Title: Literary Love-Letters and Other Stories

Author: Robert Herrick

Release date: May 1, 2005 [EBook #8113]
Most recently updated: October 19, 2012

Language: English

Produced by Eric Eldred, Charles Bidwell, Charles Franks

and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team.

LITERARY LOVE-LETTERS

AND OTHER STORIES

by

ROBERT HERRICK

TO

G. H. P.

LITERARY LOVE-LETTERS:

A MODERN ACCOUNT

NO. I. INTRODUCTORY AND EXPLANATORY.

(*Eastlake has renewed an episode of his past life. The formalities have been satisfied at a chance meeting, and he continues.*)

... So your carnations lie over there, a bit beyond this page, in a confusion of manuscripts. Sweet source of this idle letter and gentle memento of the house on Grant Street and of you! I fancy I catch their odor before it escapes generously into the vague darkness beyond my window. They whisper: "Be tender, be frank; recall to her mind what is precious in the past. For departed delights are rosy with deceitful hopes, and a woman's heart becomes heavy with living. We are the woman you once knew, but we are much more. We have learned new secrets, new emotions, new ambitions, in love—we are fuller than before." So—for to-morrow they will be shrivelled and lifeless—I take up their message to-night.

I see you now as this afternoon at the Goodriches', when you came in triumphantly to essay that hot room of empty, passive folk. Someone was singing somewhere, and we were staring at one another. There you stood at the door, placing us; the roses, scattered in plutocratic profusion, had drooped their heads to our hot faces. We turned from the music to *you*. You knew it, and you were glad of it. You knew that they were busy about you, that you and your amiable hostess made an effective group at the head of the room. You scented their possible disapproval with zest, for you had so often mocked their good-will with impunity that you were serenely confident of getting what you wanted. Did you want a lover? Not that I mean to offer myself in flesh and blood: God forbid that I should join the imploring procession, even at a respectful distance! My pen is at your service. I prefer to be your historian, your literary maid—half slave, half confidant; for then you will always welcome me. If I were a lover, I might some day be inopportune. That would not be pleasant.

Yes, they were chattering about you, especially around the table where some solid ladies of Chicago served iced drinks. I was sipping it all in with the punch, and looking at the pinks above the dark hair, and wondering if you found having your own way as good fun as when you were eighteen. You have gained, my dear lady, while I have been knocking about the world. You are now more than "sweet": you are almost handsome. I suppose it is a question of lights and the time of day whether or not you are really brilliant. And you carry surety in your face. There is nothing in Chicago to startle you, perhaps not in the world.

She at the punch remarked, casually, to her of the sherbet: "I wonder when Miss Armstrong will settle matters with Lane? It is the best she can do now, though he isn't as well worth while as the men she threw over." And her neighbor replied: "She might do worse than Lane. She could get more from him than the showy ones." So Lane is the name of the day. They have gauged you and put you down at Lane. I took an ice and waited—but you will have to supply the details.

Meantime, you sailed on, with that same everlasting enthusiasm upon your face that I knew six years ago, until you spied me. How extremely natural you made your greeting! I confess I believed that I had lived for that smile six years, and suffered a bad noise for the sound of your voice. It seemed but a minute until we found ourselves almost alone with the solid women at the ices. One swift phrase from you, and we had slipped back through the meaningless years till we stood *there* in the parlor at Grant Street, mere boy and girl. The babbling room vanished for a few golden moments. Then you rustled off, and I believe I told Mrs. Goodrich that musicales were very nice, for they gave you a chance to talk. And I went to the dressing-room, wondering what rare chance had brought me again within the bondage of that voice.

Then, then, dear pinks, you came sailing over the stairs, peeping out from that bunch of lace. I loitered and spoke. Were the eyes green, or blue, or gray; ambition, or love, or indifference to the world? I was at my old puzzle again, while you unfastened the pinks, and, before the butler, who acquiesced at your frivolity in impertinent silence, you held them out to me. Only you know the preciousness of unsought-for favors. "Write me," you said; and I write.

What should man write about to you but of love and yourself? My pen, I see, has not lost its personal gait in running over the mill books. Perhaps it politely anticipates what is expected! So much the better, say, for you expect what all men give—love and devotion. You would not know a man who could not love you. Your little world is a circle of possibilities. Let me explain. Each lover is a possible conception of life placed at a slightly different angle from his predecessor or successor. Within this circle you have turned and turned, until your head is a bit weary. But I stand outside and observe the whirligig. Shall I be drawn in? No, for I should become only a conventional interest. "If the salt," etc. I remember you once taught in a mission school.

The flowers will tell me no more! Next time give me a rose—a huge, hybrid, opulent rose, the product of a dozen forcing processes—and I will love you a new way. As the flowers say good-by, I will say

goodnight. Shall I burn them? No, for they would smoulder. And if I left them here alone, to-morrow they would be wan. There! I have thrown them out wide into that gulf of a street twelve stories below. They will flutter down in the smoky darkness, and fall, like a message from the land of the lotus-eaters, upon a prosy wayfarer. And safe in my heart there lives that gracious picture of my lady as she stands above me and gives them to me. That is eternal: you and the pinks are but phantoms. Farewell!

NO. II. ACQUIESCENT AND ENCOURAGING.

(*Miss Armstrong replies on a dull blue, canvas-textured page, over which her stub-pen wanders in fashionable negligence. She arrives on the third page at the matter in hand.*)

Ah, it was very sweet, your literary love-letter. Considerable style, as you would say, but too palpably artificial. If you want to deceive this woman, my dear sir trifler, you must disguise your mockery more artfully.

Why didn't I find you at the Stanwoods'? I had Nettie send you a card. I had promised you to a dozen delightful women, "our choicest lot," who were all agog to see my supercilious and dainty sir.... Why will you always play with things? Perhaps you will say because I am not worth serious moments. You play with everything, I believe, and that is banal. Ever sincerely,

EDITH ARMSTRONG.

NO. III. EXPLANATORY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHIC.

(*Eastlake has the masculine fondness for seeing himself in the right.*)

I turned the Stanwoods' card down, and for your sake, or rather for the sake of your memory. I preferred to sit here and dream about you in the midst of my chimney-pots and the dull March mists rather than to run the risk of another, and perhaps fatal, impression. And so far as you are concerned your reproach is just. Do I "play with everything"? Perhaps I am afraid that it might play with me. Imagine frolicking with tigers, who might take you seriously some day, as a tidbit for afternoon tea—if you should confess that you were serious! That's the way I think of the world, or, rather, your part of it. Surely, it is a magnificent game, whose rules we learn completely just as our blood runs too slowly for active exercise. I like to break off a piece of its cake (or its rank cheese at times) and lug it away with me to my den up here for further examination. I think about it, I dream over it; yes, in a reflective fashion, I *feel*. It is a charming, experimental way of living.

Then, after the echo becomes faint and lifeless, or, if you prefer, the cheese too musty, I sally out once more to refresh my larder. You play also in your way, but not so intelligently (pardon me), for you deceive yourself from day to day that your particular object, your temporary mood, is the one eternal thing in life. After all, you have mastered but one trick—the trick of being loved. With that trick you expect to take the world; but, alas! you capture only an old man's purse or a young man's passion.

Artificial, my letters—yes, if you wish. I should say, not crude—matured, considered. I discuss the love you long to experience. I dangle it before your eyes as a bit of the drapery that goes to the ball of life. But when dawn almost comes and the ball is over, you mustn't expect the paper roses to smell. This mystifies you a little, for you are a plain, downright siren. Your lovers' songs have been in simple measures. Well, the moral is this: take my love-letters as real (in their way) as the play, or rather, the opera; infinitely true for the moment, unreal for the hour, eternal as the dead passions of the ages. Further, it is better to feel the aromatic attributes of love than the dangerous or unlovely reality. You can flirt with number nine or marry number ten, but I shall be stored away in your drawer for a life.

You have carried me far afield, away from men and things. So, for a moment, I have stopped to listen to the hum of this chaotic city as it rises from Dearborn and State in the full blast of a commercial noon. You wonder why an unprofitable person like myself lives here, and not in an up-town club with my fellows. Ah, my dear lady, I wish to see the game always going on in its liveliest fashion. So I have made a den for myself, not under the eaves of a hotel, but on the roof, among the ventilators. Here I can see the clouds of steam and the perpetual pall of smoke below me. I can revel in gorgeous sunsets when the fiery light threads the smoke and the mists and the sodden clouds eastward over the lake. And at night I take my steamer chair to the battlements and peer over into a sea of lights below. As I sit writing to you, outside go the click and rattle of the elevator gates and other distant noises of humanity. My echo comes directly enough, but it does not deafen me. Below there exists my barber, and farther down that black pit of an elevator lies lunch, or a cigar, or a possible cocktail, if the mental combination should

prove unpleasant. Across the hall is Aladdin's lamp, otherwise my banker; and above all is Haroun al Raschid. Am I not wise? In the morning, if it is fair, I take a walk among the bulkheads on the roof, and watch the blue deception of the lake. Perhaps, if the wind comes booming in, I hear the awakening roar in the streets and think of work. Perhaps the clear emptiness of a Sunday hovers over the shore; then I wonder what you will say to this letter. Will you feel with me that you should live on a housetop and eat cheese? Do you long for a cool stream without flies, and a carpet of golden sand? Do you want a coal fire and a husband home at six-thirty, or a third-class ticket to the realms of nonsense? Are you thinking of Lane's income, or Smith's cleverness, or the ennui of too many dinners?

I know: you are thinking of love while you read this, and are happy. If I might send you a new sensation in every line, I should be happy, too, for your prodigal nature demands novelty. I should then be master for a moment. And love is mastery and submission, the two poles of a strong magnet. Adieu.

NO. IV. FURTHER AUTOBIOGRAPHIC.

(*Eastlake continues apropos of a chance meeting*.)

So you rather like the curious flavor of this new dish, but it puzzles you. You ask for facts? What a stamp Chicago has put on your soul! You will continue to regard as facts the feeble fancies that God has allowed to petrify. I warn you that facts kill, but you shall have them. I had meditated a delightful sheet of love that has been disdainfully shoved into the waste-basket. A grave moral there for you, my lady!

Do you remember when I was very young and *gauche*? Doubtless, for women never forget first impressions of that sort. You dressed very badly, and were quite ceremonious. I was the bantling son of one of your father's provincial correspondents, to adopt the suave term of the foreigners. I had been sent to Chicago to fit for a technical school, where I was to learn to be very clever about mill machinery. Perhaps you remember my father—a sweet-natured, wiry, active man, incapable of conceiving an interest in life that was divorced from respectability. I think he had some imagination, for now and then he was troubled about my becoming a loafer. However, he certainly kept it in control: I was to become a great mill owner.

It was all luck at first: you were luck, and the Tech. was luck. Then I found my voice and saw my problem: to cross my father's aspirations, to be other than the Wabash mill owner, would have been cruel. You see his desires were more passionate than mine. I worried through the mechanical, deadening routine of the Tech. somehow, and finally got courage enough to tell him that I could not accept Wabash quite yet. I had the audacity to propose two years abroad. We compromised on one, but I understood that I must not finally disappoint him. He cared so much that it would have been wicked. A few people in this world have positive and masterful convictions. An explosion or insanity comes if their wills smoulder in ineffectual silence. Most of us have no more than inclinations. It seems wise and best that those of mere inclinations should waive their prejudices in favor of those who feel intensely. So much for the great questions of individuality and personality that set the modern world a-shrieking. This is a commonplace solution of the great family problem Turgénieff propounded in "Fathers and Sons." Perchance you have heard of Turgénieff?

So I prepared to follow my father's will, for I loved him exceedingly. His life had not been happy, and his nature, as I have said, was a more exacting one than mine. The price of submission, however, was not plain to me until I was launched that year in Paris in a strange, cosmopolitan world. I was supposed to attend courses at the École Polytechnique, but I became mad with the longings that are wafted about Europe from capital to capital. I went to Italy—to Venice and Florence and Rome—to Athens and Constantinople and Vienna. In a word, I unfitted myself for Wabash as completely as I could, and troubled my spirit with vain attempts after art and feeling.

You women do not know the intoxication of five-and-twenty—a few hundred francs in one's pockets, the centuries behind, creation ahead. You do not know what it is to hunger after the power of understanding and the power of expression; to see the world as divine one minute and a mechanic hell the next; to feel the convictions of the vagabond; to grudge each sunbeam that falls unseen by you on some mouldering gate in some neglected city, each face of the living wherein possible life looks out untried by you, each picture that means a new curiosity. No, for, after all, you are material souls; you need a Bradshaw and a Baedeker, even in the land of dreams. All men, I like to think, for one short breath in their lives, believe this narrow world to be shoreless. They feel that they should die in discontent if they could not experience, test, this wonderful conglomerate of existence. It is an old, old matter I am writing you about. We have classified it nicely, these days; we call it the "romantic spirit," and we say that it is made three parts of youth and two of discontent—a perpetual expression of the world's pessimism.

I look back, and I think that I have done you wrong. Women like you have something nearly akin to this mood. Some time in your lives you would all be romantic lovers. The commonest of you anticipate a masculine soul that shall harmonize your discontent into happiness. Most of you are not very nice about it; you make your hero out of the most obvious man. Yet it is pathetic, that longing for something beyond yourselves. That passionate desire for a complete illusion in love is the one permanent note you women have attained in literature. In your heart of hearts you would all (until you become stiff in the arms of an unlovely life) follow a cabman, if he could make the world dance for you in this joyous fashion. Some are hard to satisfy—for example, you, my lady—and you go your restless, brilliant little way, flirting with this man, coquetting with that, examining a third, until your heart grows weary or until you are at peace. You may marry for money or for love, and in twenty years you will teach your daughters that love doesn't pay at less than ten thousand a year. But you don't expect them to believe you, and they don't.

I am not sneering at you. I would not have it otherwise, for the world would be one half cheaper if women like you did not follow the perpetual instinct. True, civilization tends to curb this romantic desire, but when civilization runs against a passionate nature we have a tragedy. The world is sweeter, deeper, for that. Live and love, if you can, and give the lie to facts. Be restless, be insatiable, be wicked, but believe that your body and soul were meant for more than food and raiment; that somewhere, somehow, some day, you will meet the dream made real, and that *he* will unlock the secrets of this life.

It is late. I am tired. The noises of the city begin, far down in the darkness. This carries love.

NO. V. AROUSED.

(*Miss Armstrong protests and invites.*)

It is real, real, *real*. If I can say so, after going on all these years with but one idea (according to my good friends) of settling myself comfortably in some large home, shouldn't you believe it? You have lived more interestingly than I, and you are not dependent, as most of us are. You really mock me through it all. You think I am worthy of only a kind of candy that you carry about for agreeable children, which you call love. To me, sir, it reads like an insult—your message of love tucked in concisely at the close.

No, keep to facts, for they are your *metier*. You make them interesting. Tell me more about your idle, contemplative self. And let me see you to-morrow at the Thorntons'. Leave your sombre eyes at home, and don't expect infinities in tea-gabble. I saw you at the opera last night. For some moments, while Melba was singing, I wanted you and your confectioner's love. That Melba might always sing, and the tide always flood the marshes! On the whole, I like candy. Send me a page of it.

E. A.

NO. VI. AUTOBIOGRAPHIC.

(*Eastlake, disregarding her comments, continues.*)

Dear lady, did you ever read some stately bit of prose, which caught in its glamour of splendid words the vital, throbbing world of affairs and passions, some crystallization of a rich experience, and then by chance turn to the "newsy" column of an American newspaper? (Forsooth, these must be literary letters!) Well, that tells the sensations of going from Europe to Wabash. I had caught the sound of the greater harmony, or struggle, and I must accept the squeak of the melodeon. I did not think highly of myself; had started too far back in the race, and I knew that laborious years of intense zeal would place me only third class, or even lower, in any pursuit of the arts. Perhaps if I had felt that I could have made a good third class, I should have fought it out in Europe. There are some things man cannot accomplish, however, our optimistic national creed to the contrary. And there would have been something low in disappointing my father for such ignoble results, such imperfect satisfaction.

So to Wabash I went. I resolved to adapt myself to the billiards and whiskey of the Commercial Club, and to the desk in the inner office behind the glass partitions. And I like to think that I satisfied my father those two years in the mills. After a time I achieved a lazy content. At first I tried to deceive myself; to think that the newsy column of Wabash was as significant as the grand page of London or Paris. That simple yarn didn't satisfy me many months.

