," he owned, with a laugh. "But that's where the psychological interest would come in."

As if she did not feel the notion quite pleasant she turned from it. "I suppose you've been writing all sorts of things since you came here."

"Well, it hasn't been such a great while as it's seemed, and I've had Mr. Stoller's psychological interests to look after."

"Oh, yes! Do you like him?"

"I don't know. He's a lump of honest selfishness. He isn't bad. You know where to have him. He's simple, too."

"You mean, like Mr. March?"

"I didn't mean that; but why not? They're not of the same generation, but Stoller isn't modern."

"I'm very curious to see him," said the girl.

"Do you want me to introduce him?"

"You can introduce him to papa."

They stopped and looked across the curve of the mounting path, down on March, who had sunk on a way-side seat, and was mopping his forehead. He saw them, and called up: "Don't wait for me. I'll join you, gradually."

"I don't want to lose you," Burnamy called back, but he kept on with Miss Triscoe. "I want to get the Hirschensprung in," he explained. "It's the cliff where a hunted deer leaped down several hundred feet to get away from an emperor who was after him."

"Oh, yes. They have them everywhere."

"Do they? Well, anyway, there's a noble view up there."



There was no view on the way up. The Germans' notion of a woodland is everywhere that of a dense forest such as their barbarous tribes primevally herded in. It means the close-set stems of trees, with their tops interwoven in a roof of boughs and leaves so densely that you may walk dry through it almost as long as a German shower lasts. When the sun shines there is a pleasant greenish light in the aisles, shot here and there with the gold that trickles through. There is nothing of the accident of an American wood in these forests, which have been watched and weeded by man ever since they burst the soil. They remain nurseries, but they have the charm which no human care can alienate. The smell of their bark and their leaves, and of the moist, flowerless earth about their roots, came to March where he sat rich with the memories of his country-bred youth, and drugged all consciousness of his long life in cities since, and made him a part of nature, with dulled interests and dimmed perspectives, so that for the moment he had the enjoyment of exemption from care. There was no wild life to penetrate his isolation; no birds, not a squirrel, not an insect; an old man who had bidden him good-morning, as he came up, kept fumbling at the path with his hoe, and was less intrusive than if he had not been there.



Page 20

March thought of the impassioned existence of these young people playing the inevitable comedy of hide and seek which the youth of the race has played from the beginning of time. The other invalids who haunted the forest, and passed up and down before him in fulfilment of their several prescriptions, had a thin unreality in spite of the physical bulk that prevailed among them, and they heightened the relief that the forest-spirit brought him from the strenuous contact of that young drama. He had been almost painfully aware that the persons in it had met, however little they knew it, with an eagerness intensified by their brief separation, and he fancied it was the girl who had unconsciously operated their reunion in response to the young man's longing, her will making itself electrically felt through space by that sort of wireless telegraphy which love has long employed, and science has just begun to imagine.

He would have been willing that they should get home alone, but he knew that his wife would require an account of them from him, and though he could have invented something of the kind, if it came to the worst, he was aware that it would not do for him to arrive without them. The thought goaded him from his seat, and he joined the upward procession of his fellow-sick, as it met another procession straggling downward; the ways branched in all directions, with people on them everywhere, bent upon building up in a month the health which they would spend the rest of the year in demolishing.

He came upon his charges unexpectedly at a turn of the path, and Miss Triscoe told him that he ought to have been with them for the view from the Hirschensprung. It was magnificent, she said, and she made Burnamy corroborate her praise of it, and agree with her that it was worth the climb a thousand times; he modestly accepted the credit she appeared willing to give him, of inventing the Hirschensprung.

XXXI.

Between his work for Stoller and what sometimes seemed the obstructiveness of General Triscoe, Burnamy was not very much with Miss Triscoe. He was not devout, but he went every Sunday to the pretty English church on the hill, where he contributed beyond his means to the support of the English clergy on the Continent, for the sake of looking at her back hair during the service, and losing himself in the graceful lines which defined, the girl's figure from the slant of her flowery hat to the point where the pewtop crossed her elastic waist. One happy morning the general did not come to church, and he had the fortune to walk home with her to her pension, where she lingered with him a moment, and almost made him believe she might be going to ask him to come in.



Page 21

The next evening, when he was sauntering down the row of glittering shops beside the Tepl, with Mrs. March, they overtook the general and his daughter at a place where the girl was admiring some stork-scissors in the window; she said she wished she were still little, so that she could get them. They walked home with the Triscoes, and then he hurried Mrs. March back to the shop. The man had already put up his shutters, and was just closing his door, but Burnamy pushed in, and asked to look at the stork-scissors they had seen in the window. The gas was out, and the shopman lighted a very dim candle, to show them.

"I knew you wanted to get them for her, after what she said, Mrs. March," he laughed, nervously, "and you must let me lend you the money."

"Why, of course!" she answered, joyfully humoring his feint. "Shall I put my card in for the man to send home to her with them?"

"Well—no. No. Not your card—exactly. Or, yes! Yes, you must, I suppose."

They made the hushing street gay with their laughter; the next evening Miss Triscoe came upon the Marches and Burnamy where they sat after supper listening to the concert at Pupp's, and thanked Mrs. March for the scissors. Then she and Burnamy had their laugh again, and Miss Triscoe joined them, to her father's frowning mystification. He stared round for a table; they were all taken, and he could not refuse the interest Burnamy made with the waiters to bring them one and crowd it in. He had to ask him to sup with them, and Burnamy sat down and heard the concert through beside Miss Triscoe.

"What is so tremendously amusing in a pair of stork-scissors?" March demanded, when his wife and he were alone.

"Why, I was wanting to tell you, dearest," she began, in a tone which he felt to be wheedling, and she told the story of the scissors.

"Look here, my dear! Didn't you promise to let this love-affair alone?"

"That was on the ship. And besides, what would you have done, I should like to know? Would you have refused to let him buy them for her?" She added, carelessly, "He wants us to go to the Kurhaus ball with him."

"Oh, does he!"

"Yes. He says he knows that she can get her father to let her go if we will chaperon them. And I promised that you would."

"That I would?"



“It will do just as well if you go. And it will be very amusing; you can see something of Carlsbad society.”

“But I’m not going!” he declared. “It would interfere with my cure. The sitting up late would be bad enough, but I should get very hungry, and I should eat potato salad and sausages, and drink beer, and do all sorts of unwholesome things.”

“Nonsense! The refreshments will be ‘kurgemass’, of course.”

“You can go yourself,” he said.



Page 22

A ball is not the same thing for a woman after fifty as it is before twenty, but still it has claims upon the imagination, and the novel circumstance of a ball in the Kurhaus in Carlsbad enhanced these for Mrs. March. It was the annual reunion which is given by municipal authority in the large hall above the bathrooms; it is frequented with safety and pleasure by curious strangers, and now, upon reflection, it began to have for Mrs. March the charm of duty; she believed that she could finally have made March go in her place, but she felt that she ought really to go in his, and save him from the late hours and the late supper.

"Very well, then," she said at last, "I will go."

It appeared that any civil person might go to the reunion who chose to pay two florins and a half. There must have been some sort of restriction, and the ladies of Burnamy's party went with a good deal of amused curiosity to see what the distinctions were; but they saw none unless it was the advantages which the military had. The long hall over the bathrooms shaped itself into a space for the dancing at one end, and all the rest of it was filled with tables, which at half past eight were crowded with people, eating, drinking, and smoking. The military enjoyed the monopoly of a table next the rail dividing the dancing from the dining space. There the tight-laced Herr Hauptmanns and Herr Lieutenants sat at their sausage and beer and cigars in the intervals of the waltzes, and strengthened themselves for a foray among the gracious Fraus and Frauleins on the benches lining three sides of the dancing-space. From the gallery above many civilian spectators looked down upon the gayety, and the dress-coats of a few citizens figured among the uniforms.

As the evening wore on some ladies of greater fashion found their way to the dancing-floor, and toward ten o'clock it became rather crowded. A party of American girls showed their Paris dresses in the transatlantic versions of the waltz. At first they danced with the young men who came with them; but after a while they yielded to the custom of the place, and danced with any of the officers who asked them.

"I know it's the custom," said Mrs. March to Miss Triscoe, who was at her side in one of the waltzes she had decided to sit out, so as not to be dancing all the time with Burnamy, "but I never can like it without an introduction."

"No," said the girl, with the air of putting temptation decidedly away, "I don't believe papa would, either."

A young officer came up, and drooped in mute supplication before her. She glanced at Mrs. March, who turned her face away; and she excused herself with the pretence that she had promised the dance, and by good fortune, Burnamy, who had been unscrupulously waltzing with a lady he did not know, came up at the moment. She rose and put her hand on his arm, and they both bowed to the officer before they whirled away. The officer looked after them with amiable admiration; then he turned to Mrs.



March with a light of banter in his friendly eyes, and was unmistakably asking her to dance. She liked his ironical daring, she liked it so much that she forgot her objection to partners without introductions; she forgot her fifty-odd years; she forgot that she was a mother of grown children and even a mother-in-law; she remembered only the step of her out-dated waltz.

Page 23

It seemed to be modern enough for the cheerful young officer, and they were suddenly revolving with the rest. . . A tide of long-forgotten girlhood welled up in her heart, and she laughed as she floated off on it past the astonished eyes of Miss Triscoe and Burnamy. She saw them falter, as if they had lost their step in their astonishment; then they seemed both to vanish, and her partner had released her, and was helping Miss Triscoe up from the floor; Burnamy was brushing the dust from his knees, and the citizen who had bowled them over was boisterously apologizing and incessantly bowing.

“Oh, are you hurt?” Mrs. March implored. “I’m sure you must be killed; and I did it! I don’t know, what I was thinking of!”

The girl laughed. “I’m not hurt a bit!”

They had one impulse to escape from the place, and from the sympathy and congratulation. In the dressing-room she declared again that she was all right. “How beautifully you waltz, Mrs. March!” she said, and she laughed again, and would not agree with her that she had been ridiculous. “But I’m glad those American girls didn’t see me. And I can’t be too thankful papa didn’t come!”

Mrs. March’s heart sank at the thought of what General Triscoe would think of her. “You must tell him I did it. I can never lift up my head!”

“No, I shall not. No one did it,” said the girl, magnanimously. She looked down sidelong at her draperies. “I was so afraid I had torn my dress! I certainly heard something rip.”

It was one of the skirts of Burnamy’s coat, which he had caught into his hand and held in place till he could escape to the men’s dressing-room, where he had it pinned up so skillfully that the damage was not suspected by the ladies. He had banged his knee abominably too; but they did not suspect that either, as he limped home on the air beside them, first to Miss Triscoe’s pension, and then to Mrs. March’s hotel.

It was quite eleven o’clock, which at Carlsbad is as late as three in the morning anywhere else, when she let herself into her room. She decided not to tell her husband, then; and even at breakfast, which they had at the Posthof, she had not got to her confession, though she had told him everything else about the ball, when the young officer with whom she had danced passed between the tables near her. He caught her eye and bowed with a smile of so much meaning that March asked, “Who’s your pretty young friend?”

“Oh, that!” she answered carelessly. “That was one of the officers at the ball,” and she laughed.

“You seem to be in the joke, too,” he said. “What is it?”

“Oh, something. I’ll tell you some time. Or perhaps you’ll find out.”



“I’m afraid you won’t let me wait.”

“No, I won’t,” and now she told him. She had expected teasing, ridicule, sarcasm, anything but the psychological interest mixed with a sort of retrospective tenderness which he showed. “I wish I could have seen you; I always thought you danced well.” He added: “It seems that you need a chaperon too.”

Page 24

The next morning, after March and General Triscoe had started off upon one of the hill climbs, the young people made her go with them for a walk up the Tepl, as far as the cafe of the Freundschaftsaal. In the grounds an artist in silhouettes was cutting out the likenesses of people who supposed themselves to have profiles, and they begged Mrs. March to sit for hers. It was so good that she insisted on Miss Triscoe's sitting in turn, and then Burnamy. Then he had the inspiration to propose that they should all three sit together, and it appeared that such a group was within the scope of the silhouettist's art; he posed them in his little bower, and while he was mounting the picture they took turns, at five kreutzers each, in listening to American tunes played by his Edison phonograph.

Mrs. March felt that all this was weakening her moral fibre; but she tried to draw the line at letting Burnamy keep the group. "Why not?" he pleaded.

"You oughtn't to ask," she returned. "You've no business to have Miss Triscoe's picture, if you must know."

"But you're there to chaperon us!" he persisted.

He began to laugh, and they all laughed when she said, "You need a chaperon who doesn't lose her head, in a silhouette." But it seemed useless to hold out after that, and she heard herself asking, "Shall we let him keep it, Miss Triscoe?"

Burnamy went off to his work with Stoller, carrying the silhouette with him, and she kept on with Miss Triscoe to her hotel. In turning from the gate after she parted with the girl she found herself confronted with Mrs. Adding and Rose. The ladies exclaimed at each other in an astonishment from which they had to recover before they could begin to talk, but from the first moment Mrs. March perceived that Mrs. Adding had something to say. The more freely to say it she asked Mrs. March into her hotel, which was in the same street with the pension of the Triscoes, and she let her boy go off about the exploration of Carlsbad; he promised to be back in an hour.

"Well, now what scrape are you in?" March asked when his wife came home, and began to put off her things, with signs of excitement which he could not fail to note. He was lying down after a long tramp, and he seemed very comfortable.

His question suggested something of anterior import, and she told him about the silhouettes, and the advantage the young people had taken of their power over her through their knowledge of her foolish behavior at the ball.

He said, lazily: "They seem to be working you for all you're worth. Is that it?"

"No; there is something worse. Something's happened which throws all that quite in the shade. Mrs. Adding is here."



“Mrs. Adding?” he repeated, with a dimness for names which she would not allow was growing on him.

“Don’t be stupid, dear! Mrs. Adding, who sat opposite Mr. Kenby on the Norumbia. The mother of the nice boy.”



Page 25

“Oh, yes! Well, that’s good!”

“No, it isn’t! Don’t say such a thing—till you know!” she cried, with a certain shrillness which warned him of an unfathomed seriousness in the fact. He sat up as if better to confront the mystery. “I have been at her hotel, and she has been telling me that she’s just come from Berlin, and that Mr. Kenby’s been there, and—Now I won’t have you making a joke of it, or breaking out about it, as if it were not a thing to be looked for; though of course with the others on our hands you’re not to blame for not thinking of it. But you can see yourself that she’s young and good-looking. She did speak beautifully of her son, and if it were not for him, I don’t believe she would hesitate—”

“For heaven’s sake, what are you driving at?” March broke in, and she answered him as vehemently:

“He’s asked her to marry him!”

“Kenby? Mrs. Adding?”

“Yes!”

“Well, now, Isabel, this won’t do! They ought to be ashamed of themselves. With that morbid, sensitive boy! It’s shocking—”

“Will you listen? Or do you want me to stop?” He arrested himself at her threat, and she resumed, after giving her contempt of his turbulence time to sink in, “She refused him, of course!”

“Oh, all right, then!”

“You take it in such a way that I’ve a great mind not to tell you anything more about it.”

“I know you have,” he said, stretching himself out again; “but you’ll do it, all the same. You’d have been awfully disappointed if I had been calm and collected.”

“She refused him,” she began again, “although she respects him, because she feels that she ought to devote herself to her son. Of course she’s very young, still; she was married when she was only nineteen to a man twice her age, and she’s not thirty-five yet. I don’t think she ever cared much for her husband; and she wants you to find out something about him.”

“I never heard of him. I—”

Mrs. March made a “tchck!” that would have recalled the most consequent of men from the most logical and coherent interpretation to the true intent of her words. He



perceived his mistake, and said, resolutely: "Well, I won't do it. If she's refused him, that's the end of it; she needn't know anything about him, and she has no right to."

"Now I think differently," said Mrs. March, with an inductive air. "Of course she has to know about him, now." She stopped, and March turned his head and looked expectantly at her. "He said he would not consider her answer final, but would hope to see her again and—She's afraid he may follow her—What are you looking at me so for?"

"Is he coming here?"

"Am I to blame if he is? He said he was going to write to her."

March burst into a laugh. "Well, they haven't been beating about the bush! When I think how Miss Triscoe has been pursuing Burnamy from the first moment she set eyes on him, with the settled belief that she was running from him, and he imagines that he has been boldly following her, without the least hope from her, I can't help admiring the simple directness of these elders."



Page 26

“And if Kenby wants to talk with you, what will you say?” she cut in eagerly.

“I’ll say I don’t like the subject. What am I in Carlsbad for? I came for the cure, and I’m spending time and money on it. I might as well go and take my three cups of Felsenquelle on a full stomach as to listen to Kenby.”

“I know it’s bad for you, and I wish we had never seen those people,” said Mrs. March. “I don’t believe he’ll want to talk with you; but if—”

“Is Mrs. Adding in this hotel? I’m not going to have them round in my bread-trough!”

“She isn’t. She’s at one of the hotels on the hill.”

“Very well, let her stay there, then. They can manage their love-affairs in their own way. The only one I care the least for is the boy.”

“Yes, it is forlorn for him. But he likes Mr. Kenby, and—No, it’s horrid, and you can’t make it anything else!”

“Well, I’m not trying to.” He turned his face away. “I must get my nap, now.” After she thought he must have fallen asleep, he said, “The first thing you know, those old Eltwins will be coming round and telling us that they’re going to get divorced.” Then he really slept.

XXXII.

The mid-day dinner at Pupp’s was the time to see the Carlsbad world, and the Marches had the habit of sitting long at table to watch it.

There was one family in whom they fancied a sort of literary quality, as if they had come out of some pleasant German story, but they never knew anything about them. The father by his dress must have been a Protestant clergyman; the mother had been a beauty and was still very handsome; the daughter was good-looking, and of a good-breeding which was both girlish and ladylike. They commended themselves by always taking the table d’hote dinner, as the Marches did, and eating through from the soup and the rank fresh-water fish to the sweet, upon the same principle: the husband ate all the compote and gave the others his dessert, which was not good for him. A young girl of a different fascination remained as much a mystery. She was small and of an extreme tenuity, which became more bewildering as she advanced through her meal, especially at supper, which she made of a long cucumber pickle, a Frankfort sausage of twice the pickle’s length, and a towering goblet of beer; in her lap she held a shivering little hound; she was in the decorous keeping of an elderly maid, and had every effect of being a gracious Fraulein. A curious contrast to her Teutonic voracity was the temperance of a young Latin swell, imaginably from Trieste, who sat long over his small



coffee and cigarette, and tranquilly mused upon the pages of an Italian newspaper. At another table there was a very noisy lady, short and fat, in flowing draperies of white, who commanded a sallow family of South-Americans, and loudly harangued them in South-American Spanish; she flared out in a picture which nowhere lacked strong effects; and in her background lurked a mysterious black face and figure, ironically subservient to the old man, the mild boy, and the pretty young girl in the middle distance of the family group.