Then my father died. I hung on at the mills for a time, until the strikes and the general depression gave me valid reasons for withdrawing. To skip details, I sold out my interests, and with my little

capital came to Chicago. My income, still dependent in some part upon those Wabash mills, trembles back and forth in unstable equilibrium.

Chicago was too much like Wabash just then. I went to Florence to join a man, half German Jew, half American, wholly cosmopolite, whom I had known in Paris. His life was very thin: it consisted wholly of interests—a tenuous sort of existence. I can thank him for two things: that I did not remain forever in Italy, trying to say something new, and that I began a definite task. I should send you my book (now that it is out and people are talking about it), but it would bore you, and you would feel that you must chatter about it. It is a good piece of journeyman work. I gathered enough notes for another volume, and then I grew restless. Business called me home for a few months, so I came back to Chicago. Of all places! you say. Yes, to Chicago, to see this brutal whirlpool as it spins and spins. It has fascinated me, I admit, and I stay on—to live up among the chimneys, hanging out over the cornice of a twelve-story building; to soak myself in the steam and smoke of the prairie and in the noises of a city's commerce.

Am I content? Yes, when I am writing to you; or when the pile of manuscripts at my side grows painfully page by page; or when, peering out of the fort-like embrasure, I can see the sun drenched in smoke and mist and the "sky-scrapers" gleam like the walls of a Colorado canon. I have enough to buy me existence, and at thirty I still find peepholes into hopes.

Are these enough facts for you? Shall I send you an inventory of my room, of my days, of my mental furniture? Some long afternoon I will spirit you up here in that little steel cage, and you shall peer out of my window, tapping your restless feet, while you sniff at the squalor below. You will move softly about, questioning the watercolors, the bits of bric-à-brac, the dusty manuscripts, the dull red hangings, not quite understanding the fox in his hole. You will gratefully catch the sounds from the mound below our feet, and when you say good-by and drop swiftly down those long stories you will gasp a little sigh of relief. You will pull down your veil and drive off to an afternoon tea, feeling that things as they are are very nice, and that a little Chicago mud is worth all the clay of the studios. And I? I shall take the roses out of the vase and throw them away. I shall say, "Enough!" But somehow you will have left a suggestion of love about the place. I shall fancy that I still hear your voice, which will be so far away dealing out banalities. I shall treasure the words you let wander heedlessly out of the window. I shall open my book and write, "To-day she came—*beatissima hora*."

NO. VII. OF THE NATURE OF A CONFESSION.

(*Miss Armstrong is nearing the close of her fifth season. Prospect and retrospect are equally uninviting. She wills to escape.*)

I shall probably be thinking about the rents in your block, and wondering if the family had best put up a sky-scraper, instead of doing all the pretty little things you mention in your letter. At five-and-twenty one becomes practical, if one is a woman whose father has left barely enough to go around among two women who like luxury, and two greedy boys at college with expensive "careers" ahead. This letter finds me in the trough of the wave. I wonder if it's what you call "the ennui of many dinners?" More likely it's because we can't keep our cottage at Sorrento. Well-a-day! it's gray this morning, and I will write off a fit of the blues.

I think it's about time to marry number nine. It would relieve the family immensely. I suspect they think I have had my share of fun. Probably you will take this as an exquisite joke, but 'tis the truth, alas!

Last night I was at the Hoffmeyers' at dinner. It was slow. All such dinners are slow. The good Fraus don't know how to mix the sheep and the goats. For a passing moment they talked about you and about your book in a puzzled way. They think you so clever and so odd. But I know how hollow he is, and how thin his fame! I got some points on the new L from the Hoffmeyers and young Mr. Knowlton. That was interesting and exciting. We dealt in millions as if they were checkers. These practical men have a better grip on life than the cynics and dreamers like you. You call them plebeian and *bourgeois* and Philistine and limited—all the bad names in your select vocabulary. But they know how to feel in the good, old, common-sense way. You've lost that. I like plebeian earnestness and push. I like success at something, and hearty enjoyment, and good dinners, and big men who talk about a million as if it were a ten-spot in the game.

You see I am looking for number nine and my four horses. Then I mean to invite you to my country house, to have a lot of "fat" girls to meet you who will talk slang at you, and one of them shall marry you—one whose father is a great newspaper man. And your new papa will start you in the business of making public opinion. You will play with that, too, but, then, you will be coining money.

No, not here in Chicago, but if you had talked to me at Sorrento as you write me from your sanctum

on the roof, I might have listened and dreamed. The sea makes me believe and hope. I love it so! That's why I made mamma take a house near the lake—to be near a little piece of infinity. Yes, if you had paddled me out of the harbor at Sorrento, some fine night when the swell was rippling in, like the groaning of a sleepy beast, and the hills were a-hush on the shore, then we might have gone on to that place you are so fond of, "the land east of the sun, and west of the moon."

NO. VIII. BIOGRAPHIC AND JUDICIAL.

(*Eastlake replies analytically*.)

But don't marry him until we are clear on all matters. I haven't finished your case. And don't marry that foreign-looking cavalier you were riding with to-day in the park. You are too American ever to be at home over there. You would smash their fragile china, and you wouldn't understand. England might fit you, though, for England is something like that dark green, prairie park, with its regular, bushy trees against a Gainsborough sky. You live deeply in the fierce open air. The English like that. However, America must not lose you.

You it was, I am sure, who moved your family in that conventional pilgrimage of ambitious Chicagoans—west, south, north. Neither your father nor your mother would have stirred from sober little Grant Street had you not felt the pressing necessity for a career. Rumor got hold of you first on the South Side, and had it that you were experimenting with some small contractor. The explosion which followed reached me even in Vienna. Did you feel that you could go farther, or did you courageously run the risk of wrecking him then instead of wrecking yourself and him later? Oh well, he's comfortably married now, and all the pain you gave him was probably educative. You may look at his flaunting granite house on that broad boulevard, and think well of your courage.

Your father died. You moved northward to that modest house tucked in lovingly under the ample shelter of the millionnaires on the Lake Shore Drive. I fancy there has always been the gambler in your nerves; that you have sacrificed your principle to getting a rapid return on your money. And you have dominated your family: you sent your two brothers to Harvard, and filled them with ambitions akin to yours. Now you are impatient because the thin ice cracks a bit.

But I have great faith: you will mend matters by some shrewd deal with the manipulators at Hoffmeyer's, or by marrying number nine. You will do it honestly—I mean the marrying; for you will convince him that you love, so far as love is in you, and you will convince yourself that marriage, the end of it all, is unselfish, though prosaic. You will accept resignation with an occasional sigh, feeling that you have gone far, perhaps as far as you can go. I trust that solution will not come quickly, however, because I cannot regard it as a brilliant ending to your evolution. For you have kept yourself sweet and clean from fads, and mean pushing, and the vulgar machinery of society. You never forced your way or intrigued. You have talked and smiled and bewitched yourself straight to the point where you now are. You were eager and curious about pleasures, and the world has dealt liberally with you.

Were you perilously near the crisis when you wrote me? Did the reflective tone come because you were brought at last squarely to the mark, because you must decide what one of the possible conceptions of life you really want? Don't think, I pray you; go straight on to the inevitable solution, for when you become conscious you are lost.

Do you wonder that I love you, my hybrid rose; that I follow the heavy petals as they push themselves out into their final bloom; that I gather the aroma to comfort my heart in these lifeless pages? I follow you about in your devious path from tea to dinner or dance, or I wait at the opera or theatre to watch for a new light in your face, to see your world written in a smile. You are dark, and winning, and strong. You are pagan in your love of sensuous, full things. You are grateful to the biting air as it touches your cheek and sends the blood leaping in glad life. You love water and fire and wind, elemental things, and you love them with fervor and passion. All this to the world! Much more intimate to me, who can read the letters you scrawl for the impudent, careless world. For deep down in the core of that rose there lies a soul that permeates it all—a longing, restless soul, one moment revealing a heaven that the next is shut out in dark despair.

Yes, keep the cottage by the sea for one more dream. Perchance I shall find something stable, eternal, something better than discontent and striving; for the sea is great and makes peace.

NO. IX. CRITICISM.

(*Miss Armstrong vindicates herself by scorning.*)

You are a tissue of phrases. You feel only words. You love! What mockery to hear you handle the worn, old words! You have secluded yourself in careful isolation from the human world you seem to despise. You have no right to its passions and solaces. Incarnate selfishness, dear friend, I suspect you are. You would not permit the disturbance of a ripple in the contemplative lake of your life such as love and marriage might bring.

Pray what right may you have to stew me in a saucepan up on your roof, and to send me flavors of myself done up nicely into little packages labelled deceitfully "love"? It is lucky that this time you have come across a woman who has played the game before, and can meet you point by point. But I am too weary to argue with a man who carries two-edged words, flattery on one side and sneers on the reverse. Mark this one thing, nevertheless: if I should decide to sell myself advantageously next season I should be infinitely better than you,—for I am only a woman.

E. A.

NO. X. THE LIMITATION OF LIFE.

(*Eastlake summarizes, and intends to conclude.*)

My lady, my humor of to-day makes me take up the charges in your last letters; I will define, not defend, myself. You fall out with me because I am a dilettante (or many words to that one effect), and you abuse me because I deal in the form rather than the matter of love. Is that not just to you?

In short, I am not as your other admirers, and the variation in the species has lost the charm of novelty.

Believe me that I am honest to-day, at least; indeed, I think you will understand. Only the college boy who feeds on Oscar Wilde and sentimental pessimism has that disease of indifference with which you crudely charge me. It is a kind of chicken-pox, cousin-French to the evils of literary Paris. But I must not thank God too loudly, or you will think I am one with them at heart.

No, I am in earnest, in terrible earnest, about all this—I mean life and what to do with it. That is a great day when a man comes into his own, no matter how paltry the pittance may be the gods have given him—when he comes to know just how far he can go, and where lies his path of least resistance. That I know. I am tremendously sure of myself now, and, like your good business men, I go about my affairs and dispose of my life with its few energies in a cautious, economical way.

What is all this I make so much to-do about? Very little, I confess, but to me more serious than L's and sky-scrapers; yes, than love. Mine is an infinite labor: first to shape the true tool, and then to master the material! I grant you I may die any day like a rat on a housetop, with only a bundle of musty papers, the tags of broken conversations, and one or two dead, distorted nerves. That is our common risk. But I shall accomplish as much of the road as God permits the snail, and I shall have moulded something; life will have justified itself to me, or I to life. But that is not our problem to-day.

Why do I isolate myself? Because a few pursuits in life are great taskmasters and jealous ones. A wise man who had felt that truth wrote about it once. I must husband my devotions: love, except the idea of love, is not for me; pleasure, except the idea of pleasure, is too keen for me; energy, except the ideas energy creates, is beyond me. I am limited, definite, alone, without you.

I confess that two passions are greater than any man, the passion for God and the passion of a great love. They send a man hungry and naked into the street, and make his subterfuges with existence ridiculous. How rarely they come! How inadequate the man who is mistaken about them! We peer into the corners of life after them, but they elude us. There are days of splendid consciousness, and we think we have them—then——

No, it is foolish, *bête*, dear lady, to be deceived by a sentiment; better the comfortable activities of the world. They will suit you best; leave the other for the dream hidden in a glass of champagne.

But let me love you always. Let me fancy you, when I walk down these gleaming boulevards in the silent evenings, as you sit flashingly lovely by some soft lamplight, wrapped about in the cotton-wools of society. That will reconcile me to the roar of these noonday streets. The city exists for *you*.

NO. XI. UNSATISFIED.

(*Miss Armstrong wills to drift.*)

... Come to Sorrento....

NO. XII. THE ILLUSION.

(*Eastlake resumes some weeks later. He has put into Bar Harbor on a yachting trip. He sits writing late at night by the light of the binnacle lamp.*)

Sweet lady, a few hours ago we slipped in here past the dark shore of your village, in almost dead calm, just parting the heavy waters with our prow. It was the golden set of the summer afternoon: a thrush or two were already whistling clear vespers in he woods; all else was fruitfully calm.

And then, in the stillness of the ebb, we floated together, you and I,
round that little lighthouse into the sheltering gloom of the woods.
Then we drifted beyond it all, in serene solution of this world's fret!
To-morrows you may keep for another.

This night was richly mine. You brought your simple self, undisturbed by the people who expect of you, without your little airs of experience. I brought incense, words, devotion, and love. And I treasure now a few pure tones, some simple motions of your arm with the dripping paddle, a few pure feelings written on your face. That is all, but it is much. We got beyond necessity and the impertinent commonplace of Chicago. We had ourselves, and that was enough.

And to-night, as I lie here under the cool, complete heavens, with only a twinkling cottage light here and there in the bay to remind me of unrest, I see life afresh in the old, simple, eternal lines. These are *our* days of full consciousness.

Do you remember that clearing in the woods where the long weeds and grass were spotted with white stones—burial-place it was—their bright faces turned ever to the sunshine and the stars? They spoke of other lives than yours and mine. Forgotten little units in our disdainful world, we pass them scornfully by. Other lives, and perhaps better, do you think? For them the struggle never came which holds us in a fist of brass, and thrashes us up and down the pavement of life. Perhaps—can you not, at one great leap, fancy it?—two sincere souls could escape from this brass master, and live, unmindful of strife, for a little grave on a hillside in the end? They must be strong souls to renounce that cherished hope of triumph, to be content with the simple, antique things, just living and loving—the eternal and brave things; for, after all, what you and I burn for so restlessly is a makeshift ambition. We wish to go far, "to make the best of ourselves." Why not, once for all, rely upon God to make? Why not live and rejoice?

And the little graves are not bad: to lie long years within sound of this great-hearted ocean, with the peaceful, upturned stones bearing this full legend, "This one loved and lived...." Forgive me for making you sad. Perhaps you merely laugh at the intoxication your clear air has brought about. Well, dearest lady, the ships are striking their eight bells for midnight, the gayest cottages are going out, light by light, and somewhere in the still harbor I can hear a fisherman laboriously sweeping his boat away to the ocean. Away!—that is the word for us: I, in this boat southward, and ever away, searching in grim fashion for an accounting with Fate; you, in your intrepid loveliness, to other lives. And if I return some weeks hence, when I have satisfied the importunate business claims, what then? Shall we slip the cables and drift quietly out "to the land east of the sun and west of the moon"?

NO. XIII. SANITY.

(*Eastlake refuses Miss Armstrong's last invitation, continues, and concludes.*)

Last night was given to me for insight. You were brilliantly your best, and set in the meshes of gold and precious stones that the gods willed for you. There was not a false note, not an attribute wanting. Over your head were mellow, clear, electric lights that showed forth coldly your faultless suitability. From the exquisitely fit pearls about your neck to the scents of the wine and the flowers, all was as it should be. I watched your face warm with multifold impressions, your nostrils dilate with sensuousness, appreciation, your pagan head above the perfect bosom; about you the languid eyes of your well-fed neighbors.

The dusky recesses of the rooms, heavy with opulent comfort, stretched away from our long feast. There you could rest, effectually sheltered from the harsh noises of the world. And I rejoiced. Each minute I saw more clearly things as they are. I saw you giving the nicest dinners in Chicago, and scurrying through Europe, buying a dozen pictures here and there, building a great house, or perhaps, tired of Chicago, trying your luck in New York; but always pressing on, seizing this exasperating life, and tenaciously sucking out the rich enjoyments thereof! For the gold has entered your heart.

What splendid folly we played at Sorrento! If you had deceived yourself with a sentiment, how long would you have maintained the illusion? When would the morning have come for your restless eyes to stare out at the world in longing and the unuttered sorrow of regret? Ah, I touch you but with words! The cadence of a phrase warms your heart, and you fancy your emotion is supreme, inevitable. Nevertheless, you are a practical goddess: you can rise beyond the waves toward the glorious ether, but at night you sink back. 'Tis alluring, but—eternal?

Few of us can risk being romantic. The penalty is too dreadful. To be successful, we must maintain the key of our loveliest enthusiasm without stimulants. You need the stimulants. You imagined that you were tired, that rest could come in a lover's arms. Better the furs that are soft about your neck, for they never grow cold. Perchance the lover will come, also, as a prince with his princedom. It will be comfortable to have your cake and the frosting, too. If not, take the frosting; go glittering on with your pulses full of the joys, until you are old and fagged and the stupid world refuses to revolve. Remember my sure word that you were meant for dinners, for power and pleasure and excitement. Trust no will-o'-the-wisp that would lead you into the stony paths of romance.

Some days in the years to come I shall enter at your feasts and watch you in admiration and love. (For I shall always love you.) Then will stir in your heart a mislaid feeling of some joy untasted. But you will smile wisely, and marvel at my exact judgment. You will think of another world where words and emotions alone are alive, where it is always high tide, and you will be glad that you did not force the gates. For life is not always lyric. Farewell.

NO. XIV. THAT OTHER WORLD.

(*Miss Armstrong writes with a calm heart.*)

I have but a minute before I must go down to meet *him*. Then it will be settled. I can hear his voice now and mother's. I must be quick.

So you tested me and found me wanting in "inevitableness." I was too much clay, it seems, and "pagan." What a strange word that is! You mean I love to enjoy; and, perhaps you are right, that I need my little world. Who knows? One cannot read the whole story—even you, dear master—until we are dead. We can never tell whether I am only frivolous and sensuous, or merely a woman who takes the best substitute at hand for life. I do not protest, and I think I never shall. I, too, am very sure—*now*. You have pointed out the path and I shall follow it to the end.

But one must have other moments, not of regret, but of wonder. Did you have too little faith? Am I so cheap and weak? Before you read this it will all be over.... Now and then it seems I want only a dress for my back, a bit of food, rest, and your smile. But you have judged otherwise, and perhaps you are right. At any rate, I will think so. Only I know that the hours will come when I shall wish that I might lie among those little white gravestones above the beach.

CHICAGO, November, 1893.

A QUESTION OF ART

I

John Clayton had pretty nearly run the gamut of the fine arts. As a boy at college he had taken a dilettante interest in music, and having shown some power of sketching the summer girl he had determined to become an artist. His numerous friends had hoped such great things for him that he had been encouraged to spend the rest of his little patrimony in educating himself abroad. It took him nearly two years to find out what being an artist meant, and the next three in thinking what he wanted to do. In Paris and Munich and Rome, the wealth of the possible had dazzled him and confused his aims; he was so skilful and adaptable that in turn he had wooed almost all the arts, and had accomplished enough trivial things to raise very pretty expectations of his future powers. He had

enjoyed an uncertain glory among the crowd of American amateurs. When his purse had become empty he returned to America to realize on his prospects.

On his arrival he had elaborately equipped a studio in Boston, but as he found the atmosphere "too provincial" he removed to New York. There he was much courted at a certain class of afternoon teas. He was in full bloom of the "might do," but he had his suspicions that a fatally limited term of years would translate the tense into "might have done." He argued, however, that he had not yet found the right *milieu*; he was fond of that word—conveniently comprehensive of all things that might stimulate his will. He doubted if America ever could furnish him a suitable *milieu* for the expression of his artistic instincts. But in the meantime necessity for effort was becoming more urgent; he could not live at afternoon teas.

Clayton was related widely to interesting and even influential people.
One woman, a distant cousin, had taken upon herself his affairs.

"I will give you another chance," she said, in a business-like tone, after he had been languidly detailing his condition to her and indicating politely that he was coming to extremities. "Visit me this summer at Bar Harbor. You shall have the little lodge at the Point for a studio, and you can take your meals at the hotel near by. In that way you will be independent. Now, there are three ways, any one of which will lead you out of your difficulties, and if you don't find one that suits you before October, I shall leave you to your fate."

The young man appeared interested.

"You can model something—that's your line, isn't it?"

Clayton nodded meekly. He had resolved to become a sculptor during his last six months in Italy.

"And so put you on your feet, professionally." Clayton sighed. "Or you can find some rich patron or patroness who will send you over for a couple of years more until your *chef d' oeuvre* makes its appearance." Her pupil turned red, and began to murmur, but she kept on unperturbed. "Or, best of all, you can marry a girl with some money and then do what you like." At this Clayton rose abruptly.

"I haven't come to that," he growled.

"Don't be silly," she pursued. "You are really charming; good character; exquisite manners; pleasant habits; success with women. You needn't feel flattered, for this is your stock in trade. You are decidedly interesting, and lots of those girls who are brought there every year to get them in would be glad to make such an exchange. You know everybody, and you could give any girl a good standing in Boston or New York. Besides, there is your genius, which may develop. That will be thrown in to boot; it may bear interest."

Clayton, who had begun by feeling how disagreeable his situation was when it exposed him to this kind of hauling over, ended by bursting into a cordial laugh at the frank materialism with which his cousin presented his case. "Well," he exclaimed, "it's no go to talk to you about the claims and ideals of art, Cousin Della, but I will accept your offer, if only for the sake of modelling a bust of 'The Energetic Matron (American).'"

"Of course, I don't make much of ideals in art and all that," replied his cousin, "but I will put this through for you, as Harry says. You must promise me only one thing: no flirting with Harriet and Mary. Henry has been foolish and lost money, as you know, and I cannot have another beggar on my hands!"

II

By the end of July Clayton had found out two things definitely; he was standing in his little workshop, pulling at his mustache and looking sometimes at a half-completed sketch, and sometimes at the blue stretch of water below the cliff. The conclusions were that he certainly should not become interested in Harriet and Mary, and, secondly, that Mount Desert made him paint rather than model.

"It's no place," he muttered, "except for color and for a poet. A man would have to shut himself up in a cellar to escape those glorious hills and the bay, if he wanted to work at that putty." He cast a contemptuous glance at a rough bust of his Cousin Della, the only thing he had attempted. As a solution of his hopeless problem he picked up a pipe and was hunting for some tobacco, preparatory to a stroll up Newport, when someone sounded timidly at the show knocker of the front door.

"Is that you, Miss Marston?" Clayton remarked, in a disappointed tone, as a middle-aged woman

entered.

"The servants were all away," she replied, "and Della thought you might like some lunch to recuperate you from your labors." This was said a little maliciously, as she looked about and found nothing noteworthy going on.

"I was just thinking of knocking off for this morning and taking a walk. Won't you come? It's such glorious weather and no fog," he added, parenthetically, as if in justification of his idleness.

"Why do you happen to ask me?" Miss Marston exclaimed, impetuously. "You have hitherto never paid any more attention to my existence than if I had been Jane, the woman who usually brings your lunch." She gasped at her own boldness. This was not coquettishness, and was evidently unusual.

"Why! I really wish you would come," said the young man, helplessly.
"Then I'll have a chance to know you better."

"Well! I will." She seemed to have taken a desperate step. Miss Jane Marston, Della's sister-in-law, had always been the superfluous member of her family. Such unenviable tasks as amusing or teaching the younger children, sewing, or making up whist sets, had, as is usual with the odd members in a family, fallen to her share. All this Miss Marston hated in a slow, rebellious manner. From always having just too little money to live independently, she had been forced to accept invitations for long visits in uninteresting places. As a girl and a young woman, she had shown a delicate, retiring beauty that might have been made much of, and in spite of gray hair, thirty-five years, and a somewhat drawn look, arising from her discontent, one might discover sufficient traces of this fading beauty to idealize her. All this summer she had watched the wayward young artist with a keen interest in the fresh life he brought among her flat surroundings. His buoyancy cheered her habitual depression; his eagerness and love of life made her blood flow more quickly, out of sympathy; and his intellectual alertness bewildered and fascinated her. She was still shy at thirty-five, and really very timid and apologetic for her commonplaceness; but at times the rebellious bitterness at the bottom of her heart would leap forth in a brusque or bold speech. She was still capable of affording surprise.

"Won't I spoil the inspiration?" she ventured, after a long silence.

"Bother the inspiration!" groaned Clayton. "I wish I were a blacksmith, or a sailor, or something honest. I feel like a hypocrite. I have started out at a pace that I can't keep up!"

Miss Marston felt complimented by this apparent confidence. If she had had experience in that kind of nature, she would have understood how indifferent Clayton was to her personally. He would have made the same confession to the birds, if they had happened to produce the same irritation in his mind.

"They all say your work is so brilliant," she said, soothingly.

"Thunder!" he commented. "I wish they would not say anything kind and pleasant and cheap. At college they praised my verses, and the theatres stole my music for the Pudding play, and the girls giggled over my sketches. And now, at twenty-six, I don't know whether I want to fiddle, or to write an epic, or to model, or to paint. I am a victim of every artistic impulse."

"I know what you should do," she said, wisely, when they had reached a shady spot and were cooling themselves.

"Smoke?" queried Clayton, quizzically.

"You ought to marry!"

"That's every woman's great solution, great panacea," he replied, contemptuously.

"It would steady you and make you work."

"No," he replied, thoughtfully, "not unless she were poor, and in that case it would be from the frying-pan into the fire!"

"You should work," she went on, more courageously. "And a wife would give you inspiration and sympathy."

"I have had too much of the last already," he sighed. "And it's better not to have it all of one sort. After awhile a woman doesn't produce pleasant or profitable reactions in my soul. Yes, I know," he added, as he noticed her look of wonderment, "I am selfish and supremely egotistical. Every artist is; his only lookout, however, should be that his surroundings don't become stale. Or, if you prefer to put it more humanely, an artist isn't fit to marry; it's criminal for him to marry and break a woman's heart."

After this heroic confession he paused to smoke. "Besides, no woman whom I ever knew really understands art and the ends which the artist is after. She has the temperament, a superficial appreciation and interest, but she hasn't the stimulus of insight. She's got the nerves, but not the head."

"But you just said that you had had too much sympathy and molly-coddling."

"Did I? Well, I was wrong. I need a lot, and I don't care how idiotic. It makes me courageous to have even a child approve. I suppose that shows how closely we human animals are linked together. We have got to have the consent of the world, or at any rate a small part of it, to believe ourselves sane. So I need the chorus of patrons, admiring friends, kind women, etc., while I play the Protagonist, to tell me that I am all right, to go ahead. Do you suppose any one woman would be enough? What a great posture for an arm!" His sudden exclamation was called out by the attitude that Miss Marston had unconsciously assumed in the eagerness of her interest. She had thrown her hand over a ledge above them, and was leaning lightly upon it. The loose muslin sleeve had fallen back, revealing a pretty, delicately rounded arm, not to be suspected from her slight figure. Clayton quickly squirmed a little nearer, and touching the arm with an artist's instinct, brought out still more the fresh white flesh and the delicate veining.

"Don't move. That would be superb in marble!" Miss Marston blushed painfully.

"How strange you are," she murmured, as she rose. "You just said that you had given up modelling, or I would let you model my arm in order to give you something to do. You should try to stick to something."

"Don't be trite," laughed Clayton, "and don't make me consistent. You will keep yourself breathless if you try that!"

"I know what you need," she said, persistently unmindful of his admonition. "You need the spur. It doesn't make so much difference *what* you do—you're clever enough."

"'Truth from the mouths of babes——'"

"I am not a babe." She replied to his mocking, literally. "Even if I am stupid and commonplace, I may have intuitions like other women."

"Which lead you to think that it's all chance whether Raphael paints or plays on the piano. Well, I don't know that you are so absurd. That's my theory: an artist is a fund of concentrated, undistributed energy that has any number of possible outlets, but selects one. Most of us are artists, but we take so many outlets that the hogshead becomes empty by leaking. Which shall it be? Shall we toss up a penny?"

"Painting," said Miss Marston, decisively. "You must stick to that."

"How did you arrive at that conclusion—have you observed my work?"

"No! I'll let you know some time, but now you must go to work. Come!" She rose, as if to go down to the lodge that instant. Clayton, without feeling the absurdity of the comedy, rose docilely and followed her down the path for some distance. He seemed completely dominated by the sudden enthusiasm and will that chance had flung him.

"There's no such blessed hurry," he remarked at last, when the first excitement had evanesced. "The light will be too bad for work by the time we reach Bar Harbor. Let's rest here in this dark nook, and talk it all over."

Clayton was always abnormally eager to talk over anything. Much of his artistic energy had trickled away in elusive snatches of talk. "Come," he exclaimed, enthusiastically, "I have it. I will begin a great work—a modern Magdalen or something of that sort. We can use you in just that posture, kneeling before a rock with outstretched hands, and head turned away. We will make everything of the hands and arms!"

Miss Marston blushed her slow, unaccustomed blush. At first sight it pleased her to think that she had become so much a part of this interesting young man's plans, but in a moment she laughed calmly at the frank desire he expressed to leave out her face, and the characteristic indifference he had shown in suggesting negligently such a subject.

"All right. I am willing to be of any service. But you will have to make use of the early hours. I teach the children at nine."

"Splendid!" he replied, as the vista of a new era of righteousness dawned upon him. "We shall have the fresh morning light, and the cool and the beauty of the day. And I shall have plenty of time to loaf, too."

"No, you mustn't loaf. You will find me a hard task-mistress!"

III

True to her word, Miss Marston rapped at the door of the studio promptly at six the next morning. She smiled fearfully, and finding no response, tried stones at the windows above. She kept saying to herself, to keep up her courage: "He won't think about me, and I am too old to care, anyway." Soon a head appeared, and Clayton called out, in a sleepy voice:

"I dreamt it was all a joke; but wait a bit, and we will talk it over."

Miss Marston entered the untidy studio, where the *débris* of a month's fruitless efforts strewed the floor. Bits of clay and carving-tools, canvases hurled face downward in disgust and covered with paint-rags, lay scattered about. She tip-toed around, carefully raising her skirt, and examined everything. Finally, discovering an alcohol-lamp and a coffee-pot, she prepared some coffee, and when Clayton appeared—a somewhat dishevelled god—he found her hunting for biscuit.

"You can't make an artist of me at six in the morning," he growled.

In sudden inspiration, Miss Marston threw open the upper half of the door and admitted a straight pathway of warm sun that led across the water just rippling at their feet. The hills behind the steep shore were dark with a mysterious green and fresh with a heavy dew, and from the nooks in the woods around them thrush was answering thrush. Miss Marston gave a sigh of content. The warm, strong sunlight strengthened her and filled her wan cheeks, as the sudden interest in the artist's life seemed to have awakened once more the vigor of her feelings. She clasped her thin hands and accepted both blessings. Clayton also revived. At first he leant listlessly against the door-post, but as minute by minute he drank in the air and the beauty and the hope, his weary frame dilated with incoming sensations. "God, what beauty!" he murmured, and he accepted unquestioningly the interference in his life brought by this woman just as he accepted the gift of sunshine and desire.

"Come to work," said Miss Marston, at last.

"That's no go," he replied, "that subject we selected."

"I dare say you won't do much with it, but it will do as well as any other for experiment and practice."

"I see that you want those arms preserved."

The little woman shrank into her shell for a moment: her lazy artist could scatter insults as negligently as epigrams. Then she blazed out.

"Mr. Clayton, I didn't come here to be insulted."

Clayton, utterly surprised, opened his sleepy eyes in real alarm.

"Bless you, my dear Miss Marston, I can't insult anybody. I never mean anything."

"Perhaps that's the trouble," replied Miss Marston, somewhat mollified. But the sitting was hardly a success. Clayton wasted almost all his time in improvising an easel and in preparing his brushes. Miss Marston had to leave him just as he was ready to throw himself into his work. He was discontented, and, instead of improving the good light and the long day, he took a pipe and went away into the hills. The next morning he felt curiously ashamed when Miss Marston, after examining the rough sketch on the easel, said:

"Is that all?"

And this day he painted, but in a fit of gloomy disgust destroyed everything. So it went on for a few weeks. Miss Marston was more regular than an alarm-clock; sometimes she brought some work, but oftener she sat vacantly watching the young man at work. Her only standard of accomplishment was quantity. One day, when Clayton had industriously employed a rainy afternoon in putting in the drapery for the figure, she was so much pleased by the quantity of the work accomplished that she praised him gleefully. Clayton, who was, as usual, in an ugly mood, cast an utterly contemptuous look at her and then turned to his easel.

"You mustn't look at me like that," the woman said, almost frightened.

"Then don't jabber about my pictures."

Her lips quivered, but she was silent. She began to realize her position of galley-slave, and welcomed with a dull joy the contempt and insults to come.