Page 27

Amidst the shows of a hardened worldliness there were touching glimpses of domesticity and heart: a young bride fed her husband soup from her own plate with her spoon, unabashed by the publicity; a mother and her two pretty daughters hung about a handsome officer, who must have been newly betrothed to one of the girls; and, the whole family showed a helpless fondness for him, which he did not despise, though he held it in check; the girls dressed alike, and seemed to have for their whole change of costume a difference from time to time in the color of their sleeves. The Marches believed they had seen the growth of the romance which had eventuated so happily; and they saw other romances which did not in any wise eventuate. Carlsbad was evidently one of the great marriage marts of middle Europe, where mothers brought their daughters to be admired, and everywhere the flower of life was blooming for the hand of love. It blew by on all the promenades in dresses and hats as pretty as they could be bought or imagined; but it was chiefly at Pupp's that it flourished. For the most part it seemed to flourish in vain, and to be destined to be put by for another season to dream, bulblike, of the coming summer in the quiet of Moldavian and Transylvanian homes.

Perhaps it was oftener of fortunate effect than the spectators knew; but for their own pleasure they would not have had their pang for it less; and March objected to having a more explicit demand upon his sympathy. "We could have managed," he said, at the close of their dinner, as he looked compassionately round upon the parterre of young girls, "we could have managed with Burnamy and Miss Triscoe; but to have Mrs. Adding and Kenby launched upon us is too much. Of course I like Kenby, and if the widow alone were concerned I would give him my blessing: a wife more or a widow less is not going to disturb the equilibrium of the universe; but—" He stopped, and then he went on: "Men and women are well enough. They complement each other very agreeably, and they have very good times together. But why should they get in love?—It is sure to make them uncomfortable to themselves and annoying to others." He broke off, and stared about him. "My dear, this is really charming—almost as charming as the Posthof." The crowd spread from the open vestibule of the hotel and the shelter of its branching pavilion roofs until it was dimmed in the obscurity of the low grove across the way in an ultimate depth where the musicians were giving the afternoon concert. Between its two stationary divisions moved a current of promenaders, with some such effect as if the colors of a lovely garden should have liquefied and flowed in mingled rose and lilac, pink and yellow, and white and orange, and all the middle tints of modern millinery. Above on one side were the agreeable bulks of architecture, in the buff and gray of Carlsbad; and far beyond on the other were the upland slopes, with villas and long curves of country roads, belted in with miles of wall. "It would be about as offensive to have a love-interest that one personally knew about intruded here," he said, "as to have a two-spanner carriage driven through this crowd. It ought to be forbidden by the municipality."



Page 28

Mrs. March listened with her ears, but not with her eyes, and she answered: "See that handsome young Greek priest! Isn't he an archimandrite? The portier said he was."

"Then let him pass for an archimandrite. Now," he recurred to his grievance again, dreamily, "I have got to take Papa Triscoe in hand, and poison his mind against Burnamy, and I shall have to instil a few drops of venomous suspicion against Kenby into the heart of poor little Rose Adding. Oh;" he broke out, "they will spoil everything. They'll be with us morning, noon, and night," and he went on to work the joke of repining at his lot. The worst thing, he said, would be the lovers' pretence of being interested in something besides themselves, which they were no more capable of than so many lunatics. How could they care for pretty girls playing tennis on an upland level, in the waning afternoon? Or a cartful of peasant women stopping to cross themselves at a way-side shrine? Or a whistling boy with holes in his trousers pausing from some wayside raspberries to touch his hat and say good-morning? Or those preposterous maidens sprinkling linen on the grass from watering-pots while the skies were full of rain? Or that blacksmith shop where Peter the Great made a horseshoe. Or the monument of the young warrior-poet Koerner, with a gentle-looking girl and her mother reading and knitting on a bench before it? These simple pleasures sufficed them, but what could lovers really care for them? A peasant girl flung down on the grassy road-side, fast asleep, while her yoke-fellow, the gray old dog, lay in his harness near her with one drowsy eye half open for her and the other for the contents of their cart; a boy chasing a red squirrel in the old upper town beyond the Tepl, and enlisting the interest of all the neighbors; the negro door-keeper at the Golden Shield who ought to have spoken our Southern English, but who spoke bad German and was from Cairo; the sweet afternoon stillness in the woods; the good German mothers crocheting at the Posthof concerts. Burnamy as a young poet might hate felt the precious quality of these things, if his senses had not been holden by Miss Triscoe; and she might have felt it if only he had done so. But as it was it would be lost upon their preoccupation; with Mrs. Adding and Kenby it would be hopeless.

A day or two after Mrs. March had met Mrs. Adding, she went with her husband to revere a certain magnificent blackamoor whom he had discovered at the entrance of one of the aristocratic hotels on the Schlossberg, where he performed the function of a kind of caryatid, and looked, in the black of his skin and the white of his flowing costume, like a colossal figure carved in ebony and ivory. They took a roundabout way through a street entirely of villa-pensions; every house in Carlsbad but one is a pension if it is not a hotel; but these were of a sort of sentimental prettiness; with each a little garden before it, and a bower with



Page 29

an iron table in it for breakfasting and supping out-doors; and he said that they would be the very places for bridal couples who wished to spend the honey-moon in getting well of the wedding surfeit. She denounced him for saying such a thing as that, and for his inconsistency in complaining of lovers while he was willing to think of young married people. He contended that there was a great difference in the sort of demand that young married people made upon the interest of witnesses, and that they were at least on their way to sanity; and before they agreed, they had come to the hotel with the blackamoor at the door. While they lingered, sharing the splendid creature's hospitable pleasure in the spectacle he formed, they were aware of a carriage with liveried coachman and footman at the steps of the hotel; the liveries were very quiet and distinguished, and they learned that the equipage was waiting for the Prince of Coburg, or the Princess of Montenegro, or Prince Henry of Prussia; there were differing opinions among the twenty or thirty bystanders. Mrs. March said she did not care which it was; and she was patient of the denouement, which began to postpone itself with delicate delays. After repeated agitations at the door among portiers, proprietors, and waiters, whose fluttered spirits imparted their thrill to the spectators, while the coachman and footman remained sculpturesquely impassive in their places, the carriage moved aside and let an energetic American lady and her family drive up to the steps. The hotel people paid her a tempered devotion, but she marred the effect by rushing out and sitting on a balcony to wait for the delaying royalties. There began to be more promises of their early appearance; a footman got down and placed himself at the carriage door; the coachman stiffened himself on his box; then he relaxed; the footman drooped, and even wandered aside. There came a moment when at some signal the carriage drove quite away from the portal and waited near the gate of the stableyard; it drove back, and the spectators redoubled their attention. Nothing happened, and some of them dropped off. At last an indescribable significance expressed itself in the official group at the door; a man in a high hat and dresscoat hurried out; a footman hurried to meet him; they spoke inaudibly together. The footman mounted to his place; the coachman gathered up his reins and drove rapidly out of the hotel-yard, down the street, round the corner, out of sight. The man in the tall hat and dress-coat went in; the official group at the threshold dissolved; the statue in ivory and ebony resumed its place; evidently the Hoheit of Coburg, or Montenegro, or Prussia, was not going to take the air.

"My dear, this is humiliating."

"Not at all! I wouldn't have missed it for anything. Think how near we came to seeing them!"

"I shouldn't feel so shabby if we had seen them. But to hang round here in this plebeian abeyance, and then to be defeated and defrauded at last! I wonder how long this sort of thing is going on?"



Page 30

“What thing?”

“This base subjection of the imagination to the Tom Foolery of the Ages.”

“I don’t know what you mean. I’m sure it’s very natural to want to see a Prince.”

“Only too natural. It’s so deeply founded in nature that after denying royalty by word and deed for a hundred years, we Americans are hungrier for it than anybody else. Perhaps we may come back to it!”

“Nonsense!”

They looked up at the Austrian flag on the tower of the hotel, languidly curling and uncurling in the bland evening air, as it had over a thousand years of stupid and selfish monarchy, while all the generous republics of the Middle Ages had perished, and the commonwealths of later times had passed like fever dreams. That dull, inglorious empire had antedated or outlived Venice and Genoa, Florence and Siena, the England of Cromwell, the Holland of the Stadtholders, and the France of many revolutions, and all the fleeting democracies which sprang from these.

March began to ask himself how his curiosity differed from that of the Europeans about him; then he became aware that these had detached themselves, and left him exposed to the presence of a fellow countryman. It was Otterson, with Mrs. Otterson; he turned upon March with hilarious recognition. “Hello! Most of the Americans in Carlsbad seem to be hanging round here for a sight of these kings. Well, we don’t have a great many of ’em, and it’s natural we shouldn’t want to miss any. But now, you Eastern fellows, you go to Europe every summer, and yet you don’t seem to get enough of ’em. Think it’s human nature, or did it get so ground into us in the old times that we can’t get it out, no difference what we say?”

“That’s very much what I’ve been asking myself,” said March. “Perhaps it’s any kind of show. We’d wait nearly as long for the President to come out, wouldn’t we?”

“I reckon we would. But we wouldn’t for his nephew, or his second cousin.”

“Well, they wouldn’t be in the way of the succession.”

“I guess you’re right.” The Iowan seemed better satisfied with March’s philosophy than March felt himself, and he could not forbear adding:

“But I don’t, deny that we should wait for the President because he’s a kind of king too. I don’t know that we shall ever get over wanting to see kings of some kind. Or at least my wife won’t. May I present you to Mrs. March?”



“Happy to meet you, Mrs. March,” said the lowan. “Introduce you to Mrs. Otterson. I’m the fool in my family, and I know just how you feel about a chance like this. I don’t mean that you’re—”

They all laughed at the hopeless case, and Mrs. March said, with one of her unexpected likings: “I understand, Mr. Otterson. And I would rather be our kind of fool than the kind that pretends not to care for the sight of a king.”

“Like you and me, Mrs. Otterson,” said March.

“Indeed, indeed,” said the lady, “I’d like to see a king too, if it didn’t take all night. Good-evening,” she said, turning her husband about with her, as if she suspected a purpose of patronage in Mrs. March, and was not going to have it.

Page 31

Otterson looked over his shoulder to explain, despairingly: "The trouble with me is that when I do get a chance to talk English, there's such a flow of language it carries me away, and I don't know just where I'm landing."

XXXIII.

There were several kings and their kindred at Carlsbad that summer. One day the Duchess of Orleans drove over from Marienbad, attended by the Duke on his bicycle. After luncheon, they reappeared for a moment before mounting to her carriage with their Secretaries: two young French gentlemen whose dress and bearing better satisfied Mrs. March's exacting passion for an aristocratic air in their order. The Duke was fat and fair, as a Bourbon should be, and the Duchess fatter, though not so fair, as became a Hapsburg, but they were both more plebeian-looking than their retainers, who were slender as well as young, and as perfectly appointed as English tailors could imagine them.

"It wouldn't do for the very highest sort of Highhotes," March declared, "to look their own consequence personally; they have to leave that, like everything else, to their inferiors."

By a happy heterophemy of Mrs. March's the German Hoheit had now become Highhote, which was so much more descriptive that they had permanently adopted it, and found comfort to their republican pride in the mockery which it poured upon the feudal structure of society. They applied it with a certain compunction, however, to the King of Servia, who came a few days after the Duke and Duchess: he was such a young King, and of such a little country. They watched for him from the windows of the reading-room, while the crowd outside stood six deep on the three sides of the square before the hotel, and the two plain public carriages which brought the King and his suite drew tamely up at the portal, where the proprietor and some civic dignitaries received him. His moderated approach, so little like that of royalty on the stage, to which Americans are used, allowed Mrs. March to make sure of the pale, slight, insignificant, amiable-looking youth in spectacles as the sovereign she was ambuscading. Then no appeal to her principles could keep her from peeping through the reading-room door into the rotunda, where the King graciously but speedily dismissed the civic gentlemen and the proprietor, and vanished into the elevator. She was destined to see him so often afterwards that she scarcely took the trouble to time her dining and supping by that of the simple potentate, who had his meals in one of the public rooms, with three gentlemen of his suite, in sack-coats like himself, after the informal manner of the place.

Still another potentate, who happened that summer to be sojourning abroad, in the interval of a successful rebellion, was at the opera one night with some of his faithful followers. Burnamy had offered Mrs. March, who supposed that he merely wanted her and her husband with him, places in a box; but after she eagerly accepted, it seemed

that he wished her to advise him whether it would do to ask Miss Triscoe and her father to join them.



Page 32

“Why not?” she returned, with an arching of the eyebrows.

“Why,” he said, “perhaps I had better make a clean breast of it.”

“Perhaps you had,” she said, and they both laughed, though he laughed with a knot between his eyes.

“The fact is, you know, this isn’t my treat, exactly. It’s Mr. Stoller’s.” At the surprise in her face he hurried on. “He’s got back his first letter in the paper, and he’s so much pleased with the way he reads in print, that he wants to celebrate.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. March, non-committally.

Burnamy laughed again. “But he’s bashful, and he isn’t sure that you would all take it in the right way. He wants you as friends of mine; and he hasn’t quite the courage to ask you himself.”

This seemed to Mrs. March so far from bad that she said: “That’s very nice of him. Then he’s satisfied with—with your help? I’m glad of that.”

“Thank you. He’s met the Triscoes, and he thought it would be pleasant to you if they went, too.”

“Oh, certainly.”

“He thought,” Burnamy went on, with the air of feeling his way, “that we might all go to the opera, and then—then go for a little supper afterwards at Schwarzkopf’s.”

He named the only place in Carlsbad where you can sup so late as ten o’clock; as the opera begins at six, and is over at half past eight, none but the wildest roisterers frequent the place.

“Oh!” said Mrs. March. “I don’t know how a late supper would agree with my husband’s cure. I should have to ask him.”

“We could make it very hygienic,” Burnamy explained.

In repeating his invitation she blamed Burnamy’s uncandor so much that March took his part, as perhaps she intended, and said, “Oh, nonsense,” and that he should like to go in for the whole thing; and General Triscoe accepted as promptly for himself and his daughter. That made six people, Burnamy counted up, and he feigned a decent regret that there was not room for Mrs. Adding and her son; he would have liked to ask them.

Mrs. March did not enjoy it so much as coming with her husband alone when they took two florin seats in the orchestra for the comedy. The comedy always began half an hour



earlier than the opera, and they had a five-o'clock supper at the Theatre-Cafe before they went, and they got to sleep by nine o'clock; now they would be up till half past ten at least, and that orgy at Schwarzkopf's might not be at all good for him. But still she liked being there; and Miss Triscoe made her take the best seat; Burnamy and Stoller made the older men take the other seats beside the ladies, while they sat behind, or stood up, when they wished to see, as people do in the back of a box. Stoller was not much at ease in evening dress, but he bore himself with a dignity which was not perhaps so gloomy as it looked; Mrs. March thought him handsome in his way, and required Miss Triscoe to admire him. As for Burnamy's

Page 33

beauty it was not necessary to insist upon that; he had the distinction of slender youth; and she liked to think that no Highhote there was of a more patrician presence than this yet unprinted contributor to 'Every Other Week'. He and Stoller seemed on perfect terms; or else in his joy he was able to hide the uneasiness which she had fancied in him from the first time she saw them together, and which had never been quite absent from his manner in Stoller's presence. Her husband always denied that it existed, or if it did that it was anything but Burnamy's effort to get on common ground with an inferior whom fortune had put over him.

The young fellow talked with Stoller, and tried to bring him into the range of the general conversation. He leaned over the ladies, from time to time, and pointed out the notables whom he saw in the house; she was glad, for his sake, that he did not lean less over her than over Miss Triscoe. He explained certain military figures in the boxes opposite, and certain ladies of rank who did not look their rank; Miss Triscoe, to Mrs. March's thinking, looked their united ranks, and more; her dress was very simple, but of a touch which saved it from being insipidly girlish; her beauty was dazzling.

"Do you see that old fellow in the corner chair just behind the orchestra?" asked Burnamy. "He's ninety-six years old, and he comes to the theatre every night, and falls asleep as soon as the curtain rises, and sleeps through till the end of the act."

"How dear!" said the girl, leaning forward to fix the nonagenarian with her glasses, while many other glasses converged upon her. "Oh, wouldn't you like to know him, Mr. March?"

"I should consider it a liberal education. They have brought these things to a perfect system in Europe. There is nothing to make life pass smoothly like inflexible constancy to an entirely simple custom. My dear," he added to his wife, "I wish we'd seen this sage before. He'd have helped us through a good many hours of unintelligible comedy. I'm always coming as Burnamy's guest, after this."

The young fellow swelled with pleasure in his triumph, and casting an eye about the theatre to cap it, he caught sight of that other potentate. He whispered joyfully, "Ah! We've got two kings here to-night," and he indicated in a box of their tier just across from that where the King of Servia sat, the well-known face of the King of New York.

"He isn't bad-looking," said March, handing his glass to General Triscoe. "I've not seen many kings in exile; a matter of a few Carlist princes and ex-sovereign dukes, and the good Henry V. of France, once, when I was staying a month in Venice; but I don't think they any of them looked the part better. I suppose he has his dream of recurring power like the rest."



“Dream!” said General Triscoe with the glass at his eyes. “He’s dead sure of it.”

“Oh, you don’t really mean that!”

Page 34

"I don't know why I should have changed my mind."

"Then it's as if we were in the presence of Charles II. just before he was called back to England, or Napoleon in the last moments of Elba. It's better than that. The thing is almost unique; it's a new situation in history. Here's a sovereign who has no recognized function, no legal status, no objective existence. He has no sort of public being, except in the affection of his subjects. It took an upheaval little short of an earthquake to unseat him. His rule, as we understand it, was bad for all classes; the poor suffered more than the rich; the people have now had three years of self-government; and yet this wonderful man has such a hold upon the masses that he is going home to win the cause of oppression at the head of the oppressed. When he's in power again, he will be as subjective as ever, with the power of civic life and death, and an idolatrous following perfectly ruthless in the execution of his will."

"We've only begun," said the general. "This kind of king is municipal, now; but he's going to be national. And then, good-by, Republic!"

"The only thing like it," March resumed, too incredulous of the evil future to deny himself the aesthetic pleasure of the parallel, "is the rise of the Medici in Florence, but even the Medici were not mere manipulators of pulls; they had some sort of public office, with some sort of legislated tenure of it. The King of New York is sovereign by force of will alone, and he will reign in the voluntary submission of the majority. Is our national dictator to be of the same nature and quality?"

"It would be the scientific evolution, wouldn't it?"

The ladies listened with the perfunctory attention which women pay to any sort of inquiry which is not personal. Stoller had scarcely spoken yet; he now startled them all by demanding, with a sort of vindictive force, "Why shouldn't he have the power, if they're willing to let him?"

"Yes," said General Triscoe, with a tilt of his head towards March. "That's what we must ask ourselves more and more."

March leaned back in his chair, and looked up over his shoulder at Stoller. "Well, I don't know. Do you think it's quite right for a man to use an unjust power, even if others are willing that he should?"

Stoller stopped with an air of bewilderment as if surprised on the point of saying that he thought just this. He asked instead, "What's wrong about it?"

"Well, that's one of those things that have to be felt, I suppose. But if a man came to you, and offered to be your slave for a certain consideration—say a comfortable house,



and a steady job, that wasn't too hard—should you feel it morally right to accept the offer? I don't say think it right, for there might be a kind of logic for it.”

Stoller seemed about to answer; he hesitated; and before he had made any response, the curtain rose.



Page 35

XXXIV.

There are few prettier things than Carlsbad by night from one of the many bridges which span the Tepl in its course through the town. If it is a starry night, the torrent glides swiftly away with an inverted firmament in its bosom, to which the lamps along its shores and in the houses on either side contribute a planetary splendor of their own. By nine o'clock everything is hushed; not a wheel is heard at that dead hour; the few feet shuffling stealthily through the Alte Wiese whisper a caution of silence to those issuing with a less guarded tread from the opera; the little bowers that overhang the stream are as dark and mute as the restaurants across the way which serve meals in them by day; the whole place is as forsaken as other cities at midnight. People get quickly home to bed, or if they have a mind to snatch a belated joy, they slip into the Theater-Cafe, where the sleepy Frauleins serve them, in an exemplary drowse, with plates of cold ham and bottles of the gently gaseous waters of Giesshubl. Few are of the bold badness which delights in a supper at Schwarzkopf's, and even these are glad of the drawn curtains which hide their orgy from the chance passer.

The invalids of Burnamy's party kept together, strengthening themselves in a mutual purpose not to be tempted to eat anything which was not strictly 'kurgemass'. Mrs. March played upon the interest which each of them felt in his own case so artfully that she kept them talking of their cure, and left Burnamy and Miss Triscoe to a moment on the bridge, by which they profited, while the others strolled on, to lean against the parapet and watch the lights in the skies and the water, and be alone together. The stream shone above and below, and found its way out of and into the darkness under the successive bridges; the town climbed into the night with lamp-lit windows here and there, till the woods of the hill-sides darkened down to meet it, and fold it in an embrace from which some white edifice showed palely in the farthest gloom.

He tried to make her think they could see that great iron crucifix which watches over it day and night from its piny cliff. He had a fancy for a poem, very impressionistic, which should convey the notion of the crucifix's vigil. He submitted it to her; and they remained talking till the others had got out of sight and hearing; and she was letting him keep the hand on her arm which he had put there to hold her from falling over the parapet, when they were both startled by approaching steps, and a voice calling, "Look here! Who's running this supper party, anyway?"

His wife had detached March from her group for the mission, as soon as she felt that the young people were abusing her kindness. They answered him with hysterical laughter, and Burnamy said, "Why, it's Mr. Stoller's treat, you know."



Page 36

At the restaurant, where the proprietor obsequiously met the party on the threshold and bowed them into a pretty inner room, with a table set for their supper, Stoller had gained courage to play the host openly. He appointed General Triscoe to the chief seat; he would have put his daughter next to him, if the girl had not insisted upon Mrs. March's having the place, and going herself to sit next to March, whom she said she had not been able to speak a word to the whole evening. But she did not talk a great deal to him; he smiled to find how soon he dropped out of the conversation, and Burnamy, from his greater remoteness across the table, dropped into it. He really preferred the study of Stoller, whose instinct of a greater worldly quality in the Triscoes interested him; he could see him listening now to what General Triscoe was saying to Mrs. March, and now to what Burnamy was saying to Miss Triscoe; his strong, selfish face, as he turned it on the young people, expressed a mingled grudge and greed that was very curious.

Stoller's courage, which had come and gone at moments throughout, rose at the end, and while they lingered at the table well on to the hour of ten, he said, in the sort of helpless offence he had with Burnamy, "What's the reason we can't all go out tomorrow to that old castle you was talking about?"

"To Engelhaus? I don't know any reason, as far as I'm concerned," answered Burnamy; but he refused the initiative offered him, and Stoller was obliged to ask March:

"You heard about it?"

"Yes." General Triscoe was listening, and March added for him, "It was the hold of an old robber baron; Gustavus Adolphus knocked it down, and it's very picturesque, I believe."

"It sounds promising," said the general. "Where is it?"

"Isn't to-morrow our mineral bath?" Mrs. March interposed between her husband and temptation.

"No; the day after. Why, it's about ten or twelve miles out on the old postroad that Napoleon took for Prague."

"Napoleon knew a good road when he saw it," said the general, and he alone of the company lighted a cigar. He was decidedly in favor of the excursion, and he arranged for it with Stoller, whom he had the effect of using for his pleasure as if he were doing him a favor. They were six, and two carriages would take them: a two-spanner for four, and a one-spanner for two; they could start directly after dinners and get home in time for supper.

Stoller asserted himself to say: "That's all right, then. I want you to be my guests, and I'll see about the carriages." He turned to Burnamy: "Will you order them?"



“Oh,” said the young fellow, with a sort of dryness, “the portier will get them.”

“I don’t understand why General Triscoe was so willing to accept. Surely, he can’t like that man!” said Mrs. March to her husband in their own room.

“Oh, I fancy that wouldn’t be essential. The general seems to me, capable of letting even an enemy serve his turn. Why didn’t you speak, if you didn’t want to go?”



Page 37

“Why didn’t you?”

“I wanted to go.”

“And I knew it wouldn’t do to let Miss Triscoe go alone; I could see that she wished to go.”

“Do you think Burnamy did?”

“He seemed rather indifferent. And yet he must have realized that he would be with Miss Triscoe the whole afternoon.”

XXXV.

If Burnamy and Miss Triscoe took the lead in the one-spanner, and the others followed in the two-spanner, it was not from want of politeness on the part of the young people in offering to give up their places to each of their elders in turn. It would have been grotesque for either March or Stoller to drive with the girl; for her father it was apparently no question, after a glance at the more rigid uprightness of the seat in the one-spanner; and he accepted the place beside Mrs. March on the back seat of the two-spanner without demur. He asked her leave to smoke, and then he scarcely spoke to her. But he talked to the two men in front of him almost incessantly, haranguing them upon the inferiority of our conditions and the futility of our hopes as a people, with the effect of bewildering the cruder arrogance of Stoller, who could have got on with Triscoe’s contempt for the worthlessness of our working-classes, but did not know what to do with his scorn of the vulgarity and venality of their employers. He accused some of Stoller’s most honored and envied capitalists of being the source of our worst corruptions, and guiltier than the voting-cattle whom they bought and sold.

“I think we can get rid of the whole trouble if we go at it the right way,” Stoller said, diverging for the sake of the point he wished to bring in. “I believe in having the government run on business principles. They’ve got it here in Carlsbad, already, just the right sort of thing, and it works. I been lookin’ into it, and I got this young man, yonder”—he twisted his hand in the direction of the one-spanner! “to help me put it in shape. I believe it’s going to make our folks think, the best ones among them. Here!” He drew a newspaper out of his pocket, folded to show two columns in their full length, and handed it to Triscoe, who took it with no great eagerness, and began to run his eye over it. “You tell me what you think of that. I’ve put it out for a kind of a feeler. I got some money in that paper, and I just thought I’d let our people see how a city can be managed on business principles.”

He kept his eye eagerly upon Triscoe, as if to follow his thought while he read, and keep him up to the work, and he ignored the Marches so entirely that they began in self-defence to talk with each other.



Page 38

Their carriage had climbed from Carlsbad in long irregular curves to the breezy upland where the great highroad to Prague ran through fields of harvest. They had come by heights and slopes of forest, where the serried stems of the tall firs showed brown and whitish-blue and grew straight as stalks of grain; and now on either side the farms opened under a sky of unwonted cloudlessness. Narrow strips of wheat and rye, which the men were cutting with sickles, and the women in red bodices were binding, alternated with ribands of yellowing oats and grass, and breadths of beets and turnips, with now and then lengths of ploughed land. In the meadows the peasants were piling their carts with heavy rowen, the girls lifting the hay on the forks, and the men giving themselves the lighter labor of ordering the load. From the upturned earth, where there ought to have been troops of strutting crows, a few sombre ravens rose. But they could not rob the scene of its gayety; it smiled in the sunshine with colors which vividly followed the slope of the land till they were dimmed in the forests on the far-off mountains. Nearer and farther, the cottages and villages shone in the valleys, or glimmered through the veils of the distant haze. Over all breathed the keen pure air of the hills, with a sentiment of changeless eld, which charmed March, back to his boyhood, where he lost the sense of his wife's presence, and answered her vaguely. She talked contentedly on in the monologue to which the wives of absent-minded men learn to resign themselves. They were both roused from their vagary by the voice of General Triscoe. He was handing back the folded newspaper to Stoller, and saying, with a queer look at him over his glasses, "I should like to see what your contemporaries have to say to all that."

"Well, sir," Stoller returned, "maybe I'll have the chance to show you. They got my instructions over there to send everything to me."

Burnamy and Miss Triscoe gave little heed to the landscape as landscape. They agreed that the human interest was the great thing on a landscape, after all; but they ignored the peasants in the fields and meadows, who were no more to them than the driver on the box, or the people in the two-spanner behind. They were talking of the hero and heroine of a novel they had both read, and he was saying, "I suppose you think he was justly punished."

"Punished?" she repeated. "Why, they got married, after all!"

"Yes, but you could see that they were not going to be happy."

"Then it seems to me that she was punished; too."

"Well, yes; you might say that. The author couldn't help that."

Miss Triscoe was silent a moment before she said:

"I always thought the author was rather hard on the hero. The girl was very exacting."



“Why,” said Burnamy, “I supposed that women hated anything like deception in men too much to tolerate it at all. Of course, in this case, he didn’t deceive her; he let her deceive herself; but wasn’t that worse?”



Page 39

“Yes, that was worse. She could have forgiven him for deceiving her.”

“Oh!”

“He might have had to do that. She wouldn’t have minded his fibbing outright, so much, for then it wouldn’t have seemed to come from his nature. But if he just let her believe what wasn’t true, and didn’t say a word to prevent her, of course it was worse. It showed something weak, something cowardly in him.”

Burnamy gave a little cynical laugh. “I suppose it did. But don’t you think it’s rather rough, expecting us to have all the kinds of courage?”

“Yes, it is,” she assented. “That is why I say she was too exacting. But a man oughn’t to defend him.”

Burnamy’s laugh had more pleasure in it, now. “Another woman might?”

“No. She might excuse him.”

He turned to look back at the two-spanner; it was rather far behind, and he spoke to their driver bidding him go slowly till it caught up with them. By the time it did so, they were so close to it that they could distinguish the lines of its wandering and broken walls. Ever since they had climbed from the wooded depths of the hills above Carlsbad to the open plateau, it had shown itself in greater and greater detail. The detached mound of rock on which it stood rose like an island in the midst of the plain, and commanded the highways in every direction.

“I believe,” Burnamy broke out, with a bitterness apparently relevant to the ruin alone, “that if you hadn’t required any quarterings of nobility from him, Stoller would have made a good sort of robber baron. He’s a robber baron by nature, now, and he wouldn’t have any scruple in levying tribute on us here in our one-spanner, if his castle was in good repair and his crossbowmen were not on a strike. But they would be on a strike, probably, and then he would lock them out, and employ none but non-union crossbowmen.”

If Miss Triscoe understood that he arraigned the morality as well as the civility of his employer, she did not take him more seriously than he meant, apparently, for she smiled as she said, “I don’t see how you can have anything to do with him, if you feel so about him.”

“Oh,” Burnamy replied in kind, “he buys my poverty and not my will. And perhaps if I thought better of myself, I should respect him more.”

“Have you been doing something very wicked?”



“What should you have to say to me, if I had?” he bantered.

“Oh, I should have nothing at all to say to you,” she mocked back.

They turned a corner of the highway, and drove rattling through a village street up a long slope to the rounded hill which it crowned. A church at its base looked out upon an irregular square.

A gaunt figure of a man, with a staring mask, which seemed to hide a darkling mind within, came out of the church, and locked it behind him. He proved to be the sacristan, and the keeper of all the village’s claims upon the visitors’ interest; he mastered, after a moment, their wishes in respect to the castle, and showed the path that led to it; at the top, he said, they would find a custodian of the ruins who would admit them.



Page 40

XXXVI.

The, path to the castle slanted upward across the shoulder of the hill, to a certain point, and there some rude stone steps mounted more directly. Wilding lilac-bushes, as if from some forgotten garden, bordered the ascent; the chickory opened its blue flower; the clean bitter odor of vermouth rose from the trodden turf; but Nature spreads no such lavish feast in wood or field in the Old World as she spoils us with in the New; a few kinds, repeated again and again, seem to be all her store, and man must make the most of them. Miss Triscoe seemed to find flowers enough in the simple bouquet which Burnamy put together for her. She took it, and then gave it back to him, that she might have both hands for her skirt, and so did him two favors.

A superannuated forester of the nobleman who owns the ruin opened a gate for the party at the top, and levied a tax of thirty kreutzers each upon them, for its maintenance. The castle, by his story, had descended from robber sire to robber son, till Gustavus knocked it to pieces in the sixteenth century; three hundred years later, the present owner restored it; and now its broken walls and arches, built of rubble mixed with brick, and neatly pointed up with cement, form a ruin satisfyingly permanent. The walls were not of great extent, but such as they were they enclosed several dungeons and a chapel, all underground, and a cistern which once enabled the barons and their retainers to water their wine in time of siege.

From that height they could overlook the neighboring highways in every direction, and could bring a merchant train to, with a shaft from a crossbow, or a shot from an arquebuse, at pleasure. With General Triscoe's leave, March praised the strategic strength of the unique position, which he found expressive of the past, and yet suggestive of the present. It was more a difference in method than anything else that distinguished the levy of customs by the authorities then and now. What was the essential difference, between taking tribute of travellers passing on horseback, and collecting dues from travellers arriving by steamer? They did not pay voluntarily in either case; but it might be proof of progress that they no longer fought the customs officials.

"Then you believe in free trade," said Stoller, severely.

"No. I am just inquiring which is the best way of enforcing the tariff laws."

"I saw in the Paris Chronicle, last night," said Miss Triscoe, "that people are kept on the docks now for hours, and ladies cry at the way their things are tumbled over by the inspectors."

"It's shocking," said Mrs. March, magisterially.



“It seems to be a return to the scenes of feudal times,” her husband resumed. “But I’m glad the travellers make no resistance. I’m opposed to private war as much as I am to free trade.”

“It all comes round to the same thing at last,” said General Triscoe. “Your precious humanity—”



Page 41

“Oh, I don’t claim it exclusively,” March protested.

“Well, then, our precious humanity is like a man that has lost his road. He thinks he is finding his way out, but he is merely rounding on his course, and coming back to where he started.”

Stoller said, “I think we ought to make it so rough for them, over here, that they will come to America and set up, if they can’t stand the duties.”

“Oh, we ought to make it rough for them anyway,” March consented.

If Stoller felt his irony, he did not know what to answer. He followed with his eyes the manoeuvre by which Burnamy and Miss Triscoe eliminated themselves from the discussion, and strayed off to another corner of the ruin, where they sat down on the turf in the shadow of the wall; a thin, upland breeze drew across them, but the sun was hot. The land fell away from the height, and then rose again on every side in carpetlike fields and in long curving bands, whose parallel colors passed unblended into the distance. “I don’t suppose,” Burnamy said, “that life ever does much better than this, do you? I feel like knocking on a piece of wood and saying ‘Unberufen.’ I might knock on your bouquet; that’s wood.”

“It would spoil the flowers,” she said, looking down at them in her belt. She looked up and their eyes met.

“I wonder,” he said, presently, “what makes us always have a feeling of dread when we are happy?”

“Do you have that, too?” she asked.

“Yes. Perhaps it’s because we know that change must come, and it must be for the worse.”

“That must be it. I never thought of it before, though.”

“If we had got so far in science that we could predict psychological weather, and could know twenty-four hours ahead when a warm wave of bliss or a cold wave of misery was coming, and prepare for smiles and tears beforehand—it may come to that.”

“I hope it won’t. I’d rather not know when I was to be happy; it would spoil the pleasure; and wouldn’t be any compensation when it was the other way.”

A shadow fell across them, and Burnamy glanced round to see Stoller looking down at them, with a slant of the face that brought his aquiline profile into relief. “Oh! Have a turf, Mr. Stoller?” he called gayly up to him.



“I guess we’ve seen about all there is,” he answered. “Hadn’t we better be going?” He probably did not mean to be mandatory.

“All right,” said Burnamy, and he turned to speak to Miss Triscoe again without further notice of him.

They all descended to the church at the foot of the hill where the weird sacristan was waiting to show them the cold, bare interior, and to account for its newness with the fact that the old church had been burnt, and this one built only a few years before. Then he locked the doors after them, and ran forward to open against their coming the chapel of the village cemetery, which they were to visit after they had fortified themselves for it at the village cafe.



Page 42

They were served by a little hunch-back maid; and she told them who lived in the chief house of the village. It was uncommonly pretty; where all the houses were picturesque, and she spoke of it with respect as the dwelling of a rich magistrate who was clearly the great man of the place. March admired the cat which rubbed against her skirt while she stood and talked, and she took his praises modestly for the cat; but they wrought upon the envy, of her brother so that he ran off to the garden, and came back with two fat, sleepy-eyed puppies which he held up, with an arm across each of their stomachs, for the acclaim of the spectators.

“Oh, give him something!” Mrs. March entreated. “He’s such a dear.”

“No, no! I am not going to have my little hunchback and her cat outdone,” he refused; and then he was about to yield.

“Hold on!” said Stoller, assuming the host. “I got the change.”

He gave the boy a few kreutzers, when Mrs. March had meant her husband to reward his naivete with half a florin at least; but he seemed to feel that he had now ingratiated himself with the ladies, and he put himself in charge of them for the walk to the cemetery chapel; he made Miss Triscoe let him carry her jacket when she found it warm.

The chapel is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and the Jesuit brother who designed it, two or three centuries ago, indulged a devotional fancy in the triangular form of the structure and the decorative details. Everything is three-cornered; the whole chapel, to begin with, and then the ark of the high altar in the middle of it, and each of the three side-altars. The clumsy baroque taste of the architecture is a German version of the impulse that was making Italy fantastic at the time; the carving is coarse, and the color harsh and unsoftened by years, though it is broken and obliterated in places.