One morning Clayton was not to be found. He did not appear during that week, and at last Miss Marston determined to find him. She made an excuse for a journey to Boston, and divining where Clayton could be found, she sent him word at a certain favorite club that she wanted to see him. He called at her modest hotel, dejected, listless, and somewhat shamefaced; he found Miss Marston calm and commonplace as usual. But it was the calm of a desperate resolve, won after painful hours, that he little recognized. Her instinct to attach herself to this strange, unaccountable creature, to make him effective to himself, had triumphed over her prejudices. She humbled herself joyfully, recognizing a mission.

"Della said that I might presume on your escort home," she remarked dryly, trembling for fear that she had exposed herself to some contemptuous retort. One great attraction, however, in Clayton was that he never expected the conventional. It did not occur to him as particularly absurd that this woman, ten years his senior, should hunt him up in this fashion. He took such eccentricities as a matter of course, and whatever the circumstances or the conversation, found it all natural and reasonable. Women did not fear him, but talked indiscreetly to him about all things.

"What's the use of keeping up this ridiculous farce about my work?" he said, sadly. Then he sought for a conventional phrase. "Your unexpected interest and enthusiasm in my poor attempts have been most kind, my dear Miss Marston. But you must allow me to go to the dogs in my own fashion; that's the inalienable right of every emancipated soul in these days." The politeness and mockery of this little epigram stung the woman.

"Don't be brutal, as well as good for nothing," she said, bitterly. "You're as low as if you took to drink or any other vice, and you know it. I can't appreciate your fine ideas, perhaps, but I know you ought to do something more than talk. You're terribly ambitious, but you're too weak to do anything but talk. I don't care what you think about my interference. I can make you work, and I will make you do something. You know you need the whip, and if none of your pleasant friends will give it to you, I can. Come!" she added, pleadingly.

"Jove!" exclaimed the young man, slowly, "I believe you're an awful trump. I will go back."

On their return they scarcely spoke. Miss Marston divined that her companion felt ashamed and awkward, and that his momentary enthusiasm had evaporated under the influence of a long railroad ride. While they were waiting for the steamer at the Mount Desert ferry, she said, as negligently as she could, "I have telegraphed for a carriage, but you had better walk up by yourself."

He nodded assent. "So you will supply the will for the machine, if I will grind out the ideas. But it will never succeed," he added, gloomily. "Of course I am greatly obliged and all that, and I will stick to it until October for the sake of your interest." In answer she smiled with an air of proprietorship.

One effect of this spree upon Clayton was that he took to landscape during the hours that he had formerly loafed. He found some quiet bits of dell with water, and planted his easel regularly every day. Sometimes he sat dreaming or reading, but he felt an unaccustomed responsibility if, when his mentor appeared with the children late in the afternoon, he hadn't something to show for his day. She never attempted to criticise except as to the amount performed, and she soon learned enough not to measure this by the area of canvas. Although Clayton had abandoned the Magdalen in utter disgust, Miss Marston persisted in the early morning sittings. She made herself useful in preparing his coffee and in getting his canvas ready. They rarely talked. Sometimes Clayton, in a spirit of deviltry, would tease his mentor about their peculiar relationship, about herself, or, worse than all, would run himself and say very true things about his own imperfections. Then, on detecting the tears that would rise in the tired, faded eyes of the woman he tortured, he would throw himself into his work.

So the summer wore away and the brilliant September came. The unsanctified crowds flitted to the mountains or the town, and the island and sea resumed the air of free-hearted peace which was theirs by right. Clayton worked still more out of doors on marines, attempting to grasp the perplexing brilliancy that flooded everything.

"It's no use," he said, sadly, as he packed up his kit one evening in the last of September. "I really don't know the first thing about color. I couldn't exhibit a single thing I have done this entire summer."

"What's the real matter?" asked Miss Marston, with a desperate calm.

"Why, I have fooled about so much that I have lost a lot I learnt over there in Paris."

"Why don't you get—get a teacher?"

Clayton laughed ironically. "I am pretty old to start in, especially as I have just fifty dollars to my name, and a whole winter before me."

They returned silently. The next morning Miss Marston appeared at the usual hour and made the coffee. After Clayton had finished his meagre meal, she sat down shyly and looked at him.

"You've never interested yourself much in my plans, but I am going to tell you some of them. I'm sick of living about like a neglected cat, and I am going to New York to—to keep boarders." Her face grew very red. "They will make a fuss, but I am ready to break with them all."

"So you, too, find dependence a burden?" commented Clayton, indifferently.

"You haven't taken much pains to know me," she replied. "And if I were a man," she went on, with great scorn, "I would die before I would be dependent!"

"Talking about insults—but an artist isn't a man," remarked Clayton, philosophically smoking his pipe.

"I hate you when you're like that," Miss Marston remarked, with intense bitterness.

"Then you must hate me pretty often! But continue with your plans. Don't let our little differences in temperament disturb us."

"Well," she continued, "I have written to some friends who spend the winters in New York, and out of them I think I shall find enough boarders—enough to keep me from starving. And the house has a large upper story with a north light." She stopped and peeped at him furtively.

"Oh," said Clayton, coolly, "and you're thinking that I would make a good tenant."

"Exactly," assented Miss Marston, uncomfortably.

"And who will put up the tin: for you don't suppose that I am low enough to live off you?"

"No," replied the woman, quietly. "I shouldn't allow that, though I was not quite sure you would be unwilling. But you can borrow two or three hundred dollars from your brother, and by the time that's gone you ought to be earning something. You could join a class; the house isn't far from those studios."

Clayton impulsively seized her arms and looked into her face. She was startled and almost frightened.

"I believe," he began, but the words faded away.

"No, don't say it. You believe that I am in love with you, and do this to keep you near me. Don't be quite such a brute, for you *are* a brute, a grasping, egotistical, intolerant brute." She smiled slightly. "But don't think that I am such a fool as not to know how impossible *that* is."

Clayton still held her in astonishment. "I think I was going to say that I was in love with you."

"Oh, no," she laughed, sadly. "I am coffee and milk and bread and butter, the 'stuff that dreams are made on.' You want some noble young woman—a goddess, to make you over, to make you human. I only save you from the poor-house."

IV

There followed a bitter two years for this strange couple. Clayton borrowed a thousand dollars—a more convenient number to remember, he said, than three hundred dollars—and induced a prominent artist "who happens to know something," to take him into his crowded classes for a year. He began with true grit to learn again what he had forgotten and some things that he had never known. At the end of the year he felt that he could go alone, and the artist agreed, adding, nonchalantly: "You may get there; God knows; but you need loads of work."

Domestically, the life was monotonous. Clayton had abandoned his old habits, finding it difficult to harmonize his present existence with his clubs and his fashionable friends. Besides, he hoarded every cent and, with Miss Marston's aid, wrung the utmost of existence out of the few dollars he had left. Miss Marston's modest house was patronized by elderly single ladies. It was situated on one of those uninteresting East Side streets where you can walk a mile without remembering an individual stone.

The table, in food and conversation, was monotonous. In fact, Clayton could not dream of a more inferior *milieu* for the birth of the great artist.

Miss Marston had fitted herself to suit his needs, and in submitting to this difficult position felt that she was repaying a loan of a new life. He was so curious, so free, so unusual, so fond of ideas, so entertaining, even in his grim moods, that he made her stupid life over. She could enjoy vicariously by feeling his intense interest in all living things. In return, she learnt the exact time to bring him an attractive lunch, and just where to place it so that it would catch his eye without calling out a scowl of impatience. She made herself at home in his premises, so that all friction was removed from the young artist's life. He made no acknowledgment of her devotion, but he worked grimly, doggedly, with a steadiness that he had never before known. Once, early in the first winter, having to return to Boston on some slight business, he permitted himself to be entrapped by old friends and lazed away a fortnight. On his return Miss Marston noticed with a pang that this outing had done him good; that he seemed to have more spirit, more vivaciousness, more ideas, and more zest for his work. So, in a methodical fashion, she thought out harmless dissipations for him. She induced him to take her to the opera, even allowing him to think that it was done from pure charity to her. Sunday walks in the picturesque nooks of New York—they both shunned the Fifth Avenue promenade for different reasons—church music, interesting novels, all the "fuel," as Clayton remarked, that she could find she piled into his furnace. She made herself acquainted with the peculiar literature that seemed to stimulate his imagination, and sometimes she read him asleep in the evenings to save his overworked eyes. Her devotion he took serenely, as a rule. During the second winter, however, after a slight illness brought on by over-application, he seemed to have a thought upon his mind that troubled him. One day he impatiently threw down his palette and put his hands upon her shoulders.

"Little woman, why do you persist in using up your life on me?"

"I am gambling," she replied, evasively.

"What do you expect to get if you win?"

"A few contemptuous thanks; perhaps free tickets when you exhibit, or a line in your biography. But seriously, Jack, don't you know women well enough to understand how they enjoy drudging for someone who is powerful?"

"But even if I have any ability, which you can't tell, how do you enjoy it? You can't appreciate a picture."

She smiled. "Don't bother yourself about me. I get my fun, as you say, because you make me feel things I shouldn't otherwise. I suppose that's the only pay you artists ever give those who slave for you?"

Such talks were rare. They experienced that physical and mental unity in duality which comes to people who live and think and work together for a common aim. They had not separated a day since that first visit to Boston. The summer had been spent at a cheap boarding-house on Cape Ann, in order that Clayton might sketch in company with the artist who had been teaching him. Neither thought of conventionality; it was too late for that.

As the second year came to an end, the pressure of poverty began to be felt. Clayton refused to make any efforts to sell his pictures. He eked out his capital and went on. The end of his thousand came; he took to feeding himself in his rooms. He sold his clothes, his watch, his books, and at last the truck he had accumulated abroad. "More fuel for the fire," he said bitterly.

"I will lend you something," remarked Miss Marston.

"No, thanks," he said, shortly, and then added, with characteristic brutality, "my body is worth a hundred. Stevens will give that for it, which would cover the room-rent. And my brother will have to whistle for his cash or take it out in paint and canvas."

She said nothing, for she had a scheme in reserve. She was content meantime to see him pinched; it brought out the firmer qualities in the man. Her own resources, moreover, were small, for the character of her boarders had fallen. Unpleasant rumors had deprived her of the unexceptionable set of middle-aged ladies with whom she had started, but she had pursued her course unaltered. The reproach of her relatives, who considered her disgraced, had been a sweet solace to her pride.

The rough struggle had told on them both. He had forgotten his delicate habits, his nicety of dress. A cheap suit once in six months was all that he could afford. His mind had become stolidly fixed, so that he did not notice the gradual change. It was a grim fight! The elements were relentless; day by day the pounding was harder, and the end of his resistance seemed nearer. Although he was deeply

discontented with his work, he did not dare to think of ultimate failure, for it unnerved him for several days. Miss Marston's quiet assumption, however, that it was only a question of months, irritated him.

"God must have put the idea into your head that I am a genius," he would mutter fiercely at her. "I never did, nor work of mine. You don't know good from bad, anyway, and we may both be crazy." He buried his face in his hands, overcome by the awfulness of failure. She put her arms about his head.

"Well, we can stand it a little longer, and then——"

"And then?" he asked, grimly.

"Then," she looked at him significantly. They both understood. "Lieber Gott," he murmured, "thou hast a soul." And he kissed her gently, as in momentary love. She did not resist, but both were indifferent to passion, so much their end absorbed them.

At last she insisted upon trying to sell some marines at the art stores. She brought him back twenty-five dollars, and he did not suspect that she was the patron. He looked at the money wistfully.

"I thought we should have a spree on the first money I earned. But it's all fuel now."

Her eyes filled with tears at this sign of humanity. "Next time, perhaps."

"So you think that's the beginning of a fortune. I have failed—failed if you get ten thousand dollars for every canvas in this shop. You will never know why. Perhaps I don't myself." And then he went to work. Some weeks later he came to her again. This time she tried to enlist the sympathy of the one successful artist Clayton knew, and through his influence she succeeded in selling a number of pictures and placed others upon sale. She was so happy, so sure that the prophetic instinct in her soul was justified, that she told Clayton of her previous fraud. He listened carefully; his face twitched, as if his mind were adjusting itself to new ideas. First he took twenty-five dollars from the money she had just brought him and handed it to her. Then putting his arms about her, he looked inquisitively down into her face, only a bit more tenderly than he squinted at his canvases.

"Jane!" She allowed him to kiss her once or twice, and then she pushed him away, making a pathetic bow.

"Thanks for your sense of gratitude. You're becoming more civilized. Only I wish it had been something more than money you had been thankful for. Is money the only sacrifice you understand?"

"You can take your dues in taunts if you like. I never pretended to be anything but a huge, and possibly productive polypus. I am honest enough, anyway, not to fool with lovers' wash. You ought to know how I feel toward you—you're the best woman I ever knew."

"Kindest to you, you mean? No, Jack," she continued, tenderly; "you can have me, body and soul. I am yours fast enough now, what there is left of me. I have given you my reputation, and that sort of thing long ago—no, you needn't protest. I know you despise people who talk like that, and I don't reproach you. But don't deceive yourself. You feel a little moved just now. If I had any charms, like a pretty model, you might acquire some kind of attachment for me, but love—you never dreamed of it. And," she continued, after a moment, "I begin to think, after watching you these two years, never will. So I am safe in saying that I am yours to do with what you will. I am fuel. Only, oh, Jack, if you break my heart, your last fuel will be gone. You can't do without me!"

It seemed very absurd to talk about breaking hearts—a tired, silent man; a woman unlovely from sordid surroundings, from age, and from care. Clayton pulled back the heavy curtain to admit the morning light, for they had talked for hours before coming to the money question. The terrible, passionate glare of a summer sun in the city burst in from the neighboring housetops.

"Why don't you curse *Him*?" muttered Clayton.

"Why?"

"Because He gave you a heart to love, and made you lonely, and then wasted your love!"

"Jack, the worst hasn't come. It's not all wasted."

V

Clayton gradually became conscious of a new feeling about his work. He was master of his tools, for one thing, and he derived exquisite pleasure from the exercise of execution. The surety of his touch, the

knowledge of the exact effect he was after, made his working hours an absorbing pleasure rather than an exasperating penance. And through his secluded life, with its singleness of purpose, its absence of the social ambitions of his youth, and the complexity of life in the world, the restlessness and agitation of his earlier devotion to his art disappeared. He was content to forget the expression of himself—that youthful longing—in contemplating and enjoying the created matter. In other words, the art of creation was attended with less friction. He worked unconsciously, and he did not, hen-like, call the attention of the entire barnyard to each new-laid egg. He felt also that human, comfortable weariness after labor when self sinks out of sight in the universal wants of mankind—food and sleep. Perhaps the fact that he could now earn enough to relieve him from actual want, that to some extent he had wrestled with the world and wrung from it the conditions of subsistence, relieved the strain under which he had been laboring. He sold his pictures rarely, however, and only when absolutely compelled to get money. Miss Marston could not comprehend his feeling about the inadequacy of his work, and he gave up attempting to make her understand where he failed.

The bond between them had become closer. This one woman filled many human relationships for him—mother, sister, friend, lover, and wife in one. The boarding-house had come to be an affair of transients and young clerks, so that all her time that could be spared from the drudgery of housekeeping was spent in the studio. Slowly he became amenable to her ever-present devotion, and even, in his way, thoughtful for her. And she was almost happy.

The end came in this way. One day Clayton was discovered on the street by an intimate college friend. They had run upon each other abruptly, and Clayton, finding that escape was decently impossible, submitted without much urging to be taken to one of his old clubs for a quiet luncheon. As a result he did not return that night, but sent a note to Miss Marston saying that he had gone to Lenox with a college chum. That note chilled her heart. She felt that this was the beginning of the end, and the following week she spent in loneliness in the little studio, sleeping upon the neglected lounge. And yet she divined that the movement and stimulus of this vacation was what Clayton needed most. She feared he was becoming stale, and she knew that in a week, or a fortnight, or perhaps a month, he would return and plunge again into his work.

He came back. He hardly spoke to her; he seemed absorbed in the conception of a new work. And when she brought him his usual luncheon she found the door locked, the first time in many months. She sat down on the stairs and waited—how long she did not know—waited, staring down the dreary hall and at the faded carpet and at herself, faded to suit the surroundings. At length she knocked, and Clayton came, only to take her lunch and say absently that he was much absorbed by a new picture and should not be disturbed. Would she bring his meals? He seemed to refuse tacitly an entrance to the studio. So a week passed, and then one day Clayton disappeared again, saying that he was going into the country for another rest. He went out as he had come in, absorbed in some dream or plan of great work. Pride kept her from entering his rooms during that week.