The sacristan said that the chapel was never used for anything but funeral services, and he led the way out into the cemetery, where he wished to display the sepulchral devices. The graves here were planted with flowers, and some were in a mourning of black pansies; but a space fenced apart from the rest held a few neglected mounds, overgrown with weeds and brambles: This space, he said, was for suicides; but to March it was not so ghastly as the dapper grief of certain tombs in consecrated ground where the stones had photographs of the dead on porcelain let into them. One was the picture of a beautiful young woman, who had been the wife of the local magnate; an eternal love was vowed to her in the inscription, but now, the sacristan said, with nothing of irony, the magnate was married again, and lived in that prettiest house of the village. He seemed proud of the monument, as the thing worthiest the attention of the strangers, and he led them with less apparent hopefulness to the unfinished chapel representing a Gethsemane, with the figure of Christ praying and his apostles sleeping. It is a subject

Page 43

much celebrated in terra-cotta about Carlsbad, and it was not a novelty to his party; still, from its surroundings, it had a fresh pathos, and March tried to make him understand that they appreciated it. He knew that his wife wished the poor man to think he had done them a great favor in showing it; he had been touched with all the vain shows of grief in the poor, ugly little place; most of all he had felt the exile of those who had taken their own lives and were parted in death from the more patient sufferers who had waited for God to take them. With a curious, unpainful self-analysis he noted that the older members of the party, who in the course of nature were so much nearer death, did not shrink from its shows; but the young girl and the young man had not borne to look on them, and had quickly escaped from the place, somewhere outside the gate. Was it the beginning, the promise of that reconciliation with death which nature brings to life at last, or was it merely the effect, or defect, of ossified sensibilities, of toughened nerves?

"That is all?" he asked of the spectral sacristan.

"That is all," the man said, and March felt in his pocket for a coin commensurate to the service he had done them; it ought to be something handsome.

"No, no," said Stoller, detecting his gesture. "Your money a'n't good."

He put twenty or thirty kreutzers into the hand of the man, who regarded them with a disappointment none the less cruel because it was so patient. In France, he would have been insolent; in Italy, he would have frankly said it was too little; here, he merely looked at the money and whispered a sad "Danke."

Burnamy and Miss Triscoe rose from the grassy bank outside where they were sitting, and waited for the elders to get into their two-spanner.

"Oh, have I lost my glove in there?" said Mrs. March, looking at her hands and such parts of her dress as a glove might cling to.

"Let me go and find it for you," Burnamy entreated.

"Well," she consented, and she added, "If the sacristan has found it, give him something for me something really handsome, poor fellow."

As Burnamy passed her, she let him see that she had both her gloves, and her heart yearned upon him for his instant smile of intelligence: some men would have blundered out that she had the lost glove in her hand. He came back directly, saying, "No, he didn't find it."

She laughed, and held both gloves up. "No wonder! I had it all the time. Thank you ever so much."



“How are we going to ride back?” asked Stoller.

Burnamy almost turned pale; Miss Triscoe smiled impenetrably. No one else spoke, and Mrs. March said, with placid authority, “Oh, I think the way we came, is best.”

“Did that absurd creature,” she apostrophized her husband as soon as she got him alone after their arrival at Pupp’s, “think I was going to let him drive back with Agatha?”



Page 44

"I wonder," said March, "if that's what Burnamy calls her now?"

"I shall despise him if it isn't."

XXXVII.

Burnamy took up his mail to Stoller after the supper which they had eaten in a silence natural with two men who have been off on a picnic together. He did not rise from his writing-desk when Burnamy came in, and the young man did not sit down after putting his letters before him. He said, with an effort of forcing himself to speak at once, "I have looked through the papers, and there is something that I think you ought to see."

"What do you mean?" said Stoller.

Burnamy laid down three or four papers opened to pages where certain articles were strongly circumscribed in ink. The papers varied, but their editorials did not, in purport at least. Some were grave and some were gay; one indignantly denounced; another affected an ironical bewilderment; the third simply had fun with the Hon. Jacob Stoller. They all, however, treated his letter on the city government of Carlsbad as the praise of municipal socialism, and the paper which had fun with him gleefully congratulated the dangerous classes on the accession of the Honorable Jacob to their ranks.

Stoller read the articles, one after another, with parted lips and gathering drops of perspiration on his upper lip, while Burnamy waited on foot. He flung the papers all down at last. "Why, they're a pack of fools! They don't know what they're talking about! I want city government carried on on business principles, by the people, for the people. I don't care what they say! I know I'm right, and I'm going ahead on this line if it takes all—" The note of defiance died out of his voice at the sight of Burnamy's pale face. "What's the matter with you?"

"There's nothing the matter with me."

"Do you mean to tell me it is"—he could not bring himself to use the word—"what they say?"

"I suppose," said Burnamy, with a dry mouth, "it's what you may call municipal socialism."

Stoller jumped from his seat. "And you knew it when you let me do it?"

"I supposed you knew what you were about."

"It's a lie!" Stoller advanced upon him, wildly, and Burnamy took a step backward.



“Look out!” shouted Burnamy. “You never asked me anything about it. You told me what you wanted done, and I did it. How could I believe you were such an ignoramus as not to know the a b c of the thing you were talking about?” He added, in cynical contempt, “But you needn’t worry. You can make it right with the managers by spending a little more money than you expected to spend.”

Stoller started as if the word money reminded him of something. “I can take care of myself, young man. How much do I owe you?”

“Nothing!” said Burnamy, with an effort for grandeur which failed him.

The next morning as the Marches sat over their coffee at the Posthof, he came dragging himself toward them with such a haggard air that Mrs. March called, before he reached their table, “Why, Mr. Burnamy, what’s the matter?”



Page 45

He smiled miserably. "Oh, I haven't slept very well. May I have my coffee with you? I want to tell you something; I want you to make me. But I can't speak till the coffee comes. Fraulein!" he besought a waitress going off with a tray near them. "Tell Lili, please, to bring me some coffee—only coffee."

He tried to make some talk about the weather, which was rainy, and the Marches helped him, but the poor endeavor lagged wretchedly in the interval between the ordering and the coming of the coffee. "Ah, thank you, Lili," he said, with a humility which confirmed Mrs. March in her instant belief that he had been offering himself to Miss Triscoe and been rejected. After gulping his coffee, he turned to her: "I want to say good-by. I'm going away."

"From Carlsbad?" asked Mrs. March with a keen distress.

The water came into his eyes. "Don't, don't be good to me, Mrs. March! I can't stand it. But you won't, when you know."

He began to speak of Stoller, first to her, but addressing himself more and more to the intelligence of March, who let him go on without question, and laid a restraining hand upon his wife when he saw her about to prompt him. At the end, "That's all," he said, huskily, and then he seemed to be waiting for March's comment. He made none, and the young fellow was forced to ask, "Well, what do you think, Mr. March?"

"What do you think yourself?"

"I think, I behaved badly," said Burnamy, and a movement of protest from Mrs. March nerved him to add: "I could make out that it was not my business to tell him what he was doing; but I guess it was; I guess I ought to have stopped him, or given him a chance to stop himself. I suppose I might have done it, if he had treated me decently when I turned up a day late, here; or hadn't acted toward me as if I were a hand in his buggy-works that had come in an hour after the whistle sounded."

He set his teeth, and an indignant sympathy shone in Mrs. March's eyes; but her husband only looked the more serious.

He asked gently, "Do you offer that fact as an explanation, or as a justification?"

Burnamy laughed forlornly. "It certainly wouldn't justify me. You might say that it made the case all the worse for me." March forbore to say, and Burnamy went on. "But I didn't suppose they would be onto him so quick, or perhaps at all. I thought—if I thought anything—that it would amuse some of the fellows in the office, who know about those things." He paused, and in March's continued silence he went on. "The chance was one in a hundred that anybody else would know where he had brought up."

"But you let him take that chance," March suggested.

“Yes, I let him take it. Oh, you know how mixed all these things are!”

“Yes.”



Page 46

“Of course I didn’t think it out at the time. But I don’t deny that I had a satisfaction in the notion of the hornets’ nest he was poking his thick head into. It makes me sick, now, to think I had. I oughtn’t to have let him; he was perfectly innocent in it. After the letter went, I wanted to tell him, but I couldn’t; and then I took the chances too. I don’t believe he could have ever got forward in politics; he’s too honest—or he isn’t dishonest in the right way. But that doesn’t let me out. I don’t defend myself! I did wrong; I behaved badly. But I’ve suffered for it.

“I’ve had a foreboding all the time that it would come to the worst, and felt like a murderer with his victim when I’ve been alone with Stoller. When I could get away from him I could shake it off, and even believe that it hadn’t happened. You can’t think what a nightmare it’s been! Well, I’ve ruined Stoller politically, but I’ve ruined myself, too. I’ve spoiled my own life; I’ve done what I can never explain to—to the people I want to have believe in me; I’ve got to steal away like the thief I am. Good-by!” He jumped to his feet, and put out his hand to March, and then to Mrs. March.

“Why, you’re not going away now!” she cried, in a daze.

“Yes, I am. I shall leave Carlsbad on the eleven-o’clock train. I don’t think I shall see you again.” He clung to her hand. “If you see General Triscoe—I wish you’d tell them I couldn’t—that I had to—that I was called away suddenly—Good-by!” He pressed her hand and dropped it, and mixed with the crowd. Then he came suddenly back, with a final appeal to March: “Should you—do you think I ought to see Stoller, and—and tell him I don’t think I used him fairly?”

“You ought to know—” March began.

But before he could say more, Burnamy said, “You’re right,” and was off again.

“Oh, how hard you were with him, my dear!” Mrs. March lamented.

“I wish,” he said, “if our boy ever went wrong that some one would be as true to him as I was to that poor fellow. He condemned himself; and he was right; he has behaved very badly.”

“You always overdo things so, when you act righteously!”

“Now, Isabel!”

“Oh, yes, I know what you will say. But I should have tempered justice with mercy.”

Her nerves tingled with pity for Burnamy, but in her heart she was glad that her husband had had strength to side with him against himself, and she was proud of the forbearance with which he had done it. In their earlier married life she would have confidently taken the initiative on all moral questions. She still believed that she was



better fitted for their decision by her Puritan tradition and her New England birth, but once in a great crisis when it seemed a question of their living, she had weakened before it, and he, with no such advantages, had somehow met the issue with courage and conscience. She could not believe he did so by inspiration, but she had since let him take the brunt of all such issues and the responsibility. He made no reply, and she said: "I suppose you'll admit now there was always something peculiar in the poor boy's manner to Stoller."



Page 47

He would confess no more than that there ought to have been. "I don't see how he could stagger through with that load on his conscience. I'm not sure I like his being able to do so."

She was silent in the misgiving which she shared with him, but she said: "I wonder how far it has gone with him and Miss Triscoe?"

"Well, from his wanting you to give his message to the general in the plural—"

"Don't laugh! It's wicked to laugh! It's heartless!" she cried, hysterically. "What will he do, poor fellow?"

"I've an idea that he will light on his feet, somehow. But, at any rate, he's doing the right thing in going to own up to Stoller."

"Oh, Stoller! I care nothing for Stoller! Don't speak to me of Stoller!"

Burnamy fond the Bird of Prey, as he no longer had the heart to call him, walking up and down in his room like an eagle caught in a trap. He erected his crest fiercely enough, though, when the young fellow came in at his loudly shouted, "Herein!"

"What do you want?" he demanded, brutally.

This simplified Burnamy's task, while it made it more loathsome. He answered not much less brutally, "I want to tell you that I think I used you badly, that I let you betray yourself, that I feel myself to blame." He could have added, "Curse you!" without change of tone.

Stoller sneered in a derision that showed his lower teeth like a dog's when he snarls. "You want to get back!"

"No," said Burnamy, mildly, and with increasing sadness as he spoke. "I don't want to get back. Nothing would induce me. I'm going away on the first train."

"Well, you're not!" shouted Stoller. "You've lied me into this—"

"Look out!" Burnamy turned white.

"Didn't you lie me into it, if you let me fool myself, as you say?" Stoller pursued, and Burnamy felt himself weaken through his wrath. "Well, then, you got to lie me out of it. I been going over the damn thing, all night—and you can do it for me. I know you can do it," he gave way in a plea that was almost a whimper. "Look here! You see if you can't. I'll make it all right with you. I'll pay you whatever you think is right—whatever you say."

"Oh!" said Burnamy, in otherwise unutterable disgust.



“You kin,” Stoller went on, breaking down more and more into his adopted Hoosier, in the stress of his anxiety. “I know you kin, Mr. Burnamy.” He pushed the paper containing his letter into Burnamy’s hands, and pointed out a succession of marked passages. “There! And here! And this place! Don’t you see how you could make out that it meant something else, or was just ironical?” He went on to prove how the text might be given the complexion he wished, and Burnamy saw that he had really thought it not impossibly out. “I can’t put it in writing as well as you; but I’ve done all the work, and all you’ve got to do is to give it some of them turns of yours. I’ll



Page 48

cable the fellows in our office to say I've been misrepresented, and that my correction is coming. We'll get it into shape here together, and then I'll cable that. I don't care for the money. And I'll get our counting-room to see this scoundrel"—he picked up the paper that had had fun with him—"and fix him all right, so that he'll ask for a suspension of public opinion, and—You see, don't you?"

The thing did appeal to Burnamy. If it could be done, it would enable him to make Stoller the reparation he longed to make him more than anything else in the world. But he heard himself saying, very gently, almost tenderly, "It might be done, Mr. Stoller. But I couldn't do it. It wouldn't be honest—for me."

"Yah!" yelled Stoller, and he crushed the paper into a wad and flung it into Burnamy's face. "Honest, you damn humbug! You let me in for this, when you knew I didn't mean it, and now you won't help me out because it a'n't honest! Get out of my room, and get out quick before I—"

He hurled himself toward Burnamy, who straightened himself, with "If you dare!" He knew that he was right in refusing; but he knew that Stoller was right, too, and that he had not meant the logic of what he had said in his letter, and of what Burnamy had let him imply. He braved Stoller's onset, and he left his presence untouched, but feeling as little a moral hero as he well could.

XXXVIII.

General Triscoe woke in the bad humor of an elderly man after a day's pleasure, and in the self-reproach of a pessimist who has lost his point of view for a time, and has to work back to it. He began at the belated breakfast with his daughter when she said, after kissing him gayly, in the small two-seated bower where they breakfasted at their hotel when they did not go to the Posthof, "Didn't you have a nice time, yesterday, papa?"

She sank into the chair opposite, and beamed at him across the little iron table, as she lifted the pot to pour out his coffee.

"What do you call a nice time?" he temporized, not quite able to resist her gayety.

"Well, the kind of time I had."

"Did you get rheumatism from sitting on the grass? I took cold in that old church, and the tea at that restaurant must have been brewed in a brass kettle. I suffered all night from it. And that ass from Illinois—"



“Oh, poor papa! I couldn’t go with Mr. Stoller alone, but I might have gone in the two-spanner with him and let you have Mr. or Mrs. March in the one-spanner.”

“I don’t know. Their interest in each other isn’t so interesting to other people as they seem to think.”

“Do you feel that way really, papa? Don’t you like their being so much in love still?”

“At their time of life? Thank you it’s bad enough in young people.”

The girl did not answer; she appeared altogether occupied in pouring out her father’s coffee.

Page 49

He tasted it, and then he drank pretty well all of it; but he said, as he put his cup down, "I don't know what they make this stuff of. I wish I had a cup of good, honest American coffee."

"Oh, there's nothing like American food!" said his daughter, with so much conciliation that he looked up sharply.

But whatever he might have been going to say was at least postponed by the approach of a serving-maid, who brought a note to his daughter. She blushed a little at sight of it, and then tore it open and read:

"I am going away from Carlsbad, for a fault of my own which forbids me to look you in the face. If you wish to know the worst of me, ask Mrs. March. I have no heart to tell you."

Agatha read these mystifying words of Burnamy's several times over in a silent absorption with them which left her father to look after himself, and he had poured out a second cup of coffee with his own hand, and was reaching for the bread beside her before she came slowly back to a sense of his presence.

"Oh, excuse me, papa," she said, and she gave him the butter. "Here's a very strange letter from Mr. Burnamy, which I think you'd better see." She held the note across the table to him, and watched his face as he read it.

After he had read it twice, he turned the sheet over, as people do with letters that puzzle them, in the vain hope of something explanatory on the back. Then he looked up and asked: "What do you suppose he's been doing?"

"I don't believe he's been doing anything. It's something that Mr. Stoller's been doing to him."

"I shouldn't infer that from his own words. What makes you think the trouble is with Stoller?"

"He said—he said yesterday—something about being glad to be through with him, because he disliked him so much he was always afraid of wronging him. And that proves that now Mr. Stoller has made him believe that he's done wrong, and has worked upon him till he does believe it."

"It proves nothing of the kind," said the general, recurring to the note. After reading it again, he looked keenly at her: "Am I to understand that you have given him the right to suppose you would want to know the worst—or the best of him?"

The girl's eyes fell, and she pushed her knife against her plate. She began: "No—"



“Then confound his impudence!” the general broke out. “What business has he to write to you at all about this?”

“Because he couldn’t go away without it!” she returned; and she met her father’s eye courageously. “He had a right to think we were his friends; and if he has done wrong, or is in disgrace any way, isn’t it manly of him to wish to tell us first himself?”

Her father could not say that it was not. But he could and did say, very sceptically: “Stuff! Now, see here, Agatha: what are you going to do?”

“I’m going to see Mrs. March, and then—”



Page 50

“You mustn’t do anything of the kind, my dear,” said her father, gently. “You’ve no right to give yourself away to that romantic old goose.” He put up his hand to interrupt her protest. “This thing has got to be gone to the bottom of. But you’re not to do it. I will see March myself. We must consider your dignity in this matter—and mine. And you may as well understand that I’m not going to have any nonsense. It’s got to be managed so that it can’t be supposed we’re anxious about it, one way or the other, or that he was authorized to write to you in this way—”

“No, no! He oughtn’t to have done so. He was to blame. He couldn’t have written to you, though, papa—”

“Well, I don’t know why. But that’s no reason why we should let it be understood that he has written to you. I will see March; and I will manage to see his wife, too. I shall probably find them in the reading-room at Pupp’s, and—”

The Marches were in fact just coming in from their breakfast at the Posthof, and he met them at the door of Pupp’s, where they all sat down on one of the iron settees of the piazza, and began to ask one another questions of their minds about the pleasure of the day before, and to beat about the bush where Burnamy lurked in their common consciousness.

Mrs. March was not able to keep long from starting him. “You knew,” she said, “that Mr. Burnamy had left us?”

“Left! Why?” asked the general.

She was a woman of resource, but in a case like this she found it best to trust her husband’s poverty of invention. She looked at him, and he answered for her with a promptness that made her quake at first, but finally seemed the only thing, if not the best thing: “He’s had some trouble with Stoller.” He went on to tell the general just what the trouble was.

At the end the general grunted as from an uncertain mind. “You think he’s behaved badly.”

“I think he’s behaved foolishly—youthfully. But I can understand how strongly he was tempted. He could say that he was not authorized to stop Stoller in his mad career.”

At this Mrs. March put her hand through her husband’s arm.

“I’m not so sure about that,” said the general.

March added: “Since I saw him this morning, I’ve heard something that disposes me to look at his performance in a friendlier light. It’s something that Stoller told me himself; to heighten my sense of Burnamy’s wickedness. He seems to have felt that I ought to



know what a serpent I was cherishing in my bosom,” and he gave Triscoe the facts of Burnamy’s injurious refusal to help Stoller put a false complexion on the opinions he had allowed him ignorantly to express.

The general grunted again. “Of course he had to refuse, and he has behaved like a gentleman so far. But that doesn’t justify him in having let Stoller get himself into the scrape.”

“No,” said March. “It’s a tough nut for the casuist to try his tooth on. And I must say I feel sorry for Stoller.”



Page 51

Mrs. March plucked her hand from his arm. "I don't, one bit. He was thoroughly selfish from first to last. He has got just what he deserved."

"Ah, very likely," said her husband. "The question is about Burnamy's part in giving him his deserts; he had to leave him to them, of course."

The general fixed her with the impenetrable glitter of his eye-glasses, and left the subject as of no concern to him. "I believe," he said, rising, "I'll have a look at some of your papers," and he went into the reading-room.

"Now," said Mrs. March, "he will go home and poison that poor girl's mind. And, you will have yourself to thank for prejudicing him against Burnamy."

"Then why didn't you do it yourself, my dear?" he teased; but he was really too sorry for the whole affair, which he nevertheless enjoyed as an ethical problem.

The general looked so little at the papers that before March went off for his morning walk he saw him come out of the reading-room and take his way down the Alte Wiese. He went directly back to his daughter, and reported Burnamy's behavior with entire exactness. He dwelt upon his making the best of a bad business in refusing to help Stoller out of it, dishonorably and mendaciously; but he did not conceal that it was a bad business.

"Now, you know all about it," he said at the end, "and I leave the whole thing to you. If you prefer, you can see Mrs. March. I don't know but I'd rather you'd satisfy yourself—"

"I will not see Mrs. March. Do you think I would go back of you in that way? I am satisfied now."

XXXIX.

Instead of Burnamy, Mrs. Adding and her son now breakfasted with the Marches at the Posthof, and the boy was with March throughout the day a good deal. He rectified his impressions of life in Carlsbad by March's greater wisdom and experience, and did his best to anticipate his opinions and conform to his conclusions. This was not easy, for sometimes he could not conceal from himself, that March's opinions were whimsical, and his conclusions fantastic; and he could not always conceal from March that he was matching them with Kenby's on some points, and suffering from their divergence. He came to join the sage in his early visit to the springs, and they walked up and down talking; and they went off together on long strolls in which Rose was proud to bear him company. He was patient of the absences from which he was often answered, and he learned to distinguish between the earnest and the irony of which March's replies seemed to be mixed. He examined him upon many features of German civilization, but chiefly upon the treatment of women in it; and upon this his philosopher was less



satisfactory than he could have wished him to be. He tried to excuse his trifling as an escape from the painful stress of questions which he found so afflicting himself; but in the matter of the woman-and-dog teams, this was not easy. March owned that the notion of their being yokemates was shocking; but he urged that it was a stage of evolution, and a distinct advance upon the time when women dragged the carts without the help of the dogs; and that the time might not be far distant when the dogs would drag the carts without the help of the women.



Page 52

Rose surmised a joke, and he tried to enjoy it, but inwardly he was troubled by his friend's apparent acceptance of unjust things on their picturesque side. Once as they were sauntering homeward by the brink of the turbid Eger, they came to a man lying on the grass with a pipe in his mouth, and lazily watching from under his fallen lids the cows grazing by the river-side, while in a field of scraggy wheat a file of women were reaping a belated harvest with sickles, bending wearily over to clutch the stems together and cut them with their hooked blades. "Ah, delightful!" March took off his hat as if to salute the pleasant sight.

"But don't you think, Mr. March," the boy ventured, "that the man had better be cutting the wheat, and letting the women watch the cows?"

"Well, I don't know. There are more of them; and he wouldn't be half so graceful as they are, with that flow of their garments, and the sway of their aching backs." The boy smiled sadly, and March put his hand on his shoulder as they walked on. "You find a lot of things in Europe that need putting right, don't you, Rose?"

"Yes; I know it's silly."

"Well, I'm not sure. But I'm afraid it's useless. You see, these old customs go such a way back, and are so grounded in conditions. We think they might be changed, if those who rule could be got to see how cruel and ugly they are; but probably they couldn't. I'm afraid that the Emperor of Austria himself couldn't change them, in his sovereign plenitude of power. The Emperor is only an old custom too, and he's as much grounded in the conditions as any." This was the serious way Rose felt that March ought always to talk; and he was too much grieved to laugh when he went on. "The women have so much of the hard work to do, over here, because the emperors need the men for their armies. They couldn't let their men cut wheat unless it was for their officers' horses, in the field of some peasant whom it would ruin."

If Mrs. March was by she would not allow him to work these paradoxes for the boy's confusion. She said the child adored him, and it was a sacrilege to play with his veneration. She always interfered to save him, but with so little logic though so much justice that Rose suffered a humiliation from her championship, and was obliged from a sense of self-respect to side with the mocker. She understood this, and magnanimously urged it as another reason why her husband should not trifle with Rose's ideal of him; to make his mother laugh at him was wicked.

"Oh, I'm not his only ideal," March protested. "He adores Kenby too, and every now and then he brings me to book with a text from Kenby's gospel."

Mrs. March caught her breath. "Kenby! Do you really think, then, that she—"



“Oh, hold on, now! It isn’t a question of Mrs. Adding; and I don’t say Rose had an eye on poor old Kenby as a step-father. I merely want you to understand that I’m the object of a divided worship, and that when I’m off duty as an ideal I don’t see why I shouldn’t have the fun of making Mrs. Adding laugh. You can’t pretend she isn’t wrapped up in the boy. You’ve said that yourself.”

Page 53

“Yes, she’s wrapped up in him; she’d give her life for him; but she is so light. I didn’t suppose she was so light; but it’s borne in upon me more and more.”

They were constantly seeing Rose and his mother, in the sort of abeyance the Triscoes had fallen into. One afternoon the Addings came to Mrs. March’s room to look from her windows at a parade of bicyclers’ clubs from the neighboring towns. The spectacle prospered through its first half-hour, with the charm which German sentiment and ingenuity, are able to lend even a bicycle parade. The wheelmen and wheelwomen filed by on machines wreathed with flowers and ribbons, and decked with streaming banners. Here and there one sat under a moving arch of blossoms, or in a bower of leaves and petals, and they were all gay with their club costumes and insignia. In the height of the display a sudden mountain shower gathered and broke upon them. They braved it till it became a drenching down-pour; then they leaped from their machines and fled to any shelter they could find, under trees and in doorways. The men used their greater agility to get the best places, and kept them; the women made no appeal for them by word or look, but took the rain in the open as if they expected nothing else.

Rose watched the scene with a silent intensity which March interpreted. “There’s your chance, Rose. Why don’t you go down and rebuke those fellows?”

Rose blushed and shrank away without answer, and Mrs. March promptly attacked her husband in his behalf. “Why don’t you go and rebuke them yourself?”

“Well, for one thing, there isn’t any conversation in my phrase-book Between an indignant American Herr and a Party of German Wheelmen who have taken Shelter from the Rain and are keeping the Wheelwomen out in the Wet.” Mrs. Adding shrieked her delight, and he was flattered into going on. “For another thing, I think it’s very well for you ladies to realize from an object-lesson of this sort what spoiled children of our civilization you are. It ought to make you grateful for your privileges.”

“There is something in that,” Mrs. Adding joyfully consented.

“Oh, there is no civilization but ours,” said Mrs. March, in a burst of vindictive patriotism. “I am more and more convinced of it the longer I stay in Europe.”

“Perhaps that’s why we like to stay so long in Europe; it strengthens us in the conviction that America is the only civilized country in the world,” said March.

The shower passed as quickly as it had gathered, and the band which it had silenced for a moment burst forth again in the music which fills the Carlsbad day from dawn till dusk. Just now, it began to play a pot pourri of American airs; at the end some unseen Americans under the trees below clapped and cheered.

“That was opportune of the band,” said March. “It must have been a telepathic impulse from our patriotism in the director. But a pot pourri of American airs is like that tablet dedicating the American Park up here on the Schlossberg, which is signed by six Jews and one Irishman. The only thing in this medley that’s the least characteristic or original is Dixie; and I’m glad the South has brought us back into the Union.”



Page 54

"You don't know one note from another, my dear," said his wife.

"I know the 'Washington Post.'"

"And don't you call that American?"

"Yes, if Sousa is an American name; I should have thought it was Portuguese."

"Now that sounds a little too much like General Triscoe's pessimism," said Mrs. March; and she added: "But whether we have any national melodies or not, we don't poke women out in the rain and keep them soaking!"

"No, we certainly don't," he assented, with such a well-studied effect of yielding to superior logic that Mrs. March screamed for joy.

The boy had stolen out of the room, and he said, "I hope Rose isn't acting on my suggestion?"

"I hate to have you tease him, dearest," his wife interposed.

"Oh, no," the mother said, laughing still, but with a note of tenderness in her laugh, which dropped at last to a sigh. "He's too much afraid of lese-majesty, for that. But I dare say he couldn't stand the sight. He's queer."

"He's beautiful!" said Mrs. March.

"He's good," the mother admitted. "As good as the day's long. He's never given me a moment's trouble—but he troubles me. If you can understand!"

"Oh, I do understand!" Mrs. March returned. "By his innocence, you mean. That is the worst of children. Their innocence breaks our hearts and makes us feel ourselves such dreadful old things."

"His innocence, yes," pursued Mrs. March, "and his ideals." She began to laugh again. "He may have gone off for a season of meditation and prayer over the misbehavior of these bicyclers. His mind is turning that way a good deal lately. It's only fair to tell you, Mr. March, that he seems to be giving up his notion of being an editor. You mustn't be disappointed."

"I shall be sorry," said the editor. "But now that you mention it, I think I have noticed that Rose seems rather more indifferent to periodical literature. I supposed he might simply have exhausted his questions—or my answers."

"No; it goes deeper than that. I think it's Europe that's turned his mind in the direction of reform. At any rate he thinks now he will be a reformer."



“Really! What kind of one? Not religious, I hope?”

“No. His reform has a religious basis, but its objects are social. I don’t make it out, exactly; but I shall, as soon as Rose does. He tells me everything, and sometimes I don’t feel equal to it, spiritually or even intellectually.”

“Don’t laugh at him, Mrs. Adding!” Mrs. March entreated.

“Oh, he doesn’t mind my laughing,” said the mother, gayly. Rose came shyly back into the room, and she said, “Well, did you rebuke those bad bicyclers?” and she laughed again.

“They’re only a custom, too, Rose,” said March, tenderly. “Like the man resting while the women worked, and the Emperor, and all the rest of it.”

“Oh, yes, I know,” the boy returned.



Page 55

"They ride modern machines, but they live in the tenth century. That's what we're always forgetting when we come to Europe and see these barbarians enjoying all our up-to-date improvements."

"There, doesn't that console you?" asked his mother, and she took him away with her, laughing back from the door. "I don't believe it does, a bit!"

"I don't believe she understands the child," said Mrs. March. "She is very light, don't you think? I don't know, after all, whether it wouldn't be a good thing for her to marry Kenby. She is very easygoing, and she will be sure to marry somebody."

She had fallen into a tone of musing censure, and he said, "You might put these ideas to her."

XL.

With the passage of the days and weeks, the strange faces which had familiarized themselves at the springs disappeared; even some of those which had become the faces of acquaintance began to go. In the diminishing crowd the smile of Otterson was no longer to be seen; the sad, severe visage of Major Eltwin, who seemed never to have quite got his bearings after his error with General Triscoe, seldom showed itself. The Triscoes themselves kept out of the Marches' way, or they fancied so; Mrs. Adding and Rose alone remained of their daily encounter.

It was full summer, as it is everywhere in mid-August, but at Carlsbad the sun was so late getting up over the hills that as people went to their breakfasts at the cafes up the valley of the Tepl they found him looking very obliquely into it at eight o'clock in the morning. The yellow leaves were thicker about the feet of the trees, and the grass was silvery gray with the belated dews. The breakfasters were fewer than they had been, and there were more little barefooted boys and girls with cups of red raspberries which they offered to the passers with cries of "Himbeeren! Himbeeren!" plaintive as the notes of birds left songless by the receding summer.

March was forbidden the fruit, but his wife and Mrs. Adding bought recklessly of it, and ate it under his eyes with their coffee and bread, pouring over it pots of clotted cream that the 'schone' Lili brought them. Rose pretended an indifference to it, which his mother betrayed was a sacrifice in behalf of March's inability.

Lili's delays in coming to be paid had been such that the Marches now tried to pay her when she brought their breakfast, but they sometimes forgot, and then they caught her whenever she came near them. In this event she liked to coquet with their impatience; she would lean against their table, and say: "Oh, no. You stay a little. It is so nice." One day after such an entreaty, she said, "The queen is here, this morning."



Mrs. March started, in the hope of highhotes. "The queen!"

"Yes; the young lady. Mr. Burnamy was saying she was a queen. She is there with her father." She nodded in the direction of a distant corner, and the Marches knew that she meant Miss Triscoe and the general. "She is not seeming so gayly as she was being."



Page 56

March smiled. "We are none of us so gayly as we were being, Lili. The summer is going."

"But Mr. Burnamy will be returning, not true?" the girl asked, resting her tray on the corner of the table.

"No, I'm afraid he won't," March returned sadly.

"He was very good. He was paying the proprietor for the dishes that Augusta did break when she was falling down. He was paying before he went away, when he was knowing that the proprietor would make Augusta to pay."

"Ah!" said March, and his wife said, "That was like him!" and she eagerly explained to Mrs. Adding how good and great Burnamy had been in this characteristic instance, while Lili waited with the tray to add some pathetic facts about Augusta's poverty and gratitude. "I think Miss Triscoe ought to know it. There goes the wretch, now!" she broke off. "Don't look at him!" She set her husband the example of averting his face from the sight of Stoller sullenly pacing up the middle aisle of the grove, and looking to the right and left for a vacant table. "Ugh! I hope he won't be able to find a single place."

Mrs. Adding gave one of her peeling laughs, while Rose watched March's face with grave sympathy. "He certainly doesn't deserve one. Don't let us keep you from offering Miss Triscoe any consolation you can." They got up, and the boy gathered up the gloves, umbrella, and handkerchief which the ladies let drop from their laps.

"Have you been telling?" March asked his wife.

"Have I told you anything?" she demanded of Mrs. Adding in turn. "Anything that you didn't as good as know, already?"

"Not a syllable!" Mrs. Adding replied in high delight. "Come, Rose!"

"Well, I suppose there's no use saying anything," said March, after she left them.

"She had guessed everything, without my telling her," said his wife.

"About Stoller?"

"Well-no. I did tell her that part, but that was nothing. It was about Burnamy and Agatha that she knew. She saw it from the first."

"I should have thought she would have enough to do to look after poor old Kenby."



“I’m not sure, after all, that she cares for him. If she doesn’t, she oughtn’t to let him write to her. Aren’t you going over to speak to the Triscoes?”

“No, certainly not. I’m going back to the hotel. There ought to be some steamer letters this morning. Here we are, worrying about these strangers all the time, and we never give a thought to our own children on the other side of the ocean.”

“I worry about them, too,” said the mother, fondly. “Though there is nothing to worry about,” she added.

“It’s our duty to worry,” he insisted.

Page 57

At the hotel the portier gave them four letters. There was one from each of their children: one very buoyant, not to say boisterous, from the daughter, celebrating her happiness in her husband, and the loveliness of Chicago as a summer city ("You would think she was born out there!" sighed her mother); and one from the son, boasting his well-being in spite of the heat they were having ("And just think how cool it is here!" his mother upbraided herself), and the prosperity of 'Every Other Week'. There was a line from Fulkerson, praising the boy's editorial instinct, and ironically proposing March's resignation in his favor.

"I do believe we could stay all winter, just as well as not," said Mrs. March, proudly. "What does 'Burnamy say?"

"How do you know it's from him?"

"Because you've been keeping your hand on it! Give it here."

"When I've read it."

The letter was dated at Ansbach, in Germany, and dealt, except for some messages of affection to Mrs. March, with a scheme for a paper which Burnamy wished to write on Kaspar Hauser, if March thought he could use it in 'Every Other Week'. He had come upon a book about that hapless foundling in Nuremberg, and after looking up all his traces there he had gone on to Ansbach, where Kaspar Hauser met his death so pathetically. Burnamy said he could not give any notion of the enchantment of Nuremberg; but he besought March, if he was going to the Tyrol for his after-cure, not to fail staying a day or so in the wonderful place. He thought March would enjoy Ansbach too, in its way.

"And, not a word—not a syllable—about Miss Triscoe!" cried Mrs. March. "Shall you take his paper?"

"It would be serving him right, if I refused it, wouldn't it?"

They never knew what it cost Burnamy to keep her name out of his letter, or by what an effort of the will he forbade himself even to tell of his parting interview with Stoller. He had recovered from his remorse for letting Stoller give himself away; he was still sorry for that, but he no longer suffered; yet he had not reached the psychological moment when he could celebrate his final virtue in the matter. He was glad he had been able to hold out against the temptation to retrieve himself by another wrong; but he was humbly glad, and he felt that until happier chance brought him and his friends together he must leave them to their merciful conjectures. He was young, and he took the chance, with an aching heart. If he had been older, he might not have taken it.



XLI.

The birthday of the Emperor comes conveniently, in late August, in the good weather which is pretty sure to fall then, if ever in the Austrian summer. For a week past, at Carlsbad, the workmen had been building a scaffolding for the illumination in the woods on a height overlooking the town, and making unobtrusive preparations at points within it.

Page 58

The day was important as the last of March's cure, and its pleasures began for him by a renewal of his acquaintance in its first kindness with the Eltwins. He had met them so seldom that at one time he thought they must have gone away, but now after his first cup he saw the quiet, sad old pair, sitting together on a bench in the Stadt Park, and he asked leave to sit down with them till it was time for the next. Eltwin said that this was their last day, too; and explained that his wife always came with him to the springs, while he took the waters.

"Well," he apologized, "we're all that's left, and I suppose we like to keep together." He paused, and at the look in March's face he suddenly went on. "I haven't been well for three or four years; but I always fought against coming out here, when the doctors wanted me to. I said I couldn't leave home; and, I don't suppose I ever should. But my home left me."

As he spoke his wife shrank tenderly near him, and March saw her steal her withered hand into his.

"We'd had a large family, but they'd all died off, with one thing or another, and here in the spring we lost our last daughter. Seemed perfectly well, and all at once she died; heart-failure, they called it. It broke me up, and mother, here, got at me to go. And so we're here." His voice trembled; and his eyes softened; then they flashed up, and March heard him add, in a tone that astonished him less when he looked round and saw General Triscoe advancing toward them, "I don't know what it is always makes me want to kick that man."