One day, however, he came back as before and plunged again into his work. This time she found the door ajar and entered noiselessly, as she had learned to move. He was hard at work; she admired his swift movements that seemed premeditated, the ease with which the picture before him was rowing. Surely he had a man's power, now, to execute what his spirit conceived! And the mechanical effort gave him evidently great pleasure. His complete absorption indicated the most intense though unconscious pleasure.

The picture stunned her. She knew that she was totally ignorant of art, but she knew that the picture before her was the greatest thing Clayton had accomplished. It seemed to breathe power. And she saw without surprise that the subject was a young woman. Clayton's form hid the face, but she could see the outline of a woman beside a dory, on a beach, in the early morning. So it had come.

When she was very close to Clayton, he felt her presence, and they both stood still, looking at the picture. It was almost finished—all was planned. Miss Marston saw only the woman. She was youthful, just between girlhood and womanhood—unconscious, strong, and active as the first; with the troubled mystery of the second. The artist had divined an exquisite moment in life, and into the immature figure, the face of perfect repose, the supple limbs, he had thrown the tender mystery that met the morning light. It was the new birth—that ancient, solemn, joyous beginning of things in woman and in day.

Clayton approached his picture as if lovingly to hide it. "Isn't it immense?" he murmured. "It's come at last. I don't daub any more, but I can see, I can paint! God, it's worth the hell I have been through—"

He paused, for he felt that his companion had left him.

"Jane," he said, curiously examining her face. "Jane, what's the matter?"

"Don't you know?" she replied, looking steadily at him. He looked first at her and then at the picture,

and then back again. Suddenly the facts in the case seemed to get hold of him. "Jane," he cried, impetuously, "it's all yours—you gave me the power, and made me human, too—or a little more so than I was. But I am killing you by living in this fashion. Why don't you end it?"

She smiled feebly at his earnestness. "There is only one end," she whispered, and pointed to his picture. Clayton comprehended, and seizing a paint-rag would have ruined it, but the woman caught his hand.

"Don't let us be melodramatic. Would you ruin what we have been living for all these years? Don't be silly—you would always regret it."

"It's your life against a little fame."

"No, against your life." They stood, nervelessly eying the picture.

"Oh, Jack, Jack," she cried, at last, "why did God make men like you? You take it all, everything that life gives, sunshine and love and hope and opportunity. Your roots seem to suck out what you want from the whole earth, and you leave the soil exhausted. My time has gone; I know it, I know it, and I knew it would go. Now some other life will be sacrificed. For you'll break her heart whether she's alive now or you're dreaming of someone to come. You'll treat her as you have everything. It isn't any fault—you don't understand." The words ended with a moan. Clayton sat doggedly looking at his picture. But his heart refused to be sad.

LITTLE CRANBERRY, ME.,

August, 1893.

MARE MARTO

I

The narrow slant of water that could be seen between the posts of the felza was rippling with little steely waves. The line of the heavy beak cut the opening between the tapering point of the Lido and the misty outline of Tre Porti. Inside the white lighthouse tower a burnished man-of-war lay at anchor, a sluggish mass like a marble wharf placed squarely in the water. From the lee came a slight swell of a harbor-boat puffing its devious course to the Lido landing. The sea-breeze had touched the locust groves of San Niccolò da Lido, and caught up the fragrance of the June blossoms, filling the air with the soft scent of a feminine city.

When the scrap of the island Sant' Elena came enough into the angle to detach itself from the green mass of the Giardino Pubblico, the prow swung softly about, flapping the little waves, and pointed in shore where a bridge crossed an inlet into the locust trees.

"You can see the Italian Alps," Miss Barton remarked, pulling aside the felza curtains and pointing lazily to the snow masses on the blue north horizon. "That purplish other sea is the Trevisan plain, and back of it is Castelfranco—Giorgione's Castelfranco—and higher up where the blue begins to break into the first steps of the Alps is perched Asolo—Browning's Asolo. Oh! It is so sweet! a little hill town! And beyond are Bassano and Belluno, and somewhere in the mist before you get to those snow-heads is Pieve da Cadore." Her voice dropped caressingly over the last vowels. The mere, procession of names was a lyric sent across sea to the main.

"They came over them, then, the curious ones," the younger man of the two who lounged on cushions underneath the felza remarked, as if to prolong the theme. "To the gates of Paradise," he continued, while his companion motioned to the gondolier. "And they broke them open, but they could never take the swag after all."

He laughed at her puzzled look. He seemed to mock her, and his face became young in spite of the bald-looking temples and forehead, and the copperish skin that indicated years of artificial heat.

"They got some things," the older man put in, "and they have been living off 'em ever since."

"But they never got *it*," persisted his companion, argumentatively.
"Perhaps they were afraid."

The gondola was gliding under the stone bridge, skilfully following the line of the key-stones in the arch. It passed out into a black pool at the feet of the Church of San Niccolò. The marble bishop

propped up over the pediment of the door lay silently above the pool. The grove of blossoming locusts dropped white-laden branches over a decaying barca chained to the shore.

"What is *'it'*?" the girl asked, slowly turning her face from the northern mountains. She seemed to carry a suggestion of abundance, of opulence; of beauty made of emphasis. "You," the young man laughed back, enigmatically.

"They came again and again, and they longed for you, and would have carried you away by force. But their greedy arms snatched only a few jewels, a dress or two, and *you* they left."

The girl caught at a cluster of locust blossoms that floated near.

"It is an allegory."

"I'll leave Niel to untie his riddles." Their companion lit his pipe and strode ashore. "I am off for an hour with the Adriatic. Don't bother about me if you get tired of waiting."

He disappeared in the direction of the Lido bathing stablimento. The two gathered up cushions and rugs, and wandered into the grove. The shade was dark and cool. Beyond were the empty acres of a great fort grown up in a tangle of long grass like an abandoned pasture. Across the pool they could see the mitred bishop sleeping aloft in the sun, and near him the lesser folk in their graves beside the convent wall.

"No, I am not all that," Miss Barton said, thoughtfully, her face bending, as if some rich, half-open rose were pondering.

"*He* says that I am a fragment, a bit of detritus that has been washed around the world—"

"And finally lodged and crystallized in Italy."

This mystified her again, as if she were compelled to use a medium of expression that was unfamiliar.

"Papa was consul-general, you know, first at Madrid, then in the East, and lastly merely a consul at Milan." She fell back in relief upon a statement of fact.

"Yes, I know."

"And mamma—she was from the South but he married her in Paris. They called me the polyglot bébé at the convent." She confided this as lazily interesting, like the clouds, or the locusts, or the faint chatter of the Adriatic waves around the breakwater of the Lido.

"Nevertheless you are Venice, you are Italy, you are Pagan"—the young man iterated almost solemnly, as if a Puritan ancestry demanded this reproach. Then he rolled his body half over and straightened himself to look at her rigidly. "How did you come about? How could Council Bluffs make it?" His voice showed amusement at its own intensity. She shook her head.

"I don't know," she said, softly.

"It doesn't seem real. They tell me so, just as they say that the marble over there comes from that blue mountain. But why bother about it? I am here——"

They drifted on in personal chat until the sunlight came in parallel lines between the leaves.

"Where is Caspar?" he said at last, reluctantly. "It's too late to get back to the Britannia for dinner." He jumped up as if conscious of a fault.

"Oh, we'll dine here. Caspar has found some one at the stablimento and has gone off. Ask Bastian—there must be some place where we can get enough to eat."

Lawrence hesitated as if not quite sure of the outcome of such unpremeditation. But Miss Barton questioned the gondolier. "The Buon Pesche—that will be lovely; Bastian will paddle over and order the supper. We can walk around."

So Lawrence, as if yielding against his judgment, knelt down and picked up her wrap. "Bastian will take care of the rest," she said, gleefully, walking on ahead through the long grass of the abandoned fort. "Be a bit of detritus, too, and enjoy the few half-hours," she added, coaxingly, over her shoulder.

When they were seated at the table under the laurel-trees before the Buon Pesche, Lawrence threw himself into the situation, with all the robustness of a moral resolve to do the delightful and sinful thing. Just why it should be sinful to dine there out-doors in an evening light of luminous gold, with the

scent of locusts eddying about, and the mirage-like show of Venice sleeping softly over beyond—was not quite clear. Perhaps because his companion seemed so careless and unfamiliar with the monitions of strenuous living; perhaps because her face was brilliant and naïve—some spontaneous thing of nature, unmarked by any lines of consciousness.

Under a neighboring tree a couple were already eating, or quarrelling in staccato phrases. Lawrence thought that the man was an artist.

Miss Barton smiled at his seriousness, crossing her hands placidly on the table and leaning forward. To her companion she gleamed, as if a wood-thing, a hamadryad, had slipped out from the laurel-tree and come to dine with him in the dusk.

The woman of the inn brought a flask of thin yellow wine and placed it between them. Lawrence mutely decanted it into the glasses.

"Well?" she said, questioningly.

Her companion turned his head away to the solemn, imperial mountains, that were preparing with purple and gold for a night's oblivion.

"You are thinking of Nassau Street, New York, of the rooms divided by glass partitions, and typewriters and the bundles of documents—bah! Chained!" She sipped scornfully a drop or two from the glass.

The man flushed.

"No, not that exactly. I am thinking of the police courts, of the squalor, of taking a deposition in a cell with the filthy breathing all about. The daily jostle." He threw his head back.

"Don't try it again," she whispered.

"I am only over for six weeks, you know, health—"

"Yes? and there is a girl in Lowell,"—she read his mind impudently.

"Was," he emended, with an uneasy blush.

"Poor, starved one! Here is our fish and spaghetti. To-night is a night of feast."

The dusk grew grayer, more powderish; the mountains faded away, and the long Lido banks disappeared into lines pointed by the lights of Torcello and Murano. Sant' Elena became sea, and the evening wind from the Adriatic started in toward the city. A few sailors who had come for a glass were sitting under the arbor of the Buon Pesche smoking, with an occasional stinging word dropped nonchalantly into the dusk. Their hostess was working in the garden patch behind the house. At last the artist moved off with his companion through the grove of laurel between the great well-heads. Bastian loitered suggestively near.

So they gathered their thoughts and followed the gondolier to the bank. Miss Barton lingered by one of the well-heads to peer at the pitchy bottom.

"Here they came for fresh water, the last gift of Venice before they took sail. And sometimes a man never went farther—it was a safe kind of a grave." She laughed unconcernedly.

"Perhaps you came out of the locusts and took a hand in pitching the bodies in."

The woman shivered.

"No! no! I only brought them here."

Bastian turned the prow into the current, heading to weather Sant' Elena. Lawrence took an oar silently. He liked the rush on the forward stroke, the lingering recovery. The evening puffs were cool. They slid on past a ghostly full-rigged ship from the north, abandoned at the point of Sant' Elena, until the black mass of trees in the Giardino Pubblico loomed up. A little off the other quarter the lights from the island of San Lazzaro gleamed and faded. It was so very silent on the waste of waters!

"Come."

Lawrence looked back at his companion; she was holding her hat idly, huddled limply on the cushions.

"Come," she said again, adding mockingly——

"If you are so ferocious, we shall get there too soon."

Lawrence gave up his oar and lay down at her feet. Bastian's sweep dipped daintily in and out; the good current was doing his work. They drifted silently on near Venice. The halo of light above the squares grew brighter. San Giorgio Maggiore appeared suddenly off the quarter.

Miss Barton signed to the gondolier to wait. They were outside the city wash; the notes of the band in San Marco came at intervals; the water slipped noiselessly around the channels, and fire-fly lights from the gondolas twinkled on the Grand Canal. San Giorgio was asleep.

Miss Barton's head was leaning forward, her eyes brooding over the black outlines, her ears sensuously absorbing the gurgle of the currents. A big market boat from Palestrina winged past them, sliding over the oily water. Several silent figures were standing in the stern.

Lawrence looked up; her eyes seemed lit with little candles placed behind. Her face gleamed, and one arm slipped from her wrap to the cushion by his side.

"Bella Venezia," he murmured.

She smiled, enveloping him, mastering him, taking him as a child with her ample powers.

"You will never go back to 'that'!"

Her arm by his side filled out the thought.

"Never," he heard himself say as on a stage, and the dusky lights from that radiant face seemed very near.

"Because——"

"Because I am——"

"Sh," she laid her fingers lightly on his forehead. "There is no thine and mine."

Bastian dipped his sweep once more. San Giorgio's austere façade went out into the black night. One cold ripple of Adriatic wind stirred the felza curtains.

II

The garden on the Giudecca was a long narrow strip on the seaward side, blossoming profusely with flowers. A low vine-covered villino slanted along the canal; beyond, there was a cow-house where a boy was feeding some glossy cows. The garden was full of the morning sun.

Lawrence could see her from the open door, a white figure, loitering in a bed of purple tulips. Her dark hair was loosely knotted up; stray wisps fell about her ears.

Lawrence closed the door that opened from the canal and walked softly through the plats of lilies and tulips. Miss Barton glanced up.

"Ecco! il cavaliere!"

"Didn't you expect me!" he asked, clumsily, revealing one potent reason for his appearance.

She smiled for an answer.

"Last night," he began again, explanatorily. Her eyes followed his lips and interrupted him.

"What do you think of our place?" She had turned away as if to direct his speech into indifferent channels.

He looked about bewildered.

"I can't think anything; I *feel* it; it's one mass of sense."

"Exactly. We found it, papa and I, one day two years ago when we were paddling around the Giudecca. One is so much at home here. At night you can see the lights along the Lido, and all the campaniles over there in Venice. Then the Redentore sweeps up so grandly—"

Lawrence slapped a bending tulip.

"Yes, the world lies far away."

"And you are afraid to lose sight of it," she turned on him swiftly. And she added, before he could find defence, "You have come to redeem your words, to tell me that you love me desperately; that you want to make an engagement; and some day marry me and go over there to live?"

She laughed.

"Well?"

"Caspar would do that."

"And Severance has something to offer," Lawrence remarked, bluntly.

"Half a million."

She began to walk slowly across the little grass-plot over to the Lido side. Here the oily swell was gurgling in the stone embankment.

She was like a plant flowering in the garden—a plant, part lily, part hyacinth.

"And you do not want me," she began, softly, less to him than to herself. "I don't fit in. You cannot take me up and put me aside, at your will. You would be *mine*."

"Good!"

"It should have been different. We should never have met. They should have made you a saint, or a priest, or a pastor for the bleeding world. You are a trifle late; half a century ago, you could have given your soul to God, quite easily, and not bothered about one woman."

"Yes, I agree, but that was settled by the way the world has ground," the young man sighed. "Why should it bother you, my fooling with the forlorn and wretched—the others? Any more than I mind your dealings with men?"

They turned about and crossed the dozen paces to the Redentore wall where lay a blade of dark shade.

"You could flirt with the multitude? Yes, I should object," she looked at him slowly, "I couldn't understand it."

He threw his head back as if to look beyond Venice.

"The maimed in body and spirit," he muttered.

"They call you; I call you; you——"

"I was starved," he pleaded, "I love flesh and glory, too."

She laughed unconcernedly.

"Oh, no. I think not. You are trying to very hard. You think you are enjoying your wine and your figs and the sun; but you say a prayer."

Her words taunted him. The vines on the villino swayed in the sun.

"Come, we will go out to the water, and I will master your doubt."

They stood silent, looking at each other, half curiously. At length she uttered what was common to their minds.

"Marry the world; it woos you. Love me and leave me; love another and leave her. The world, that is your mistress."

"And the world incarnate, that is you. The world, breathing, living, loving, the world a passion of delight."

Their hands touched for a moment. Then she said, hastily:

"Too late! There is Caspar. I forgot we were to go to Burano. Will you join us?"

A figure in white ducks was coming toward them. His cordial smile seemed to include a comment—a mental note of some hint he must give. "In stalks the world of time and place," the young man

muttered. "No, I will not go with you."

He helped her into the waiting gondola. She settled back upon the cushions, stretched one languid arm in farewell. He could feel the smile with which she swept Caspar Severance, the women at work in the rio over their kettles, the sun-bright stretch of waters—all impartially.

He lay down in the shade of the Redentore wall. Eight weeks ago there had been a dizzy hour, a fainting scene in a crowded court-room, a consultation with a doctor, the conventional prescription, a fortnight of movement—then *this*. He had cursed that combination of nerve and tissue; equally he cursed this. One word to his gondolier and in two hours he could be on the train for Milan, Paris, London—then indefinite years of turning about in the crowd, of jostling and being jostled. But he lay still while the sun crept over him.

She was so unreal, once apart from her presence, like an evanescent mirage on the horizon of the mind. He told himself that he had seen her, heard her voice; that her eyes had been close to his, that she had touched him; that there had been moments when she stood with the flowers of the garden.

He shook the drowsy sun from his limbs and went away, closing the door softly on the empty garden. Venice, too, was a shadow made between water and sun. The boat slipped in across the Zattere, in and out of cool water alleys, under church windows and palings of furtive gardens, until he came to the plashings of the waves on the marble steps along the Grand Canal. Empty! that, too, was empty from side to side between cool palace façades, the length of its expressive curve. From silence and emptiness into silence the gondola pushed. Someone to incarnate this empty, vacuous world! Memory troubled itself with a face, and eyes, and hair, and a voice that mocked the little goings up and down of men.

III

In the afternoon Lawrence and Severance were dawdling over coffee in the Piazza. A strident band sent up voluminous notes that boomed back and forth between the palace and the stone arches of the procurate.

"And Burano?" Lawrence suggested, idly. The older man nodded.

"We lunched there—convent—Miss Barton bought lace."

He broke the pause by adding, negligently:

"I think I shall marry her."

Lawrence smoked; he could see the blue water about San Giorgio.

"Marry her," he repeated, vaguely. "You are engaged?"

Severance nodded.

The young man reached out a bony hand. One had but to wait to still the problems of life. They strolled across the piazza.

"When do you leave?" Severance inquired.

"To-night," almost slipped from the young man's lips. He was murmuring to himself. "I have played with Venice and lost. I must return to my busy village."

"I can't tell," he said.

Severance daintily stepped into a gondola. "La Giudecca."

Lawrence turned into the swarming alleys leading to the Rialto.

Streams of Venetians were eddying about the cul-de-sacs and enclosed squares, hurrying over the bridges of the canals, turning in and out of the calles, or coming to rest at the church doors. Lawrence drifted tranquilly on. He had slipped a cable; he was free and ready for the open sea. Following at random any turning that offered, he came out suddenly upon Verocchio's black horseman against the black sky. The San Zanipolo square was deserted; the cavernous San Zanipolo tenanted by tombs. Stone figures, seated, a-horse, lying carved in death, started out from the silent walls.

"Condottieri," the man muttered, "great robbers who saw and took! Briseghella, Mocenigo, Leonardo

Loredan, Vittore Capello." He rolled the powerful names under his breath. "They are right—Take, enjoy; then die." And he saw a hill sleeping sweetly in the mountains, where the sun rested on its going down, and a villino with two old trees where the court seemed ever silent. In the stealthy, passing hours she came and sat in the sun, and *was*. And the two remembered, looking on the valley road, that somewhere lay in the past a procession of storms and mornings and nights which was called the world, and a procession of people which was called life. But she looked at him and smiled.

Outside in the square the transparent dusk of Venice settled down. In the broad canal of the Misericordia a faint plash and drip from a passing gondola; then, in a moment, as the boat rounded into the rio, a resounding "Stai"; again silence and the robber in bronze.

IV

He waited for a sign from the Giudecca. He told himself that Theodosia Barton was not done with him yet, nor he with her.

The tourist-stream, turning northward from Rome and Florence, met in Venice a new stream of Germans. The paved passage beside the hotel garden was alive with a cosmopolitan picnic party. Lawrence lingered and watched; perhaps when the current set strongly to the north again, it would carry him along with it.

He had not seen Caspar Severance. Each day of delay made it more awkward to meet him, made the confession of disappointment more obvious, he reflected. Each day it was easier to put out to the lagoons for a still dream, and return when the Adriatic breeze was winding into the heated calles. Over there, in the heavy-scented garden on the Giudecca, lined against a purplish sea, she was resting; she had given free warning for him to go, but she was there——.

"She holds me here in the Mare Morto, where the sea-weeds wind about and bind."

And he believed that he should meet her somewhere in the dead lagoon, out yonder around the city, in the enveloping gloom of the waters which held the pearl of Venice.

So each afternoon his gondola crept out from the Fondamenta del Zattere into the ruffling waters of the Giudecca canal, and edged around the deserted Campo di Marte. There the gondolier labored in the viscous sea-grass.

One day, from far behind, came the plash of an oar in the channel. As the narrow hull swept past, he saw a hand gather in the felza curtains, and a woman kneel to his side.

"So Bastian takes you always to the dead sea," she tossed aboard.

"Bastian might convoy other forestieri," Lawrence defended.

"Really? here to the laguna morta?" and as his gondola slid into the channel, she added:

"I knew you were in Venice; you could not go without—another time."

"What would that bring?" he questioned her with his eyes.

"How should I know?" she answered, evasively. "Come with me out to the San Giorgio in Alga. It is the loneliest place in Venice!"

Lawrence sat at her feet. The gondola moved on between the sea-weed banks. Away off by Chioggia, filmy gray clouds grew over the horizon.

"Rain."

She shook her head. "For the others, landward. Those opalescent clouds streaking the sky are merely the undertone of Venice; they are always *here*."

"The note of sadness," he suggested.

"You thought to have ended with *me*."

She rested her head on her hands and looked at him. He preferred to have her mention Caspar Severance.

"Whenever I was beyond your eyes, you were not quite sure. You went back to your hotel and

wondered. The wine was over strong for your temperate nerves, and there was so much to do elsewhere!" she mocked him.

"After all, I was a fragment. And you judged in your wise new-world fashion that fragments were—useless."

Just ahead was a tiny patch of earth, rimmed close to the edge by ruined walls. The current running landward drew them about the corner, under the madonna's hand, and the gondola came to rest beside the lichens and lizards of a crumbling wharf.

"No," she continued, "I shall not let you go so easily." One hand fell beside his arm, figuratively indicating her thought.

"And I shall carry you off," he responded, slowly. "It lies between you—and all, everything."

The gondolier had gone ashore. Silence had swallowed him up.

"All, myself and the others; effort, variety—for the man who loves *you*, there is but one act in life."

"Splendid!" Her lips parted as if savoring his words.

His voice went on, low, strained to plunge his words into her heart.

"You are the woman, the curious thing that God made to stir life. You would draw all activities to you, and through you nothing may pass. Like the dead sea of grass you encompass the end of desire. You have been with me from my manhood, the fata morgana that laughed at my love of other creatures. I must meet you, I knew, face to face!"

His lips closed.

"Go on!"

"I have met you," he added, sullenly, "and should I turn away, I should not forget you. You will go with me, and I shall hunger for you and hate you, and you will make it over, my life, to fill the hollow of your hand."

"To fill the hollow of my hand," she repeated softly, as if not understanding.

"You will mould it and pat it and caress it, until it fits. You will never reason about it, nor doubt, nor talk; the tide flows underneath into the laguna morta, and never wholly flows out. God has painted in man's mind the possible; and he has painted the delusions, the impossible—and that is woman?"

"Impossible," she murmured. "Oh, no, not that!"

Her eyes compelled him; her hand dropped to his hand. Venice sank into a gray blot in the lagoon. The water was waveless like a deep night.

"Possible for a moment," he added, dreamily, "possible as the unsung lyric. Possible as the light of worlds behind the sun and moon. Possible as the mysteries of God that the angels whisper——"

"The only possible," again her eyes flamed; the dark hair gleamed black above the white face.

"And that is enough for us forever!"

V

The heavy door of the Casa Lesca swung in, admitting Lawrence to a damp stone-flagged room. At the farther end it opened on a little cortile, where gnarled rose-bushes were in bloom. A broken Venus, presiding over a dusty fountain, made the centre of the cortile, and there a strapping girl from the campagna was busy trimming the stalks of a bunch of roses. The signorina had not arrived; Lawrence lounged against the gunwale of a gondola, which lay on one side of the court.

A pretentious iron gate led from the cortile to the farm, where the running vines stretched from olive-stump to trellis, weaving a mat of undulating green. It was so quiet, here in the rear of the palace, that one could almost hear the hum of the air swimming over the broad vine leaves.

Lawrence, at first alert, then drowsy, reclined in the shade, and watched the girl. From time to time she threw him a soft word of Venetian. Then, gathering her roses, she shook them in his face and tripped up the stairs to the palace above.

He had made the appointment without intention, but he came to fulfil it in a tumult of energy.

She must choose and *he* arrange—for that future which troubled his mind. But the heated emptiness of the June afternoon soothed his will. He saw that whatever she bade, that he would do. Still here, while he was alone, before her presence came to rule, he plotted little things. When he was left with himself he wondered about it; no, he did not want her, did not want it! His life was over there, beyond her, and she must bend to that conception. People, women, anyone, this piece of beauty and sense, were merely episodic. The sum was made from all, and greater than all.

The door groaned, and he turned to meet her, shivering in the damp passage. She gathered a wrap about her shoulders.

"Caspar would not go," she explained, appealingly.

"Which one is to go?" the young man began. She sank down on a bench and turned her head wearily to the vineyard. Over the swaying tendrils of the vine, a dark line, a blue slab of salt water, made the horizon.

"Should I know?" her face said, mutely.

"He thinks you should," she spoke, calmly. "He has been talking two hours about you, your future, your brilliant performances——"

"That detained you!"

"He is plotting to make you a great man. You belong to the world, he said, and, the world would have you. They need you to plan and exhort, I believe."

"So you come to tell me—"

"Let us go out to the garden." She laid her hand reprovingly on his arm. "We can see the pictures later."

She took his arm and directed him down the arched walk between the vines, toward the purple sea.

"I did not realize that—that you were a little Ulysses. He warned me!"

"Indeed!"

"That you would love and worship at any wayside shrine; that the spirit of devotion was not in you."

"And you believed?"

She nodded.

"It seemed so. I have thought so. Once a few feet away and you are wondering!"

The young man was guiltily silent.

"And I am merely a wayside chapel, good for an idle prayer."

"Make it perpetual."

Her arm was heavy.

"Caspar wants you—away. He will try to arrange it. Perhaps you will yield, and I shall lose."

"You mean he will make them recall me."

She said nothing.

"You can end it now." He stopped and raised her arm. They stood for a moment, revolving the matter; a gardener came down the path. "You will get the message tonight," she said, gloomily. "Go! The message will say 'come,' and you will obey."

Lawrence turned.

"Shall we see the pictures?"

The peasant girl admitted them to the hall, and opened, here and there, a long shutter. The vast hall, in the form of a Latin cross, revealed a dusky line of frescoes.

"Veronese," she murmured. Lawrence turned to the open window that looked across the water to the piazza. Beneath, beside the quay, a green-painted Greek ship was unloading grain. Some panting, half-naked men were shovelling the oats.

"We might go," he said; "Caspar is probably waiting for his report. You can tell him that he has won."

Suddenly he felt her very near him.

"No, not that way!"

"You are good to—love," she added deliberatively, placing her hands lightly on his heart.

"You do not care enough; ah! that is sad, sad. Caspar, or denial, or God—nothing would stand if you cared, more than you care for the little people and things. See, I can take you now. I can say you are mine. I can make you love—as another may again. But love me, now, as if no other minute could ever follow."

She sighed the words.

"Here I am, to be loved. Let us settle nothing. Let us have this minute for a few kisses."

The hall filled with dusk. The girl came back again. Suddenly a bell began ringing.

"Caspar," she said. "Stay here; I will go."

"We will go together."

"No," she waved him back. "You will get the message. Caspar is right.
You are not for any woman for always."

"Go," he flung out, angrily.

The great doors of the hall had rattled to, leaving him alone half will-less. He started and then returned to the balcony over the fondamenta. In the half-light he could see her stepping into a waiting gondola, and certain words came floating up clearly as if said to him——

"To-morrow evening, the Contessa Montelli, at nine." But she seemed to be speaking to her companion. The gondola shot out into the broad canal.

VI

The long June day, Lawrence sat with the yellow cablegram before his eyes. The message had come, indeed, and the way had been cleared. Eleven—the train for Paris! passed; then, two, and now it was dusk again.

Had she meant those words for him? So carelessly flung back. That he would prove.

* * * * *

"The signorina awaits you." The man pointed to the garden, and turned back with his smoking lamp up the broad staircase that clung to one side of the court. Across the strip of garden lay a bar of moonlight on the grass.

She was standing over the open well-head at the farther end where the grass grew in rank tufts. The gloomy wall of the palace cast a shadow that reached to the well. Just as he entered, a church-clock across the rio struck the hour on a cracked bell.

"My friend has gone in—she is afraid of the night air," Miss Barton explained. "Perhaps she is afraid of ghosts," she added, as the young man stood silent by her side. "An old doge killed his wife and her children here, some centuries ago. They say the woman walks. Are you afraid?"

"Of only one ghost——"

"Not yet a ghost!" Indeed, her warm, breathing self threw a spirit of life into the moonlight and gainsaid his idle words.

"I have come for you," he said, a little peremptorily. "To do it I have lost my engagement with life."

"So the message came. You refused, and now you look for a reward. A man must be paid!"

"I tried to keep the other engagement and could not!"

"I shall make you forget it, as if it were some silly boyish dream." She began to walk over the moonlit grass. "I was waiting for that—sacrifice. For if you desire *me*, you must leave the other engagements, always."

"I know it."

"I lie in the laguna morta, and the dead are under me, and the living are caught in my sea-weed." She laughed.

"Now, we have several long hours of moonlight. Shall we stay here?"

The young man shivered.

"No, the Lady Dogessa might disturb us. Let us go out toward Murano."

"Are you really—alive and mine, not Severance's?" he threw out, recklessly.

She stopped and smiled.

"First you tell me that I disturb your plans; then you want to know if I am preoccupied. You would like to have me as an 'extra' in the subscription."

As they came out on the flags by the gondola, another boat was pushing a black prow into the rio from the Misericordia canal. It came up to the water-steps where the two stood. Caspar Severance stepped out.

"Caspar!" Miss Barton laughed.

"They told me you were here for dinner," he explained. He was in evening clothes, a Roman cloak hanging from his shoulders. He looked, standing on the steps below the other two, like an impertinent intrusion.

"Lawrence! I thought you were on your way home."

Lawrence shook his head. All three were silent, wondering who would dare to open the final theme.

"The Signora Contessa had a headache," Miss Barton began, nonchalantly.

Severance glanced skeptically at the young American by her side.

"So you fetched il dottore americano? Well, Giovanni is waiting to carry us home."

Miss Barton stepped forward slowly, as if to enter the last gondola whose prow was nuzzling by the steps.

Lawrence took her hand and motioned to his gondola.

"Miss Barton——"

Severance smiled, placidly.

"You will miss the midnight train."

The young man halted a moment, and Miss Barton's arm slipped into his fingers.

"Perhaps," he muttered.

"The night will be cool for you," Severance turned to the woman. She wavered a moment.

"You will miss more than the midnight train," Severance added to the young fellow, in a low voice.

Lawrence knelt beside his gondola. He glanced up into the face of the woman above him. "Will you come?" he murmured. She gathered up her dress and stepped firmly into the boat. Severance, left alone on the fondamenta, watched the two. Then he turned back to his gondola. The two boats floated out silently into the Misericordia Canal.

"To the Cimeterio," Miss Barton said. "To the Canale Grande," Severance motioned.

The two men raised their hats.

* * * * *

For a few moments the man and the woman sat without words, until the gondola cleared the Fondamenta Nuova, and they were well out in the sea of moonlight. Ahead of them lay the stucco walls of the Cimeterio, glowing softly in the white light. Some dark spots were moving out from the city mass to their right, heading for the silent island.

"There goes the conclusion," Lawrence nodded to the funeral boats.

"But between us and them lies a space of years—life."

"Who decided?"

"You looked. It was decided."

The city detached itself insensibly from them, lying black behind. A light wind came down from Treviso, touching the white waves.