The general lifted his hat to their group, and hoped that Mrs. Eltwin was well, and Major Eltwin better. He did not notice their replies, but said to March, "The ladies are waiting for you in Pupp's readingroom, to go with them to the Posthof for breakfast."

"Aren't you going, too?" asked March.

"No, thank you," said the general, as if it were much finer not; "I shall breakfast at our pension." He strolled off with the air of a man who has done more than his duty.

"I don't suppose I ought to feel that way," said Eltwin, with a remorse which March suspected a reproachful pressure of his wife's hand had prompted in him. "I reckon he means well."

"Well, I don't know," March said, with a candor he could not wholly excuse.

On his way to the hotel he fancied mocking his wife for her interest in the romantic woes of her lovers, in a world where there was such real pathos as these poor old people's; but in the company of Miss Triscoe he could not give himself this pleasure. He tried to amuse her on the way from Pupp's, with the doubt he always felt in passing the Cafe



Sans-Souci, whether he should live to reach the Posthof where he meant to breakfast. She said, "Poor Mr. March!" and laughed inattentively; when he went on to philosophize the commonness of the sparse company always observable at the Sans-Souci as a just effect of its Laodicean situation between Pupp's and the Posthof, the girl sighed absently, and his wife frowned at him.



Page 59

The flower-woman at the gate of her garden had now only autumnal blooms for sale in the vases which flanked the entrance; the windrows of the rowen, left steeping in the dews overnight, exhaled a faint fragrance; a poor remnant of the midsummer multitudes trailed itself along to the various cafes of the valley, its pink paper bags of bread rustling like sere foliage as it moved.

At the Posthof the 'schone' Lili alone was as gay, as in the prime of July. She played archly about the guests she welcomed to a table in a sunny spot in the gallery. "You are tired of Carlsbad?" she said caressingly to Miss Triscoe, as she put her breakfast before her.

"Not of the Posthof," said the girl, listlessly.

"Posthof, and very little Lili?" She showed, with one forefinger on another, how very little she was.

Miss Triscoe laughed, not cheerily, and Lili said to Mrs. March, with abrupt seriousness, "Augusta was finding a handkerchief under the table, and she was washing it and ironing it before she did bring it. I have scolded her, and I have made her give it to me."

She took from under her apron a man's handkerchief, which she offered to Mrs. March. It bore, as she saw Miss Triscoe saw, the initials L. J. B. But, "Whose can it be?" they asked each other.

"Why, Burnamy's," said March; and Lili's eyes danced. "Give it here!"

His wife caught it farther away. "No, I'm going to see whose it is, first; if it's his, I'll send it to him myself."

She tried to put it into the pocket which was not in her dress by sliding it down her lap; then she handed it to the girl, who took it with a careless air, but kept it after a like failure to pocket it.

Mrs. March had come out in her India-rubber sandals, but for once in Carlsbad the weather was too dry for them, and she had taken them off and was holding them in her lap. They fell to the ground when she now rose from breakfast, and she stooped to pick them up. Miss Triscoe was too quick for her.

"Oh, let me carry them for you!" she entreated, and after a tender struggle she succeeded in enslaving herself to them, and went away wearing them through the heel-bands like manacles on her wrist. She was not the kind of girl to offer such pretty devotions, and Mrs. March was not the kind of woman to suffer them; but they played the comedy through, and let March go off for his last hill-climb with the promise to meet him in the Stadt Park when he came to the Kurhaus for his last mineral bath.



Mrs. March in the mean time went about some final shopping, and invited the girl's advice with a fondness which did not prevent her rejecting it in every case, with Miss Triscoe's eager approval. In the Stadt Park they sat down and talked; from time to time Mrs. March made polite feints of recovering her sandals, but the girl kept them with increased effusion.

When they rose, and strolled away from the bench where they had been sitting, they seemed to be followed. They looked round and saw no one more alarming than a very severe-looking old gentleman, whose hat brim in spite of his severity was limp with much lifting, as all Austrian hat brims are. He touched it, and saying haughtily in German, "Something left lying," passed on.



Page 60

They stared at each other; then, as women do, they glanced down at their skirts to see if there was anything amiss with them, and Miss Triscoe perceived her hands empty of Mrs. March's sandals and of Burnamy's handkerchief.

"Oh, I put it in one of the toes!" she lamented, and she fled back to their bench, alarming in her course the fears of a gendarme for the public security, and putting a baby in its nurse's arms into such doubts of its personal safety that it burst into a desolate cry. She laughed breathlessly as she rejoined Mrs. March. "That comes of having no pocket; I didn't suppose I could forget your sandals, Mrs. March! Wasn't it absurd?"

"It's one of those things," Mrs. March said to her husband afterwards, "that they can always laugh over together."

"They? And what about Burnamy's behavior to Stoller?"

"Oh, I don't call that anything but what will come right. Of course he can make it up to him somehow. And I regard his refusal to do wrong when Stoller wanted him to as quite wiping out the first offence."

"Well, my dear, you have burnt your ships behind you. My only hope is that when we leave here tomorrow, her pessimistic papa's poison will neutralize yours somehow."

XLII.

One of the pleasantest incidents of March's sojourn in Carlsbad was his introduction to the manager of the municipal theatre by a common friend who explained the editor in such terms to the manager that he conceived of him as a brother artist. This led to much bowing and smiling from the manager when the Marches met him in the street, or in their frequent visits to the theatre, with which March felt that it might well have ended, and still been far beyond his desert. He had not thought of going to the opera on the Emperor's birthday, but after dinner a box came from the manager, and Mrs. March agreed with him that they could not in decency accept so great a favor. At the same time she argued that they could not in decency refuse it, and that to show their sense of the pleasure done them, they must adorn their box with all the beauty and distinction possible; in other words, she said they must ask Miss Triscoe and her father.

"And why not Major Eltwin and his wife? Or Mrs. Adding and Rose?"

She begged him, simply in his own interest, not to be foolish; and they went early, so as to be in their box when their guests came. The foyer of the theatre was banked with flowers, and against a curtain of evergreens stood a high-pedestalled bust of the paternal Caesar, with whose side-whiskers a laurel crown comported itself as well as it could. At the foot of the grand staircase leading to the boxes the manager stood in evening dress, receiving his friends and their felicitations upon the honor which the

theatre was sure to do itself on an occasion so august. The Marches were so cordial in their prophecies that the manager yielded to an artist's impulse and begged his fellow-artist to do him the pleasure of coming behind the scenes between the acts of the opera; he bowed a heart-felt regret to Mrs. March that he could not make the invitation include her, and hoped that she would not be too lonely while her husband was gone.



Page 61

She explained that they had asked friends, and she should not be alone, and then he entreated March to bring any gentleman who was his guest with him. On the way up to their box, she pressed his arm as she used in their young married days, and asked him if it was not perfect. "I wish we were going to have it all to ourselves; no one else can appreciate the whole situation. Do you think we have made a mistake in having the Triscoes?"

"We!" he retorted. "Oh, that's good! I'm going to shirk him, when it comes to going behind the scenes."

"No, no, dearest," she entreated. "Snubbing will only make it worse. We must stand it to the bitter end, now."

The curtain rose upon another laurelled bust of the Emperor, with a chorus of men formed on either side, who broke into the grave and noble strains of the Austrian Hymn, while every one stood. Then the curtain fell again, and in the interval before the opera could begin, General Triscoe and his daughter came in.

Mrs. March took the splendor in which the girl appeared as a tribute to her hospitality. She had hitherto been a little disappointed of the open homage to American girlhood which her readings of international romance had taught her to expect in Europe, but now her patriotic vanity feasted full. Fat highhotes of her own sex levelled their lorgnettes at Miss Triscoe all around the horseshoe, with critical glances which fell blunted from her complexion and costume; the house was brilliant with the military uniforms, which we have not yet to mingle with our unrivalled millinery, and the ardent gaze of the young officers dwelt on the perfect mould of her girlish arms and neck, and the winning lines of her face. The girl's eyes shone with a joyful excitement, and her little head, defined by its dark hair, trembled as she slowly turned it from side to side, after she removed the airy scarf which had covered it. Her father, in evening dress, looked the Third Emperor complaisant to a civil occasion, and took a chair in the front of the box without resistance; and the ladies disputed which should yield the best place to the other, till Miss Triscoe forced Mrs. March fondly into it for the first act at least.

The piece had to be cut a good deal to give people time for the illuminations afterwards; but as it was it gave scope to the actress who, 'als Gast' from a Viennese theatre, was the chief figure in it. She merited the distinction by the art which still lingered, deeply embedded in her massive balk, but never wholly obscured.

"That is grand, isn't it?" said March, following one of the tremendous strokes by which she overcame her physical disadvantages. "It's fine to see how her art can undo, for one splendid instant, the work of all those steins of beer, those illimitable licks of sausage, those boundless fields of cabbage. But it's rather pathetic."



“It’s disgusting,” said his wife; and at this General Triscoe, who had been watching the actress through his lorgnette, said, as if his contrary-mindedness were irresistibly invoked:



Page 62

“Well, I don’t know. It’s amusing. Do you suppose we shall see her when we go behind, March?”

He still professed a desire to do so when the curtain fell, and they hurried to the rear door of the theatre. It was slightly ajar, and they pulled it wide open, with the eagerness of their age and nation, and began to mount the stairs leading up from it between rows of painted dancing-girls, who had come out for a breath of air, and who pressed themselves against the walls to make room for the intruders. With their rouged faces, and the stare of their glassy eyes intensified by the coloring of their brows and lashes, they were like painted statues, as they stood there with their crimsoned lips parted in astonished smiles.

“This is rather weird,” said March, faltering at the sight. “I wonder if we might ask these young ladies where to go?” General Triscoe made no answer, and was apparently no more prepared than himself to accost the files of danseuses, when they were themselves accosted by an angry voice from the head of the stairs with a demand for their business. The voice belonged to a gendarme, who descended toward them and seemed as deeply scandalized at their appearance as they could have been at that of the young ladies.

March explained, in his ineffective German, with every effect of improbability, that they were there by appointment of the manager, and wished to find his room.

The gendarme would not or could not make anything out of it. He pressed down upon them, and laying a rude hand on a shoulder of either, began to force them back to the door. The mild nature of the editor might have yielded to his violence, but the martial spirit of General Triscoe was roused. He shrugged the gendarme’s hand from his shoulder, and with a voice as furious as his own required him, in English, to say what the devil he meant. The gendarme rejoined with equal heat in German; the general’s tone rose in anger; the dancing-girls emitted some little shrieks of alarm, and fled noisily up the stairs. From time to time March interposed with a word of the German which had mostly deserted him in his hour of need; but if it had been a flow of intelligible expostulation, it would have had no effect upon the disputants. They grew more outrageous, till the manager himself, appeared at the head of the stairs, and extended an arresting hand over the hubbub. As soon as the situation clarified itself he hurried down to his visitors with a polite roar of apology and rescued them from the gendarme, and led them up to his room and forced them into arm-chairs with a rapidity of reparation which did not exhaust itself till he had entreated them with every circumstance of civility to excuse an incident so mortifying to him. But with all his haste he lost so much time in this that he had little left to show them through the theatre, and their presentation to the prima donna was reduced to the obeisances with which they met and parted as she went upon the stage at the lifting of the curtain. In the lack of a common language this was perhaps as well as a longer interview; and nothing could have been more honorable than their dismissal at the hands of the gendarme who had

received them so stormily. He opened the door for them, and stood with his fingers to his cap saluting, in the effect of being a whole file of grenadiers.



Page 63

XLIII.

At the same moment Burnamy bowed himself out of the box where he had been sitting with the ladies during the absence of the gentlemen. He had knocked at the door almost as soon as they disappeared, and if he did not fully share the consternation which his presence caused, he looked so frightened that Mrs. March reserved the censure which the sight of him inspired, and in default of other inspiration treated his coming simply as a surprise. She shook hands with him, and then she asked him to sit down, and listened to his explanation that he had come back to Carlsbad to write up the birthnight festivities, on an order from the Paris-New York Chronicle; that he had seen them in the box and had ventured to look in. He was pale, and so discomposed that the heart of justice was softened more and more in Mrs. March's breast, and she left him to the talk that sprang up, by an admirable effect of tact in the young lady, between him and Miss Triscoe.

After all, she decided, there was nothing criminal in his being in Carlsbad, and possibly in the last analysis there was nothing so very wicked in his being in her box. One might say that it was not very nice of him after he had gone away under such a cloud; but on the other hand it was nice, though in a different way, if he longed so much to see Miss Triscoe that he could not help coming. It was altogether in his favor that he was so agitated, though he was momentarily becoming less agitated; the young people were beginning to laugh at the notion of Mr. March and General Triscoe going behind the scenes. Burnamy said he envied them the chance; and added, not very relevantly, that he had come from Baireuth, where he had seen the last of the Wagner performances. He said he was going back to Baireuth, but not to Ansbach again, where he had finished looking up that Kaspar Hauser business. He seemed to think Mrs. March would know about it, and she could not help saying; Oh, yes, Mr. March was so much interested. She wondered if she ought to tell him about his handkerchief; but she remembered in time that she had left it in Miss Triscoe's keeping. She wondered if the girl realized how handsome he was. He was extremely handsome, in his black evening dress, with his Tuxedo, and the pallor of his face repeated in his expanse of shirt front.

At the bell for the rising of the curtain he rose too, and took their offered hands. In offering hers Mrs. March asked if he would not stay and speak with Mr. March and the general; and now for the first time he recognized anything clandestine in his visit. He laughed nervously, and said, "No, thank you!" and shut himself out.

"We must tell them," said Mrs. March, rather interrogatively, and she was glad that the girl answered with a note of indignation.

"Why, certainly, Mrs. March."



They could not tell them at once, for the second act had begun when March and the general came back; and after the opera was over and they got out into the crowded street there was no chance, for the general was obliged to offer his arm to Mrs. March, while her husband followed with his daughter.

Page 64

The facades of the theatre and of the hotels were outlined with thickly set little lamps, which beaded the arches of the bridges spanning the Tepl, and lighted the casements and portals of the shops. High above all, against the curtain of black woodland on the mountain where its skeleton had been growing for days, glittered the colossal effigy of the doubleheaded eagle of Austria, crowned with the tiara of the Holy Roman Empire; in the reflected splendor of its myriad lamps the pale Christ looked down from the mountain opposite upon the surging multitudes in the streets and on the bridges.

They were most amiable multitudes, March thought, and they responded docilely to the entreaties of the policemen who stood on the steps of the bridges, and divided their encountering currents with patient appeals of "Bitte schon! Bitte schon!" He laughed to think of a New York cop saying "Please prettily! Please prettily!" to a New York crowd which he wished to have go this way or that, and then he burned with shame to think how far our manners were from civilization, wherever our heads and hearts might be, when he heard a voice at his elbow:

"A punch with a club would start some of these fellows along quicker."

It was Stoller, and March turned from him to lose his disgust in the sudden terror of perceiving that Miss Triscoe was no longer at his side. Neither could he see his wife and General Triscoe, and he began to push frantically about in the crowd looking for the girl. He had an interminable five or ten minutes in his vain search, and he was going to call out to her by name, when Burnamy saved him from the hopeless absurdity by elbowing his way to him with Miss Triscoe on his arm.

"Here she is, Mr. March," he said, as if there were nothing strange in his having been there to find her; in fact he had followed them all from the theatre, and at the moment he saw the party separated, and Miss Triscoe carried off helpless in the human stream, had plunged in and rescued her. Before March could formulate any question in his bewilderment, Burnamy was gone again; the girl offered no explanation for him, and March had not yet decided to ask any when he caught sight of his wife and General Triscoe standing tiptoe in a doorway and craning their necks upward and forward to scan the crowd in search of him and his charge. Then he looked round at her and opened his lips to express the astonishment that filled him, when he was aware of an ominous shining of her eyes and trembling of her hand on his arm.

She pressed his arm nervously, and he understood her to beg him to forbear at once all question of her and all comment on Burnamy's presence to her father.

It would not have been just the time for either. Not only Mrs. March was with the general, but Mrs. Adding also; she had called to them from that place, where she was safe with Rose when she saw them eddying about in the crowd. The general was still, expressing a gratitude which became more pressing the more it was disclaimed; he said casually at sight of his daughter, "Ah; you've found us, have you?" and went on talking

to Mrs. Adding, who nodded to them laughingly, and asked, "Did you see me beckoning?"



Page 65

“Look here, my dear!” March said to his wife as soon as they parted from the rest, the general gallantly promising that his daughter and he would see Mrs. Adding safe to her hotel, and were making their way slowly home alone. “Did you know that Burnamy was in Carlsbad?”

“He’s going away on the twelve-o’clock train tonight,” she answered, firmly.

“What has that got to do with it? Where did you see him?”

“In the box, while you were behind the scenes.”

She told him all about it, and he listened in silent endeavor for the ground of censure from which a sense of his own guilt forced him. She asked suddenly, “Where did you see him?” and he told her in turn.

He added severely, “Her father ought to know. Why didn’t you tell him?”

“Why didn’t you?” she retorted with great reason.

“Because I didn’t think he was just in the humor for it.” He began to laugh as he sketched their encounter with the gendarme, but she did not seem to think it amusing; and he became serious again. “Besides, I was afraid she was going to blubber, any way.”

“She wouldn’t have blubbered, as you call it. I don’t know why you need be so disgusting! It would have given her just the moral support she needed. Now she will have to tell him herself, and he will blame us. You ought to have spoken; you could have done it easily and naturally when you came up with her. You will have yourself to thank for all the trouble that comes of it, now, my dear.”

He shouted in admiration of her skill in shifting the blame on him. “All right! I should have had to stand it, even if you hadn’t behaved with angelic wisdom.”

“Why,” she said, after reflection, “I don’t see what either of us has done. We didn’t get Burnamy to come here, or connive at his presence in any way.”

“Oh! Make Triscoe believe that! He knows you’ve done all you could to help the affair on.”

“Well, what if I have? He began making up to Mrs. Adding himself as soon as he saw her, to-night. She looked very pretty.”

“Well, thank Heaven! we’re off to-morrow morning, and I hope we’ve seen the last of them. They’ve done what they could to spoil my cure, but I’m not going to have them spoil my aftercure.”



XLIV.

Mrs. March had decided not to go to the Posthof for breakfast, where they had already taken a lavish leave of the 'schone' Lili, with a sense of being promptly superseded in her affections. They found a place in the red-table-cloth end of the pavilion at Pupp's, and were served by the pretty girl with the rose-bud mouth whom they had known only as Ein-und-Zwanzig, and whose promise of "Komm' gleich, bitte schon!" was like a bird's note. Never had the coffee been so good, the bread so aerially light, the Westphalian ham so tenderly pink. A young married couple whom they knew came by, arm in arm, in their morning walk, and sat down with them, like their own youth, for a moment.



Page 66

"If you had told them we were going, dear," said Mrs. March, when the couple were themselves gone, "we should have been as old as ever. Don't let us tell anybody, this morning, that we're going. I couldn't bear it."

They had been obliged to take the secretary of the hotel into their confidence, in the process of paying their bill. He put on his high hat and came out to see them off. The portier was already there, standing at the step of the lordly two-spanner which they had ordered for the long drive to the station. The Swiss elevator-man came to the door to offer them a fellow-republican's good wishes for their journey; Herr Pupp himself appeared at the last moment to hope for their return another summer. Mrs. March bent a last look of interest upon the proprietor as their two-spanner whirled away.

"They say that he is going to be made a count."

"Well, I don't object," said March. "A man who can feed fourteen thousand people, mostly Germans, in a day, ought to be made an archduke."

At the station something happened which touched them even more than these last attentions of the hotel. They were in their compartment, and were in the act of possessing themselves of the best places by putting their bundles and bags on them, when they heard Mrs. March's name called.

They turned and saw Rose Adding at the door, his thin face flushed with excitement and his eyes glowing. "I was afraid I shouldn't get here in time," he panted, and he held up to her a huge bunch of flowers.

"Why Rose! From your mother?"

"From me," he said, timidly, and he was slipping out into the corridor, when she caught him and his flowers to her in one embrace. "I want to kiss you," she said; and presently, when he had waved his hand to them from the platform outside, and the train had started, she fumbled for her handkerchief. "I suppose you call it blubbering; but he is the sweetest child!"

"He's about the only one of our Carlsbad compatriots that I'm sorry to leave behind," March assented. "He's the only unmarried one that wasn't in danger of turning up a lover on my hands; if there had been some rather old girl, or some rather light matron in our acquaintance, I'm not sure that I should have been safe even from Rose. Carlsbad has been an interruption to our silver wedding journey, my dear; but I hope now that it will begin again."

"Yes," said his wife, "now we can have each other all to ourselves."

"Yes. It's been very different from our first wedding journey in that. It isn't that we're not so young now as we were, but that we don't seem so much our own property. We used



to be the sole proprietors, and now we seem to be mere tenants at will, and any interloping lover may come in and set our dearest interests on the sidewalk. The disadvantage of living along is that we get too much into the hands of other people.”

“Yes, it is. I shall be glad to be rid of them all, too.”



Page 67

"I don't know that the drawback is serious enough to make us wish we had died young—or younger," he suggested.

"No, I don't know that it is," she assented. She added, from an absence where he was sufficiently able to locate her meaning, "I hope she'll write and tell me what her father says and does when she tells him that he was there."

There were many things, in the weather, the landscape, their sole occupancy of an unsmoking compartment, while all the smoking compartments round overflowed with smokers, which conspired to offer them a pleasing illusion of the past; it was sometimes so perfect that they almost held each other's hands. In later life there are such moments when the youthful emotions come back, as certain birds do in winter, and the elderly heart chirps and twitters to itself as if it were young. But it is best to discourage this fondness; and Mrs. March joined her husband in mocking it, when he made her observe how fit it was that their silver wedding journey should be resumed as part of his after-cure. If he had found the fountain of youth in the warm, flat, faintly nauseous water of the Felsenquelle, he was not going to call himself twenty-eight again till his second month of the Carlsbad regimen was out, and he had got back to salad and fruit.

At Eger they had a memorable dinner, with so much leisure for it that they could form a life-long friendship for the old English-speaking waiter who served them, and would not suffer them to hurry themselves. The hills had already fallen away, and they ran along through a cheerful country, with tracts of forest under white clouds blowing about in a blue sky, and gayly flinging their shadows down upon the brown ploughed land, and upon the yellow oat-fields, where women were cutting the leisurely harvest with sickles, and where once a great girl with swarthy bare arms unbent herself from her toil, and rose, a statue of rude vigor and beauty, to watch them go by. Hedges of evergreen enclosed the yellow oat-fields, where slow wagons paused to gather the sheaves of the week before, and then loitered away with them. Flocks of geese waddled in sculpturesque relief against the close-cropt pastures, herded by little girls with flaxen pigtails, whose eyes, blue as corn-flowers, followed the flying train. There were stretches of wild thyme purpling long barren acreages, and growing up the railroad banks almost to the rails themselves. From the meadows the rowen, tossed in long loose windrows, sent into their car a sad autumnal fragrance which mingled with the tobacco smoke, when two fat smokers emerged into the narrow corridor outside their compartments and tried to pass each other. Their vast stomachs beat together in a vain encounter.

"Zu enge!" said one, and "Ja, zu enge!" said the other, and they laughed innocently in each other's faces, with a joy in their recognition of the corridor's narrowness as great as if it had been a stroke of the finest wit.

Page 68

All the way the land was lovely, and as they drew near Nuremberg it grew enchanting, with a fairy quaintness. The scenery was Alpine, but the scale was toy-like, as befitted the region, and the mimic peaks and valleys with green brooks gushing between them, and strange rock forms recurring in endless caprice, seemed the home of children's story. All the gnomes and elves might have dwelt there in peaceful fellowship with the peasants who ploughed the little fields, and gathered the garlanded hops, and lived in the farmsteads and village houses with those high timber-laced gables.

"We ought to have come here long ago with the children, when they were children," said March.

"No," his wife returned; "it would have been too much for them. Nobody but grown people could bear it."

The spell which began here was not really broken by anything that afterwards happened in Nuremberg, though the old toy-capital was trolley-wired through all its quaintness, and they were lodged in a hotel lighted by electricity and heated by steam, and equipped with an elevator which was so modern that it came down with them as well as went up. All the things that assumed to be of recent structure or invention were as nothing against the dense past, which overwhelmed them with the sense of a world elsewhere outlived. In Nuremberg it is not the quaint or the picturesque that is exceptional; it is the matter-of-fact and the commonplace. Here, more than anywhere else, you are steeped in the gothic spirit which expresses itself in a Teutonic dialect of homely sweetness, of endearing caprice, of rude grotesqueness, but of positive grace and beauty almost never. It is the architectural speech of a strenuous, gross, kindly, honest people's fancy; such as it is it was inexhaustible, and such as it is it was bewitching for the travellers.

They could hardly wait till they had supper before plunging into the ancient town, and they took the first tram-car at a venture. It was a sort of transfer, drawn by horses, which delivered them a little inside of the city gate to a trolley-car. The conductor with their fare demanded their destination; March frankly owned that they did not know where they wanted to go; they wanted to go anywhere the conductor chose; and the conductor, after reflection, decided to put them down at the public garden, which, as one of the newest things in the city, would make the most favorable impression upon strangers. It was in fact so like all other city gardens, with the foliage of its trimly planted alleys, that it sheltered them effectually from the picturesqueness of Nuremberg, and they had a long, peaceful hour on one of its benches, where they rested from their journey, and repented their hasty attempt to appropriate the charm of the city.



Page 69

The next morning it rained, according to a custom which the elevator-boy (flown with the insolent recollection of a sunny summer in Milan) said was invariable in Nuremberg; but after the one-o'clock table d'hote they took a noble two-spanner carriage, and drove all round the city. Everywhere the ancient moat, thickly turfed and planted with trees and shrubs, stretched a girdle of garden between their course and the wall beautifully old, with knots of dead ivy clinging to its crevices, or broad meshes of the shining foliage mantling its blackened masonry. A tile-roofed open gallery ran along the top, where so many centuries of sentries had paced, and arched the massive gates with heavily moulded piers, where so countlessly the fierce burgher troops had sallied forth against their besiegers, and so often the leaguer hosts had dashed themselves in assault. The blood shed in forgotten battles would have flooded the moat where now the grass and flowers grew, or here and there a peaceful stretch of water stagnated.

The drive ended in a visit to the old Burg, where the Hapsburg Kaisers dwelt when they visited their faithful imperial city. From its ramparts the incredible picturesqueness of Nuremberg best shows itself, and if one has any love for the distinctive quality of Teutonic architecture it is here that more than anywhere else one may feast it. The prospect of tower and spire and gable is of such a mediaeval richness, of such an abounding fulness, that all incidents are lost in it. The multitudinous roofs of red-brown tiles, blinking browsily from their low dormers, press upon one another in endless succession; they cluster together on a rise of ground and sink away where the street falls, but they nowhere disperse or scatter, and they end abruptly at the other rim of the city, beyond which looms the green country, merging in the remoter blue of misty uplands.

A pretty young girl waited at the door of the tower for the visitors to gather in sufficient number, and then led them through the terrible museum, discanting in the same gay voice and with the same smiling air on all the murderous engines and implements of torture. First in German and then in English she explained the fearful uses of the Iron Maiden, she winningly illustrated the action of the racks and wheels on which men had been stretched and broken, and she sweetly vaunted a sword which had beheaded eight hundred persons. When she took the established fee from March she suggested, with a demure glance, "And what more you please for saying it in English."

"Can you say it in Russian?" demanded a young man, whose eyes he had seen dwelling on her from the beginning. She laughed archly, and responded with some Slavic words, and then delivered her train of sight-seers over to the custodian who was to show them through the halls and chambers of the Burg. These were undergoing the repairs which the monuments of the past are perpetually suffering in the present,



Page 70

and there was some special painting and varnishing for the reception of the Kaiser, who was coming to Nuremberg for the military manoeuvres then at hand. But if they had been in the unmolested discomfort of their unlivable magnificence, their splendor was such as might well reconcile the witness to the superior comfort of a private station in our snigger day. The Marches came out owning that the youth which might once have found the romantic glories of the place enough was gone from them. But so much of it was left to her that she wished to make him stop and look at the flirtation which had blossomed out between that pretty young girl and the Russian, whom they had scarcely missed from their party in the Burg. He had apparently never parted from the girl, and now as they sat together on the threshold of the gloomy tower, he most have been teaching her more Slavic words, for they were both laughing as if they understood each other perfectly.

In his security from having the affair in any wise on his hands, March would have willingly lingered, to see how her education got on; but it began to rain, The rain did not disturb the lovers, but it obliged the elderly spectators to take refuge in their carriage; and they drove off to find the famous Little Goose Man. This is what every one does at Nuremberg; it would be difficult to say why. When they found the Little Goose Man, he was only a mediaeval fancy in bronze, who stood on his pedestal in the market-place and contributed from the bill of the goose under his arm a small stream to the rainfall drenching the wet wares of the wet market-women round the fountain, and soaking their cauliflowers and lettuce, their grapes and pears, their carrots and turnips, to the watery flavor of all fruits and vegetables in Germany.

The air was very raw and chill; but after supper the clouds cleared away, and a pleasant evening tempted the travellers out. The portier dissembled any slight which their eagerness for the only amusement he could think of inspired, and directed them to a popular theatre which was giving a summer season at low prices to the lower classes, and which they surprised, after some search, trying to hide itself in a sort of back square. They got the best places at a price which ought to have been mortifyingly cheap, and found themselves, with a thousand other harmless bourgeois folk, in a sort of spacious, agreeable barn, of a decoration by no means ugly, and of a certain artless comfort. Each seat fronted a shelf at the back of the seat before it, where the spectator could put his hat; there was a smaller shelf for his stein of the beer passed constantly throughout the evening; and there was a buffet where he could stay himself with cold ham and other robust German refreshments.

It was "The Wedding Journey to Nuremberg" upon which they had oddly chanced, and they accepted as a national tribute the character of an American girl in it. She was an American girl of the advanced pattern, and she came and went at a picnic on the arm of a head waiter. She seemed to have no office in the drama except to illustrate a German conception of American girlhood, but even in this simple function she seemed rather to

puzzle the German audience; perhaps because of the occasional English words which she used.

Page 71

To the astonishment of her compatriots, when they came out of the theatre it was not raining; the night was as brilliantly starlit as a night could be in Germany, and they sauntered home richly content through the narrow streets and through the beautiful old Damenthor, beyond which their hotel lay. How pretty, they said, to call that charming port the Ladies' Gate! They promised each other to find out why, and they never did so, but satisfied themselves by assigning it to the exclusive use of the slim maidens and massive matrons of the old Nuremberg patriciate, whom they imagined trailing their silken splendors under its arch in perpetual procession.

XLV.

The life of the Nuremberg patriciate, now extinct in the control of the city which it builded so strenuously and maintained so heroically, is still insistent in all its art. This expresses their pride at once and their simplicity with a childish literality. At its best it is never so good as the good Italian art, whose influence is always present in its best. The coloring of the great canvases is Venetian, but there is no such democracy of greatness as in the painting at Venice; in decoration the art of Nuremberg is at best quaint, and at the worst puerile. Wherever it had obeyed an academic intention it seemed to March poor and coarse, as in the bronze fountain beside the Church of St. Lawrence. The water spins from the pouted breasts of the beautiful figures in streams that cross and interlace after a fancy trivial and gross; but in the base of the church there is a time-worn Gethsemane, exquisitely affecting in its simple-hearted truth. The long ages have made it even more affecting than the sculptor imagined it; they have blurred the faces and figures in passing till their features are scarcely distinguishable; and the sleeping apostles seem to have dreamed themselves back into the mother-marble. It is of the same tradition and impulse with that supreme glory of the native sculpture, the ineffable tabernacle of Adam Krafft, which climbs a column of the church within, a miracle of richly carven story; and no doubt if there were a Nuremberg sculptor doing great things today, his work would be of kindred inspiration.

The descendants of the old patrician who ordered the tabernacle at rather a hard bargain from the artist still worship on the floor below, and the descendants of his neighbor patricians have their seats in the pews about, and their names cut in the proprietary plates on the pew-tops. The vergeress who showed the Marches through the church was devout in the praise of these aristocratic fellow-citizens of hers. "So simple, and yet so noble!" she said. She was a very romantic vergeress, and she told them at unsparing length the legend of the tabernacle, how the artist fell asleep in despair of winning his patron's daughter, and saw in a vision the master-work with the lily-like droop at top, which gained him her hand. They did not realize till too late that it was all out of a novel of Georg Ebers's, but added to the regular fee for the church a gift worthy of an inedited legend.

Page 72

Even then they had a pleasure in her enthusiasm rarely imparted by the Nuremberg manner. They missed there the constant, sweet civility of Carlsbad, and found themselves falling flat in their endeavors for a little cordiality. They indeed inspired with some kindness the old woman who showed them through that cemetery where Albert Durer and Hans Sachs and many other illustrious citizens lie buried under monumental brasses of such beauty:

“That kings to have the like, might wish to die.”

But this must have been because they abandoned themselves so willingly to the fascination of the bronze skull on the tomb of a fourteenth-century patrician, which had the uncommon advantage of a lower jaw hinged to the upper. She proudly clapped it up and down for their astonishment, and waited, with a toothless smile, to let them discover the bead of a nail artfully figured in the skull; then she gave a shrill cackle of joy, and gleefully explained that the wife of this patrician had killed him by driving a nail into his temple, and had been fitly beheaded for the murder.

She cared so much for nothing else in the cemetery, but she consented to let them wonder at the richness of the sculpture in the level tombs, with their escutcheons and memorial tablets, overrun by the long grass and the matted ivy; she even consented to share their indignation at the destruction of some of the brasses and the theft of others. She suffered more reluctantly their tenderness for the old, old crucifixion figured in sculpture at one corner of the cemetery, where the anguish of the Christ had long since faded into the stone from which it had been evoked, and the thieves were no longer distinguishable in their penitence or impenitence; but she parted friends with them when she saw how much they seemed taken with the votive chapel of the noble Holzschuh family, where a line of wooden shoes puns upon the name in the frieze, like the line of dogs which chase one another, with bones in their mouths, around the Canossa palace at Verona. A sense of the beautiful house by the Adige was part of the pleasing confusion which possessed them in Nuremberg whenever they came upon the expression of the gothic spirit common both to the German and northern Italian art. They knew that it was an effect which had passed from Germany into Italy, but in the liberal air of the older land it had come to so much more beauty that now, when they found it in its home, it seemed something fetched from over the Alps and coarsened in the attempt to naturalize it to an alien air.

In the Germanic Museum they fled to the Italian painters from the German pictures they had inspired; in the great hall of the Rathhaus the noble Processional of Durer was the more precious, because his Triumph of Maximilian somehow suggested Mantegna's Triumph of Caesar. There was to be a banquet in the hall, under the mighty fresco, to welcome the German Emperor, coming the next week, and the Rathhaus was full of



Page 73

work-people furbishing it up against his arrival, and making it difficult for the custodian who had it in charge to show it properly to strangers. She was of the same enthusiastic sisterhood as the vergeress of St. Lawrence and the guardian of the old cemetery, and by a mighty effort she prevailed over the workmen so far as to lead her charges out through the corridor where the literal conscience of the brothers Kuhn has wrought in the roof to an exact image of a tournament as it was in Nuremberg four hundred years ago. In this relief, thronged with men and horses, the gala-life of the past survives in unexampled fulness; and March blamed himself after enjoying it for having felt in it that toy-figure quality which seems the final effect of the German gothicism in sculpture.

XLVI.

On Sunday Mrs. March partially conformed to an earlier New England ideal of the day by ceasing from sight-seeing. She could not have understood the sermon if she had gone to church, but she appeased the lingering conscience she had on this point by not going out till afternoon. Then she found nothing of the gayety which Sunday afternoon wears in Catholic lands. The people were resting from their week-day labors, but they were not playing; and the old churches, long since converted to Lutheran uses, were locked against tourist curiosity.

It was as it should be; it was as it would be at home; and yet in this ancient city, where the past was so much alive in the perpetual picturesqueness, the Marches felt an incongruity in it; and they were fain to escape from the Protestant silence and seriousness of the streets to the shade of the public garden they had involuntarily visited the evening of their arrival.

On a bench sat a quiet, rather dejected man, whom March asked some question of their way. He answered in English, and in the parley that followed they discovered that they were all Americans. The stranger proved to be an American of the sort commonest in Germany, and he said he had returned to his native country to get rid of the ague which he had taken on Staten Island. He had been seventeen years in New York, and now a talk of Tammany and its chances in the next election, of pulls and deals, of bosses and heelers, grew up between the civic step-brothers, and joined them is a common interest. The German-American said he was bookkeeper in some glass-works which had been closed by our tariff, and he confessed that he did not mean to return to us, though he spoke of German affairs with the impartiality of an outsider. He said that the Socialist party was increasing faster than any other, and that this tacitly meant the suppression of rank and the abolition of monarchy. He warned March against the appearance of industrial prosperity in Germany; beggary was severely repressed, and if poverty was better clad than with us, it was as hungry and as hopeless in Nuremberg as

in New York. The working classes were kindly and peaceable; they only knifed each other quietly on Sunday evenings after having too much beer.



Page 74

Presently the stranger rose and bowed to the Marches for good-by; and as he walked down the aisle of trees in which they had been fitting together, he seemed to be retreating farther and farther from such Americanism as they had in common. He had reverted to an entirely German effect of dress and figure; his walk was slow and Teutonic; he must be a type of thousands who have returned to the fatherland without wishing to own themselves its children again, and yet out of heart with the only country left them.