"You are thinking that back there, up the Grand Canal, lie fame and accomplishment. You are thinking that now you have your fata morgana—nothing else. You are already preparing a grave for her in your mind!"

Lawrence took her head in his hands. "Never," he shot out the word. "Never—you are mine; I have come all these ocean miles to find you. I have come for an accounting with the vision that troubles man." Her face drew nearer.

"I am Venice, you said. I am set in the mare morto. I am built on the sea-weed. But from me you shall not go. You came over the mountains for this."

The man sighed. Some ultimate conception of life seemed to outline itself on the whitish walls of the Cimeterio—a question of sex. The man would go questioning visions. The woman was held by one.

"Caspar Severance will find his way, and will play your game for you," she went on coaxingly. "But this," her eyes were near him, "*this* is a moment of life. You have chosen. There is no mine and thine."

One by one the campaniles of Venice loomed, dark pillars in the white sky. And all around toward Mestre and Treviso and Torcello; to San Pietro di Castello and the grim walls of the arsenal, the mare morto heaved gently and sighed.

CHICAGO, January, 1897.

THE PRICE OF ROMANCE

They were paying the price of their romance, and the question was whether they would pay it cheerfully. They had been married a couple of years, and the first flush of excitement over their passion and the stumbling-blocks it had met was fading away. When he, an untried young lawyer and delicate dilettante, had married her she was a Miss Benton, of St. Louis, "niece of Oliphant, that queer old fellow who made his money in the Tobacco Trust," and hence with no end of prospects. Edwards had been a pleasant enough fellow, and Oliphant had not objected to his loafing away a vacation about the old house at Quogue. Marriage with his niece, the one remaining member of his family who walked the path that pleased him, was another thing. She had plenty of warning. Had he not sent his only son adrift as a beggar because he had married a little country cousin? He could make nothing out of Edwards except that he was not keen after business—loafed much, smoked much, and fooled with music, possibly wrote songs at times.

Yet Miss Benton had not expected that cruel indifference when she announced her engagement to the keen old man. For she was fond of him and grateful.

"When do you think of marrying?" had been his single comment. She guessed the unexpressed complement to that thought, "You can stay here until that time. Then good-by."

She found in herself an admirable spirit, and her love added devotion and faith in the future, her lover's future. So she tided over the months of her engagement, when her uncle's displeasure settled down like a fog over the pleasant house. Edwards would run down frequently, but Oliphant managed to keep out of his way. It was none of his affair, and he let them see plainly this aspect of it. Her spirit rose. She could do as other women did, get on without candy and roses, and it hurt her to feel that she had expected money from her uncle. She could show him that they were above that.

So they were married and went to live in a little flat in Harlem, very modest, to fit their income.

Oliphant had bade her good-by with the courtesy due to a tiresome Sunday visitor. "Oh, you're off, are you?" his indifferent tones had said. "Well, good-by; I hope you will have a good time." And that was all. Even the colored cook had said more; the servants in general looked deplorable. Wealth goes so well with a pretty, bright young woman!

Thus it all rested in the way they would accept the bed they had made. Success would be ample justification. Their friends watched to see how well they would solve the problem they had so jauntily set themselves.

Edwards was by no means a *fainéant*—his record at the Columbia Law School promised better than that, and he had found a place in a large office that might answer for the stepping-stone. As yet he had not individualized himself; he was simply charming, especially in correct summer costume, luxuriating in indolent conversation. He had the well-bred, fine-featured air of so many of the graduates from our Eastern colleges. The suspicion of effeminacy which he suggested might be unjust, but he certainly had not experienced what Oliphant would call "life." He had enough interest in music to dissipate in it. Marriage was an excellent settler, though, on a possible income of twelve hundred!

The two years had not the expected aspiring march, however; ten-dollar cases, even, had not been plenty in Edwards's path, and he suspected that he was not highly valued in his office. He had been compelled to tutor a boy the second year, and the hot summers made him listless. In short, he felt that he had missed his particular round in the ladder. He should have studied music, or tried for the newspapers as a musical critic. Sunday afternoons he would loll over the piano, picturing the other life—that life which is always so alluring! His wife followed him heroically into all his moods with that pitiful absorption such women give to the men they love. She believed in him tremendously, if not as a lawyer, as a man and an artist. Somehow she hadn't been an inspiration, and for that she humbly blamed herself. How was it accomplished, this inspiration? A loving wife inspired the ordinary man. Why not an artist?

They got into the habit of planning their life all differently—so that it might not be limited and futile. *If* they had a few thousand dollars! That was a bad sign, and she knew it, and struggled against it. *If* she could only do something to keep the pot boiling while he worked at his music for fame and success! But she could reduce expenses; so the one servant went, and the house-bills grew tinier and tinier. However, they didn't "make connections," and—something was wrong—she wondered what.

As the second summer came in they used to stroll out of their stuffy street of an evening, up St. Nicholas Avenue, to the Park, or to the Riverside Drive. There they would sit speechless, she in a faded blue serge skirt with a crisp, washed-out shirtwaist, and an old sailor hat—dark and pretty, in spite of her troubled face; he in a ready-made black serge suit, yet very much the gentleman—pale and listless. Their eyes would seek out any steamer in the river below, or anything else that reminded them of other conditions. He would hum a bit from an opera. They needed no words; their faces were evident, though mute, indications of the tragedy. Then they would return at bed-time into the sultry streets, where from the open windows of the flats came the hammered music of the city. Such discordant efforts for harmony! Her heart would fill over him, yearning like a mother to cherish him in all the pleasant ways of life, but impotent, impotent!

She never suggested greater effort. Conditions were hard, she said over and over; if there were only a little money to give him a start in another direction. She admired his pride in never referring to old Oliphant. Her uncle was often in her mind, but she felt that even if she could bring herself to petition him, her husband would indignantly refuse to consider the matter.

Still, she thought about it, and especially this summer, for she knew he was then at Quogue. Moreover, she expected her first child. That worried her daily; she saw how hopeless another complication would make their fate. She cried over it at night when the room was too hot to sleep. And then she reproached herself; God would punish her for not wanting her baby.

One day she had gone down town to get some materials for the preparations she must make. She liked to shop, for sometimes she met old friends; this time in a large shop she happened upon a woman she had known at Quogue, the efficient wife of a successful minister in Brooklyn. This Mrs. Leicester invited her to lunch at the cafe at the top of the building, and she had yielded, after a little urging, with real relief. They sat down at a table near the window—it was so high up there was not much noise—and the streets suddenly seemed interesting to Mrs. Edwards. The quiet table, the pleasant lunch, and the energetic Mrs. Leicester were all refreshing.

"And how is your husband?" Mrs. Leicester inquired, keenly. As a minister's wife she was compelled to interest herself in sentimental complications that inwardly bored her. It was a part of her professional duties. She had taken in this situation at once—she had seen that kind of thing before; it made her impatient. But she liked the pretty little woman before her, and was sorry she hadn't

managed better.

"Pretty well," Mrs. Edwards replied, consciously. "The heat drags one down so!"

Mrs. Leicester sent another quick glance across the table. "You haven't been to Quogue much of late, have you? You know how poorly your uncle is."

"No! *You* must know that Uncle James doesn't see us."

"Well," Mrs. Leicester went on, hastily, "he's been quite ill and feeble, and they say he's growing queer. He never goes away now, and sees nobody. Most of the servants have gone. I don't believe he will last long."

Then her worldliness struggled with her conventional position, and she relapsed into innuendo. "He ought to have someone look after him, to see him die decently, for he can't live beyond the autumn, and the only person who can get in is that fat, greasy Dr. Shapless, who is after his money for the Methodist missions. He goes down every week. I wonder where Mr. Oliphant's son can be?"

Mrs. Edwards took in every word avidly while she ate. But she let the conversation drift off to Quogue, their acquaintances, and the difficulty of shopping in the summer. "Well, I must be going to get the train," exclaimed Mrs. Leicester at last. With a sigh the young wife rose, looked regretfully down at the remains of their liberal luncheon, and then walked silently to the elevator. They didn't mention Oliphant again, but there was something understood between them. Mrs. Leicester hailed a cab; just as she gathered her parcels to make a dive, she seemed illuminated with an idea. "Why don't you come down some Sunday—visit us? Mr. Leicester would be delighted."

Mrs. Edwards was taken unawares, but her instincts came to her rescue.

"Why, we don't go anywhere; it's awfully kind, and I should be delighted; I am afraid Mr. Edwards can't."

"Well," sighed Mrs. Leicester, smiling back, unappeased, "come if you can; come alone." The cab drove off, and the young wife felt her cheeks burn.

* * * * *

The Edwardses had never talked over Oliphant or his money explicitly. They shrank from it; it would be a confession of defeat. There was something abhorrently vulgar in thus lowering the pitch of their life. They had come pretty near it often this last summer. But each feared what the other might think. Edwards especially was nervous about the impression it might make on his wife, if he should discuss the matter. Mrs. Leicester's talk, however, had opened possibilities for the imagination. So little of Uncle James's money, she mused, would make them ideally happy—would put her husband on the road to fame. She had almost made up her mind on a course of action, and she debated the propriety of undertaking the affair without her husband's knowledge. She knew that his pride would revolt from her plan. She could pocket her own pride, but she was tender of his conscience, of his comfort, of his sensibilities. It would be best to act at once by herself—perhaps she would fail, anyway—and to shield him from the disagreeable and useless knowledge and complicity. She couldn't resist throwing out some feelers, however, at supper that night. He had come in tired and soiled after a day's tramp collecting bills that wouldn't collect this droughty season. She had fussed over him and coaxed a smile out, and now they were at their simple tea.

She recounted the day's events as indifferently as possible, but her face trembled as she described the luncheon, the talk, the news of her uncle, and at last Mrs. Leicester's invitation. Edwards had started at the first mention of Quogue.

"It's been in his mind," she thought, half-relieved, and his nervous movements of assumed indifference made it easier for her to go on.

"It was kind of her, wasn't it?" she ended.

"Yes," Edwards replied, impressively. "Of course you declined."

"Oh, yes; but she seemed to expect us all the same." Edwards frowned, but he kept an expectant silence. So she remarked, tentatively:

"It would be so pleasant to see dear old Quogue again." Her hypocrisy made her flush. Edwards rose abruptly from the table and wandered about the room. At length he said, in measured tones, his face averted from her:

"*Of course*, under the circumstances, we cannot visit Quogue while your uncle lives—unless he should send for us." Thus he had put himself plainly on record. His wife suddenly saw the folly and meanness of her little plans.

It was hardly a disappointment; her mind felt suddenly relieved from an unpleasant responsibility. She went to her husband, who was nervously playing at the piano, and kissed him, almost reverently. It had been a temptation from which he had saved her. They talked that evening a good deal, planning what they would do if they could get over to Europe for a year, calculating how cheaply they could go. It was an old subject. Sometimes it kept off the blues; sometimes it indicated how blue they were. Mrs. Edwards forgot the disturbance of the day until she was lying wide awake in her hot bed. Then the old longings came in once more; she saw the commonplace present growing each month more dreary; her husband drudging away, with his hopes sinking. Suddenly he spoke:

"What made Mrs. Leicester ask us, do you suppose?" So he was thinking of it again.

"I don't know!" she replied, vaguely. Soon his voice came again:

"You understand, Nell, that I distinctly disapprove of our making any effort *that way*." She didn't think that her husband was a hypocrite. She did not generalize when she felt deeply. But she knew that her husband didn't want the responsibility of making any effort. Somehow she felt that he would be glad if she should make the effort and take the responsibility on her own shoulders.

Why had he lugged it into plain light again if he hadn't expected her to do something? How could she accomplish it without making it unpleasant for him? Before daylight she had it planned, and she turned once and kissed her husband, protectingly.

* * * * *

That August morning, as she walked up the dusty road, fringed with blossoming golden-rod, toward the little cottage of the Leicesters, she was content, in spite of her tumultuous mind. It was all so heavenly quiet! the thin, drooping elms, with their pendent vines, like the waterfalls of a maiden lady; the dusty snarls of blackberry bushes; the midsummer contented repose of the air, and that distantly murmuring sea—it was all as she remembered it in her childhood. A gap of disturbed years closed up, and peace once more! The old man slowly dying up beyond in that deserted, gambrel-roofed house would Forget and forgive.

Mrs. Leicester received her effusively, anxious now not to meddle dangerously in what promised to be a ticklish business. Mrs. Edwards must stay as long as she would. The Sundays were especially lonely, for Mr. Leicester did not think she should bear the heat of the city so soon, and left her alone when he returned to Brooklyn for his Sunday sermon. Of course, stay as long as Mr. Edwards could spare her—a month; if possible.

At the mention of Mr. Edwards the young wife had a twinge of remorse for the manner in which she had evaded him—her first deceit for his sake. She had talked vaguely about visiting a friend at Moriches, and her husband had fallen in with the idea. New York was like a finely divided furnace, radiating heat from every tube-like street. So she was to go for a week or ten days. Perhaps the matter would arrange itself before that time was up; if not, she would write him what she had done. But ten days seemed so long that she put uncomfortable thoughts out of her head.

Mrs. Leicester showed her to her room, a pretty little box, into which the woodbine peeped and nodded, and where from one window she could get a glimpse of the green marshes, with the sea beyond. After chatting awhile, her hostess went out, protesting that her guest must be too tired to come down. Mrs. Edwards gladly accepted the excuse, ate the luncheon the maid brought, in two bites, and then prepared to sally forth.

She knew the path between the lush meadow-grass so well! Soon she was at the entrance to the "Oliphant place." It was more run down than two years ago; the lower rooms were shut up tight in massive green blinds that reached to the warped boards of the veranda. It looked old, neglected, sad, and weary; and she felt almost justified in her mission. She could bring comfort and light to the dying man.

In a few minutes she was smothering the hysterical enthusiasm of her old friend, Dinah. It was as she had expected: Oliphant had grown more suspicious and difficult for the last two years, and had refused to see a doctor, or, in fact, anyone but the Rev. Dr. Shapless and a country lawyer whom he used when absolutely necessary. He hadn't left his room for a month; Dinah had carried him the little he had seen fit to eat. She was evidently relieved to see her old mistress once more at hand. She asked no questions, and Mrs. Edwards knew that she would obey her absolutely.

They were sitting in Oliphant's office, a small closet off the more pretentious library, and Mrs. Edwards could see the disorder into which the old man's papers had fallen. The confusion preceding death had already set in.

After laying aside her hat, she went up, unannounced, to her uncle's room, determined not to give him an opportunity to dismiss her out of hand. He was lying with his eyes closed, so she busied herself in putting the room to rights, in order to quiet her nerves. The air was heavily languorous, and soon in the quiet country afternoon her self-consciousness fell asleep, and she went dreaming over the irresponsible past, the quiet summers, and the strange, stern old man. Suddenly she knew that he was awake and watching her closely. She started, but, as he said nothing, she went on with her dusting, her hand shaking.

He made no comment while she brought him his supper and arranged the bed. Evidently he would accept her services. Her spirit leapt up with the joy of success. That was the first step. She deemed it best to send for her meagre satchel, and to take possession of her old room. In that way she could be more completely mistress of the situation and of him. She had had no very definite ideas of action before that afternoon; her one desire had been to be on the field of battle, to see what could be done, perhaps to use a few tears to soften the implacable heart. But now her field opened out. She must keep the old man to herself, within her own care—not that she knew specifically what good that would do, but it was the tangible nine points of the law.

The next morning Oliphant showed more life, and while she was helping him into his dressing-gown, he vouchsafed a few grunts, followed by a piercing inquiry:

"Is *he* dead yet?"

The young wife flushed with indignant protest.

"Broke, perhaps?"

"Well, we haven't starved yet." But she was cowed by his cynical examination. He relapsed into silence; his old, bristly face assumed a sardonic peace whenever his eyes fell upon her. She speculated about that wicked beatitude; it made her uncomfortable. He was still, however—never a word from morning till night.

The routine of little duties about the sickroom she performed punctiliously. In that way she thought to put her conscience to rights, to regard herself in the kind rôle of ministering angel. That illusion was hard to attain in the presence of the sardonic comment the old man seemed to add. After all, it was a vulgar grab after the candied fruits of this life.