“He was rather pathetic, my dear,” said March, in the discomfort he knew his wife must be feeling as well as himself. “How odd to have the lid lifted here, and see the same old problems seething and bubbling in the witch’s caldron we call civilization as we left simmering away at home! And how hard to have our tariff reach out and snatch the bread from the mouths of those poor glass-workers!”

“I thought that was hard,” she sighed. “It must have been his bread, too.”

“Let’s hope it was not his cake, anyway. I suppose,” he added, dreamily, “that what we used to like in Italy was the absence of all the modern activities. The Italians didn’t repel us by assuming to be of our epoch in the presence of their monuments; they knew how to behave as pensive memories. I wonder if they’re still as charming.”

“Oh, no,” she returned, “nothing is as charming as it used to be. And now we need the charm more than ever.”

He laughed at her despair, in the tacit understanding they had lived into that only one of them was to be desperate at a time, and that they were to take turns in cheering each other up. “Well, perhaps we don’t deserve it. And I’m not sure that we need it so much as we did when we were young. We’ve got tougher; we can stand the cold facts better now. They made me shiver once, but now they give me a sort of agreeable thrill. Besides, if, life kept up its pretty illusions, if it insisted upon being as charming as it used to be, how could we ever bear to die? We’ve got that to consider.” He yielded to the temptation of his paradox, but he did not fail altogether of the purpose with which he began, and they took the trolley back to their hotel cheerful in the intrepid fancy that they had confronted fate when they had only had the hardihood to face a phrase.

They agreed that now he ought really to find out something about the contemporary life of Nuremberg, and the next morning he went out before breakfast, and strolled through some of the simpler streets, in the hope of intimate impressions. The peasant women, serving portions of milk from house to house out of the cans in the little wagons which they drew themselves, were a touch of pleasing domestic comedy; a certain effect of tragedy imparted itself from the lamentations of the sucking-pigs jolted over the pavements in handcarts; a certain majesty from the long procession of yellow mail-wagons, with drivers in the royal Bavarian blue,

Page 75

trooping by in the cold small rain, impassibly dripping from their glazed hat-brims upon their uniforms. But he could not feel that these things were any of them very poignantly significant; and he covered his retreat from the actualities of Nuremberg by visiting the chief book-store and buying more photographs of the architecture than he wanted, and more local histories than he should ever read. He made a last effort for the contemporaneous life by asking the English-speaking clerk if there were any literary men of distinction living in Nuremberg, and the clerk said there was not one.

He went home to breakfast wondering if he should be able to make his meagre facts serve with his wife; but he found her far from any wish to listen to them. She was intent upon a pair of young lovers, at a table near her own, who were so absorbed in each other that they were proof against an interest that must otherwise have pierced them through. The bridegroom, as he would have called himself, was a pretty little Bavarian lieutenant, very dark and regular, and the bride was as pretty and as little, but delicately blond. Nature had admirably mated them, and if art had helped to bring them together through the genius of the bride's mother, who was breakfasting with them, it had wrought almost as fitly. Mrs. March queried impartially who they were, where they met, and how, and just when they were going to be married; and March consented, in his personal immunity from their romance, to let it go on under his eyes without protest. But later, when they met the lovers in the street, walking arm in arm, with the bride's mother behind them gloating upon their bliss, he said the woman ought, at her time of life, to be ashamed of such folly. She must know that this affair, by nine chances out of ten, could not fail to eventuate at the best in a marriage as tiresome as most other marriages, and yet she was abandoning herself with those ignorant young people to the illusion that it was the finest and sweetest thing in life.

"Well, isn't it?" his wife asked.

"Yes, that's the worst of it. It shows how poverty-stricken life really is. We want somehow to believe that each pair of lovers will find the good we have missed, and be as happy as we expected to be."

"I think we have been happy enough, and that we've had as much good as was wholesome for us," she returned, hurt.

"You're always so concrete! I meant us in the abstract. But if you will be personal, I'll say that you've been as happy as you deserve, and got more good than you had any right to."

She laughed with him, and then they laughed again to perceive that they were walking arm in arm too, like the lovers, whom they were insensibly following.

He proposed that while they were in the mood they should go again to the old cemetery, and see the hinged jaw of the murdered Paumgartner, wagging in eternal accusation of his murderess. "It's rather hard on her, that he should be having the last word, that way," he said. "She was a woman, no matter what mistakes she had committed."



Page 76

“That’s what I call ‘banale’,” said Mrs. March.

“It is, rather,” he confessed. “It makes me feel as if I must go to see the house of Durer, after all.”

“Well, I knew we should have to, sooner or later.”

It was the thing that they had said would not do, in Nuremberg, because everybody did it; but now they hailed a fiacre, and ordered it driven to Durer’s house, which they found in a remote part of the town near a stretch of the city wall, varied in its picturesqueness by the interposition of a dripping grove; it was raining again by the time they reached it. The quarter had lapsed from earlier dignity, and without being squalid, it looked worn and hard worked; otherwise it could hardly have been different in Durer’s time. His dwelling, in no way impressive outside, amidst the environing quaintness, stood at the corner of a narrow side-hill street that sloped cityward; and within it was stripped bare of all the furniture of life below-stairs, and above was none the cozier for the stiff appointment of a show-house. It was cavernous and cold; but if there had been a fire in the kitchen, and a table laid in the dining-room, and beds equipped for nightmare, after the German fashion, in the empty chambers, one could have imagined a kindly, simple, neighborly existence there. It in no wise suggested the calling of an artist, perhaps because artists had not begun in Durer’s time to take themselves so objectively as they do now, but it implied the life of a prosperous citizen, and it expressed the period.

The Marches wrote their names in the visitors’ book, and paid the visitor’s fee, which also bought them tickets in an annual lottery for a reproduction of one of Durer’s pictures; and then they came away, by no means dissatisfied with his house. By its association with his sojourns in Italy it recalled visits to other shrines, and they had to own that it was really no worse than Ariosto’s house at Ferrara, or Petrarch’s at Arqua, or Michelangelo’s at Florence. “But what I admire,” he said, “is our futility in going to see it. We expected to surprise some quality of the man left lying about in the house because he lived and died in it; and because his wife kept him up so close there, and worked him so hard to save his widow from coming to want.”

“Who said she did that?”

“A friend of his who hated her. But he had to allow that she was a God-fearing woman, and had a New England conscience.”

“Well, I dare say Durer was easy-going.”

“Yes; but I don’t like her laying her plans to survive him; though women always do that.”

They were going away the next day, and they sat down that evening to a final supper in such good-humor with themselves that they were willing to include a young couple who

came to take places at their table, though they would rather have been alone. They lifted their eyes for their expected salutation, and recognized Mr. and Mrs. Leffers, of the Norumbia.



Page 77

The ladies fell upon each other as if they had been mother and daughter; March and the young man shook hands, in the feeling of passengers mutually endeared by the memories of a pleasant voyage. They arrived at the fact that Mr. Leffers had received letters in England from his partners which allowed him to prolong his wedding journey in a tour of the continent, while their wives were still exclaiming at their encounter in the same hotel at Nuremberg; and then they all sat down to have, as the bride said, a real Norumbia time.

She was one of those young wives who talk always with their eyes submissively on their husbands, no matter whom they are speaking to; but she was already unconsciously ruling him in her abeyance. No doubt she was ruling him for his good; she had a livelier, mind than he, and she knew more, as the American wives of young American business men always do, and she was planning wisely for their travels. She recognized her merit in this devotion with an artless candor, which was typical rather than personal. March was glad to go out with Leffers for a little stroll, and to leave Mrs. March to listen to Mrs. Leffers, who did not let them go without making her husband promise to wrap up well, and not get his feet wet. She made March promise not to take him far, and to bring him back early, which he found himself very willing to do, after an exchange of ideas with Mr. Leffers. The young man began to talk about his wife, in her providential, her almost miraculous adaptation to the sort of man he was, and when he had once begun to explain what sort of man he was, there was no end to it, till they rejoined the ladies in the reading-room.

XLVII.

The young couple came to the station to see the Marches off after dinner the next day; and the wife left a bank of flowers on the seat beside Mrs. March, who said, as soon as they were gone, "I believe I would rather meet people of our own age after this. I used to think that you could keep young by being with young people; but I don't, now. There world is very different from ours. Our world doesn't really exist any more, but as long as we keep away from theirs we needn't realize it. Young people," she went on, "are more practical-minded than we used to be; they're quite as sentimental; but I don't think they care so much for the higher things. They're not so much brought up on poetry as we were," she pursued. "That little Mrs. Leffers would have read Longfellow in our time; but now she didn't know of his poem on Nuremberg; she was intelligent enough about the place, but you could see that its quaintness was not so precious as it was to us; not so sacred." Her tone entreated him to find more meaning in her words than she had put into them. "They couldn't have felt as we did about that old ivied wall and that grassy, flowery moat under it; and the beautiful Damenthor and that pile-up of the roofs from the Burg; and those winding streets with their Gothic facades all, cobwebbed with trolley wires; and that yellow, aguish-looking river drowsing through the town under the windows of those overhanging houses; and the market-place, and the squares before the churches, with their queer shops in the nooks and corners round them!"



Page 78

"I see what you mean. But do you think it's as sacred to us as it would have been twenty-five years ago? I had an irreverent feeling now and then that Nuremberg was overdoing Nuremberg."

"Oh, yes; so had I. We're that modern, if we're not so young as we were."

"We were very simple, in those days."

"Well, if we were simple, we knew it!"

"Yes; we used to like taking our unconsciousness to pieces and looking at it."

"We had a good time."

"Too good. Sometimes it seems as if it would have lasted longer if it had not been so good. We might have our cake now if we hadn't eaten it."

"It would be mouldy, though."

"I wonder," he said, recurring to the Lefferses; "how we really struck them."

"Well, I don't believe they thought we ought to be travelling about alone, quite, at our age."

"Oh, not so bad as that!" After a moment he said, "I dare say they don't go round quarrelling on their wedding journey, as we did."

"Indeed they do! They had an awful quarrel just before they got to Nuremberg: about his wanting to send some of the baggage to Liverpool by express that she wanted to keep with them. But she said it had been a lesson, and they were never going to quarrel again." The elders looked at each other in the light of experience, and laughed. "Well," she ended, "that's one thing we're through with. I suppose we've come to feel more alike than we used to."

"Or not to feel at all. How did they settle it about the baggage?"

"Oh! He insisted on her keeping it with her." March laughed again, but this time he laughed alone, and after a while she said: "Well, they gave just the right relief to Nuremberg, with their good, clean American philistinism. I don't mind their thinking us queer; they must have thought Nuremberg was queer."

"Yes. We oldsters are always queer to the young. We're either ridiculously lively and chirpy, or we're ridiculously stiff and grim; they never expect to be like us, and wouldn't, for the world. The worst of it is, we elderly people are absurd to one another; we don't,



at the bottom of our hearts, believe we're like that, when we meet. I suppose that arrogant old ass of a Triscoe looks upon me as a grinning dotard."

"I wonder," said Mrs. March, "if she's told him yet," and March perceived that she was now suddenly far from the mood of philosophic introspection; but he had no difficulty in following her.

"She's had time enough. But it was an awkward task Burnamy left to her."

"Yes, when I think of that, I can hardly forgive him for coming back in that way. I know she is dead in love with him; but she could only have accepted him conditionally."

"Conditionally to his making it all right with Stoller?"

"Stoller? No! To her father's liking it."

"Ah, that's quite as hard. What makes you think she accepted him at all?"



Page 79

“What do you think she was crying about?”

“Well, I have supposed that ladies occasionally shed tears of pity. If she accepted him conditionally she would have to tell her father about it.” Mrs. March gave him a glance of silent contempt, and he hastened to atone for his stupidity. “Perhaps she’s told him on the instalment plan. She may have begun by confessing that Burnamy had been in Carlsbad. Poor old fellow, I wish we were going to find him in Ansbach! He could make things very smooth for us.”

“Well, you needn’t flatter yourself that you’ll find him in Ansbach. I’m sure I don’t know where he is.”

“You might write to Miss Triscoe and ask.”

“I think I shall wait for Miss Triscoe to write to me,” she said, with dignity.

“Yes, she certainly owes you that much, after all your suffering for her. I’ve asked the banker in Nuremberg to forward our letters to the poste restante in Ansbach. Isn’t it good to see the crows again, after those ravens around Carlsbad?”

She joined him in looking at the mild autumnal landscape through the open window. The afternoon was fair and warm, and in the level fields bodies of soldiers were at work with picks and spades, getting the ground ready for the military manoeuvres; they disturbed among the stubble foraging parties of crows, which rose from time to time with cries of indignant protest. She said, with a smile for the crows, “Yes. And I’m thankful that I’ve got nothing on my conscience, whatever happens,” she added in dismissal of the subject of Burnamy.

“I’m thankful too, my dear. I’d much rather have things on my own. I’m more used to that, and I believe I feel less remorse than when you’re to blame.”

They might have been carried near this point by those telepathic influences which have as yet been so imperfectly studied. It was only that morning, after the lapse of a week since Burnamy’s furtive reappearance in Carlsbad, that Miss Triscoe spoke to her father about it, and she had at that moment a longing for support and counsel that might well have made its mystical appeal to Mrs. March.

She spoke at last because she could put it off no longer, rather than because the right time had come. She began as they sat at breakfast. “Papa, there is something that I have got to tell you. It is something that you ought to know; but I have put off telling you because—”

She hesitated for the reason, and “Well!” said her father, looking up at her from his second cup of coffee. “What is it?”



Then she answered, "Mr. Burnamy has been here."

"In Carlsbad? When was he here?"

"The night of the Emperor's birthday. He came into the box when you were behind the scenes with Mr. March; afterwards I met him in the crowd."

"Well?"

"I thought you ought to know. Mrs. March said I ought to tell you."

"Did she say you ought to wait a week?" He gave way to an irascibility which he tried to check, and to ask with indifference, "Why did he come back?"



Page 80

“He was going to write about it for that paper in Paris.” The girl had the effect of gathering her courage up for a bold plunge. She looked steadily at her father, and added: “He said he came back because he couldn’t help it. He—wished to speak with me, He said he knew he had no right to suppose I cared anything about what had happened with him and Mr. Stoller. He wanted to come back and tell me—that.”

Her father waited for her to go on, but apparently she was going to leave the word to him, now. He hesitated to take it, but he asked at last with a mildness that seemed to surprise her, “Have you heard anything from him since?”

“No.”

“Where is he?”

“I don’t know. I told him I could not say what he wished; that I must tell you about it.”

The case was less simple than it would once have been for General Triscoe. There was still his affection for his daughter, his wish for her happiness, but this had always been subordinate to his sense of his own interest and comfort, and a question had recently arisen which put his paternal love and duty in a new light. He was no more explicit with himself than other men are, and the most which could ever be said of him without injustice was that in his dependence upon her he would rather have kept his daughter to himself if she could not have been very prosperously married. On the other hand, if he disliked the man for whom she now hardly hid her liking, he was not just then ready to go to extremes concerning him.

“He was very anxious,” she went on, “that you should know just how it was. He thinks everything of your judgment and—and—opinion.” The general made a consenting noise in his throat. “He said that he did not wish me to ‘whitewash’ him to you. He didn’t think he had done right; he didn’t excuse himself, or ask you to excuse him unless you could from the stand-point of a gentleman.”

The general made a less consenting noise in his throat, and asked, “How do you look at it, yourself, Agatha?”

“I don’t believe I quite understand it; but Mrs. March—”

“Oh, Mrs. March!” the general snorted.

“—says that Mr. March does not think so badly of it as Mr. Burnamy does.”

“I doubt it. At any rate, I understood March quite differently.”

“She says that he thinks he behaved very nobly afterwards when Mr. Stoller wanted him to help him put a false complexion on it; that it was all the more difficult for him to do

right then, because of his remorse for what he had done before.” As she spoke on she had become more eager.

“There’s something in that,” the general admitted, with a candor that he made the most of both to himself and to her. “But I should like to know what Stoller had to say of it all. Is there anything,” he inquired, “any reason why I need be more explicit about it, just now?”

“N—no. Only, I thought—He thinks so much of your opinion that—if—”



Page 81

“Oh, he can very well afford to wait. If he values my opinion so highly he can give me time to make up my mind.”

“Of course—”

“And I’m not responsible,” the general continued, significantly, “for the delay altogether. If you had told me this before—Now, I don’t know whether Stoller is still in town.”

He was not behaving openly with her; but she had not behaved openly with him. She owned that to herself, and she got what comfort she could from his making the affair a question of what Burnamy had done to Stoller rather than of what Burnamy had said to her, and what she had answered him. If she was not perfectly clear as to what she wanted to do, or wished to have happen, there was now time and place in which she could delay and make sure. The accepted theory of such matters is that people know their minds from the beginning, and that they do not change them. But experience seems to contradict this theory, or else people often act contrary to their convictions and impulses. If the statistics were accessible, it might be found that many potential engagements hovered in a doubtful air, and before they touched the earth in actual promise were dissipated by the play of meteorological chances.

When General Triscoe put down his napkin in rising he said that he would step round to Pupp’s and see if Stoller were still there. But on the way he stepped up to Mrs. Adding’s hotel on the hill, and he came back, after an interval which he seemed not to have found long, to report rather casually that Stoller had left Carlsbad the day before. By this time the fact seemed not to concern Agatha herself very vitally.

He asked if the Marches had left any address with her, and she answered that they had not. They were going to spend a few days in Nuremberg, and then push on to Holland for Mr. March’s after-cure. There was no relevance in his question unless it intimated his belief that she was in confidential correspondence with Mrs. March, and she met this by saying that she was going to write her in care of their bankers; she asked whether he wished to send any word.

“No. I understand,” he intimated, “that there is nothing at all in the nature of a—a—an understanding, then, with—”

“No, nothing.”

“Hm!” The general waited a moment. Then he ventured, “Do you care to say—do you wish me to know—how he took it?”

The tears came into the girl’s eyes, but she governed herself to say, “He—he was disappointed.”

“He had no right to be disappointed.”



It was a question, and she answered: “He thought he had. He said—that he wouldn’t—trouble me any more.”

The general did not ask at once, “And you don’t know where he is now—you haven’t heard anything from him since?”

Agatha flashed through her tears, “Papa!”

“Oh! I beg your pardon. I think you told me.”

PG EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS:



Page 82

Americans are hungrier for royalty than anybody else
Effort to get on common ground with an inferior
He buys my poverty and not my will
Honest selfishness
Intrepid fancy that they had confronted fate
Less intrusive than if he had not been there
Monologue to which the wives of absent-minded men resign
Only one of them was to be desperate at a time
Reconciliation with death which nature brings to life at last
Voting-cattle whom they bought and sold
We don't seem so much our own property
We get too much into the hands of other people