She had felt it necessary to explain her continued absence to her husband. Mrs. Leicester, who did not appear to regard her actions as unexpected, had undertaken that delicate business. Evidently, she had handled it tactfully, for Mrs. Edwards soon received a hurried note. He felt that she was performing her most obvious duty; he could not but be pleased that the breach caused by him had been thus tardily healed. As long as her uncle continued in his present extremity, she must remain. He would run down to the Leicesters over Sundays, etc. Mrs. Edwards was relieved; it was nice of him—more than that, delicate—not to be stuffy over her action.

The uppermost question these days of monotonous speculation was how long would this ebb-tide of a tenacious life flow. She took a guilty interest in her uncle's condition, and yet she more than half wished him to live. Sometimes he would rally. Something unfulfilled troubled his mind, and once he even crawled downstairs. She found him shakily puttering over the papers in his huge davenport. He asked her to make a fire in the grate, and then, gathering up an armful of papers, he knelt down on the brick hearth, but suddenly drew back. His deep eyes gleamed hatefully at her. Holding out several stiff papers, he motioned to her to burn them. Usually she would have obeyed docilely enough, but this deviltry of merriment she resented. While she delayed, standing erect before the smouldering sticks, she noticed that a look of terror crept across the sick face. A spasm shook him, and he fainted. After that his weakness kept him in bed. She wondered what he had been so anxious to burn.

From this time her thoughts grew more specific. Just how should she attain her ends? Had he made a will? Could he not now do something for them, or would it be safer to bide their time? Indeed, for a few moments she resolved to decide all by one straightforward prayer. She began, and the old man seemed so contentedly prepared for the scene that she remained dumb.

In this extremity of doubt she longed to get aid from her husband. Yet under the circumstances she dared to admit so little. One Saturday afternoon he called at the house; she was compelled to share some of her perplexities.

"He seems so very feeble," she remarked. They were sitting on the veranda some distance from Oliphant's room, yet their conversation was furtive. "Perhaps he should see a doctor or a minister."

"No, I don't think so," Edwards replied, assuringly. "You see, he doesn't believe in either, and such things should be left to the person himself, as long as he's in his right mind."

"And a lawyer?" Mrs. Edwards continued, probingly.

"Has he asked for one?"

"No, but he seems to find it hard to talk."

"I guess it's best not to meddle. Who's that?"

A little, fat man in baggy black trousers and a seersucker coat was panting up the gentle hill to the gate. He had a puggy nose and a heavy, thinly bearded face incased about the eyes in broad steel spectacles.

"That must be Dr. Shapless," she said, in a flutter.

"What of it?" Edwards replied.

"He mustn't come in," she cried, with sudden energy. "You must see him, and send him away! He wants to see Uncle Oliphant. Tell him he's too sick—to come another day." Edwards went down the path to meet him. Through the window she could hear a low conversation, and then crunched gravel. Meantime Oliphant seemed restlessly alert, expectant of something, and with suspicious eyes intent on her.

Her heart thumped with relief when the gate clicked. Edwards had been effective that time. Oliphant was trying to say something, but the hot August day had been too much for him—it all ended in a mumble. Then she pulled in the blinds, settled the pillows nervously, and left the room in sheer fright.

The fight had begun—and grimly.

* * * * *

"I wonder what the old cove wanted?" Edwards said the next day; "he was dead set on seeing your uncle; said he had an engagement with him, and looked me up and down. I stood him off, but he'll be down again."

"Don't you know about that new fund the Methodists are raising? Uncle Oliphant has always helped the Methodists, and I suppose Dr. Shapless wanted to see him about some contributions." Edwards asked no more questions, and, in fact, got back to town on a pretext of business that afternoon. He was clearly of no use in Quogue. His wife sent for a physician that week. It was tardy justice to propriety, but it was safe then, for Oliphant had given up all attempts to talk.

The doctor came, looked at the old man, and uttered a few remarks. He would come again. Mrs. Edwards did not need to be told that the end was near. The question was, how soon?

That week had another scare. Somehow old Slocum, the local lawyer Oliphant used, had been summoned, and one morning she ran across him in the hall. She knew the man well of old. He was surprised and pleased to see her, and it was not difficult to get him out of the house without arousing his suspicions. But he would talk so boisterously; she felt her uncle's eyes aflame in anger.

"Be sure and send for me when he rallies, quick," Slocum whispered loudly in the hall. "Perhaps we can do a little something for some folks." And with a wink he went out.

Had she done the clever thing, after all, in shooing old Slocum out? Her mind went over the possibilities in tense anxiety. If there were no will, James, Jr., would get the whole, she thought. If there was a will already in the house, in that old davenport, what then? Would Shapless get the money? She grew keen in speculation. To leave her in the lurch, to give it all to that greasy Shapless, would be the most natural trick in the world for an incisive old fellow like Oliphant.

It was too much! She cried a little, and she began to hate the helpless man upstairs. It occurred to her to poke about in the papers in the adjoining room. She must do it at once, for she expected Edwards every moment.

First she ran upstairs to see if her uncle was all right. As soon as she entered, he glared at her bitterly and would have spoken. She noted the effort and failure, elated. He could not betray her now, unless he rallied wonderfully. So leaving the door ajar, she walked firmly downstairs. Now she could

satisfy her desire.

If the money were *all* left to Shapless? She might secure the will, and bargain with the old parasite for a few thousands of dollars. Her mind was full of wild schemes. If she only knew a little more about affairs! She had heard of wills, and read many novels that turned upon wills lost or stolen. They had always seemed to her improbable, mere novels. Necessity was stranger than fiction.

It did not take long to find the very articles she was after; evidently Oliphant had been overhauling them on that last excursion from his room. The package lay where he had dropped it when he fainted. There were two documents. She unfolded them on the top of the mussy desk. They were hard reading in all their legal dress, and her head was filled with fears lest her husband should walk in. She could make out, however, that Oliphant was much richer than she had ever vaguely supposed, and that since her departure he had relented toward his son. For by the first will in date she was the principal heir, a lot of queer charities coming in besides. In the second, James, Jr., received something. Her name did not appear. Several clauses had been added from time to time, each one giving more money and lands to the Methodists. Probably Shapless was after another codicil when he called.

It had taken her into the twilight to gain even a meagre idea of all this. She was preparing to fold the documents up in their common wrapper, when she felt the door open behind her. All she could see in the terror of the moment was the gaunt white arm of her uncle, and the two angry eyes in the shaking head. She shrieked, from pure nervousness, and at her cry the old man fell in a heap.

The accident steeled her nerves. Dinah came in in a panic, and as they were lifting the bony frame from the floor Edwards arrived. With his assistance they got the sick man to bed.

That was clearly the last gasp. Yet Mrs. Edwards shook in dread every time she entered the room. The look seemed conscious still, intensified malignity and despair creeping in. She was afraid and guilty and unstrung. Perhaps, with some sudden revival of his forces, he would kill her. He was lying there, too still for defeat. His life had been an expression of hates; the last one might be dreadful.

Yet she stood to her post in the sick-room, afraid, as she knew, to trust herself with her husband. Her mind was soiled with seething thoughts, and, in contrast, his seemed so fresh and pure! If she could keep him unsuspicious of her, all would be well in the end. But the task she had set herself for him was hard, so hard!

That night when all was still she crept downstairs and groped about in the davenport for the papers. They had been lying there unopened where they had fallen earlier in the evening. She struck a match, caught up the fresher document, and hugged it to her as she toiled upstairs. When she had tucked it away in her satchel the end seemed near. They must wait now.

She put her husband out of her mind. Outside, the warm summer days died away over the sea, one by one, and the grass beyond the gates grew heavier with dust. Life was tense in its monotony.

* * * * *

That had happened on a Saturday; Monday Dr. Shapless came again, his shoes dusty from his long walk from the station. He looked oiled as ever, but more determined. Mrs. Edwards daringly permitted him to see the dying man—he had been lying in a stupor—for she was afraid that the reverend doctor's loud tones in the hall might exasperate Oliphant to some wild act. Dr. Shapless shut her from the room when he went in, but he did not stay long. A restless despair had settled down on her uncle's face, there to remain for the last few hours.

Her heart sank; she longed to cry out to the poor old man on the bed that *she* did not want his money. She remained with him all night, yet she did not dare to approach his bed. She would disturb him.

He died the next afternoon, and at the last he looked out on the world and at her with his final note of intelligence. It was pathetic, a suggestion of past tenderness defeated, and of defeat in hate, too. She shuddered as she closed his sad eyes; it was awful to meddle with a man's last purposes.

The funeral was almost surreptitious; old Dinah, the Leicesters, and the Edwardses occupied the one carriage that followed him to the graveyard across the village. They met a hay-cart or two on their way, but no curious neighbors. Old Oliphant's death aroused no interest in this village, ridden with summer strangers.

The day was impersonally suave and tender, with its gentle haze and autumn premonitions. Mr. Leicester said a few equivocal words, while Mrs. Edwards gazed helplessly into the grave. The others fell back behind the minister. Between her and her uncle down there something remained unexplained, and her heart ached.

* * * * *

They spent that night at the Leicesters', for Mrs. Edwards wearily refused to return to the Oliphant place. Edwards carried the keys over to Slocum, and told him to take the necessary steps toward settling the old man's affairs. The next day they returned to the little flat in Harlem. The Leicesters found their presence awkward, now that there was nothing to do, and Mrs. Edwards was craving to be alone with her husband, to shut out the past month from their lives as soon as possible.

These September days, while they both waited in secret anxiety, she clung to him as she had never before. He was pure, the ideal she had voluntarily given up, given up for his sake in order that he might have complete perfection. His delicate sensitiveness kept him from referring to that painful month, or to possible expectations. She worshipped him the more, and was thankful for his complete ignorance. Their common life could go on untainted and noble.

Yet Edwards betrayed his nervous anxiety. His eagerness for the mail every morning, his early return from business, indicated his troubled mind.

The news came at breakfast-time. Mrs. Edwards handed Slocum's letter across the table and waited, her face wanly eager. The letter was long; it took some half-dozen large letter-sheets for the country lawyer to tell his news, but in the end it came. He had found the will and was happy to say that Mrs. Edwards was a large, a very large, beneficiary. Edwards read these closing sentences aloud. He threw down the letter and tried to take her in his arms. But she tearfully pushed him away, and then, repenting, clasped his knees.

"Oh, Will! it's so much, so very much," she almost sobbed.

Edwards looked as if that were not an irremediable fault in their good luck. He said nothing. Already he was planning their future movements. Under the circumstances neither cared to discuss their happiness, and so they got little fun from the first bloom.

In spite of Mrs. Edwards's delicate health and her expected confinement they decided to go abroad. She was feverishly anxious for him to begin his real work at once, to prove himself; and it might be easier to forget her one vicious month when the Atlantic had been crossed. They put their affairs to rights hurriedly, and early in November sailed for France.

The Leicesters were at the dock to bid them God-speed and to chirrup over their good fortune.

"It's all like a good, old-fashioned story," beamed Mrs. Leicester, content with romance for once, now that it had arranged itself so decorously.

"Very satisfactory; quite right," the clergyman added. "We'll see you soon in Paris. We're thinking of a gay vacation, and will let you know."

Edwards looked fatuous; his wife had an orderly smile. She was glad when Sandy Hook sank into the mist. She had only herself to avoid now.

They took some pleasant apartments just off the Rue de Rivoli, and then their life subsided into the complacent commonplace of possession. She was outwardly content to enjoy with her husband, to go to the galleries, the opera, to try the restaurants, and to drive.

Yet her life went into one idea, a very fixed idea, such as often takes hold of women in her condition. She was eager to see him at work. If he accomplished something—even content!—she would feel justified and perhaps happy. As to the child, the idea grew strange to her. Why should she have a third in the problem? For she saw that the child must take its part in her act, must grow up and share their life and inherit the Oliphant money. In brief, she feared the yet unborn stranger, to whom she would be responsible in this queer way. And the child could not repair the wrong as could her husband. Certainly the child was an alien.

She tried to be tender of her husband in his boyish glee and loafing. She could understand that he needed to accustom himself to his new freedom, to have his vacation first. She held herself in, tensely, refraining from criticism lest she might mar his joy. But she counted the days, and when her child had come, she said to herself, *then* he must work.

This morbid life was very different from what she had fancied the rich future would be, as she looked into the grave, the end of her struggle, that September afternoon. But she had grown to demand so much more from *him*; she had grown so grave! His bright, boyish face, the gentle curls, had been dear enough, and now she looked for the lines a man's face should have. Why was he so terribly at ease? The world was bitter and hard in its conditions, and a man should not play.

Late in December the Leicesters called; they were like gleeful sparrows, twittering about. Mrs. Edwards shuddered to see them again, and when they were gone she gave up and became ill.

Her tense mind relieved itself in hysterics, which frightened her to further repression. Then one night she heard herself moaning: "Why did I have to take all? It was so little, so very little, I wanted, and I had to take all. Oh, Will, Will, you should have done for yourself! Why did you need this? Why couldn't you do as other men do? It's no harder for you than for them." Then she recollected herself. Edwards was holding her hand and soothing her.

Some weeks later, when she was very ill, she remembered those words, and wondered if he had suspected anything. Her child came and died, and she forgot this matter, with others. She lay nerveless for a long time, without thought; Edwards and the doctor feared melancholia. So she was taken to Italy for the cold months. Edwards cared for her tenderly, but his caressing presence was irritating, instead of soothing, to her. She was hungry for a justification that she could not bring about.

At last it wore on into late spring. She began to force herself back into the old activities, in order to leave no excuse for further dawdling. Her attitude became terribly judicial and suspicious.

An absorbing idleness had settled down over Edwards, partly excused to himself by his wife's long illness. When he noticed that his desultory days made her restless, he took to loafing about galleries or making little excursions, generally in company with some forlorn artist he had picked up. He had nothing, after all, so very definite that demanded his time; he had not yet made up his mind for any attempts. And something in the domestic atmosphere unsettled him. His wife held herself aloof, with alien sympathies, he felt.

So they drifted on to discontent and unhappiness until she could bear it no longer without expression.

"Aren't we to return to Paris soon?" she remarked one morning as they idled over a late breakfast. "I am strong now, and I should like to settle down."

Edwards took the cue, idly welcoming any change.

"Why, yes, in the fall. It's too near the summer now, and there's no hurry."

"Yes, there *is* hurry," his wife replied, hastily. "We have lost almost eight months."

"Out of a lifetime," Edwards put in, indulgently.

She paused, bewildered by the insinuation of his remark. But her mood was too incendiary to avoid taking offence. "Do you mean that that would be a *life*, loafing around all day, enjoying this, that, and the other fine pleasure? That wasn't what we planned."

"No, but I don't see why people who are not driven should drive themselves. I want to get the taste of Harlem out of my mouth." He was a bit sullen. A year ago her strict inquiry into his life would have been absurd. Perhaps the money, her money, gave her the right.

"If people don't drive themselves," she went on, passionately, "they ought to be driven. It's cowardly to take advantage of having money to do nothing. You wanted the—the opportunity to do something. Now you have it."

Edwards twisted his wicker chair into uncomfortable places. "Well, are you sorry you happen to have given me the chance?" He looked at her coldly, so that a suspicious thought shot into her mind.

"Yes," she faltered, "if it means throwing it away, I *am* sorry."

She dared no more. Her mind was so close on the great sore in her gentle soul. He lit a cigarette, and sauntered down the hotel garden. But the look he had given her—a queer glance of disagreeable intelligence—illumined her dormant thoughts.

What if he had known all along? She remembered his meaning words that hot night when they talked over Oliphant's illness for the first time. And why had he been so yielding, so utterly passive, during the sordid drama over the dying man? What kept him from alluding to the matter in any way? Yes, he must have encouraged her to go on. *She* had been his tool, and he the passive spectator. The blind certainty of a woman made the thing assured, settled. She picked up the faint yellow rose he had laid by her plate, and tore it slowly into fine bits. On the whole, he was worse than she.

But before he returned she stubbornly refused to believe herself.

* * * * *

In the autumn they were again in Paris, in soberer quarters, which were conducive to effort. Edwards was working fitfully with several teachers, goaded on, as he must confess to himself, by a pitiless wife. Not much was discussed between them, but he knew that the price of the *statu quo* was continued labor.

She was watching him; he felt it and resented it, but he would not understand. All the idealism, the worship of the first sweet months in marriage, had gone. Of course that incense had been foolish, but it was sweet. Instead, he felt these suspicious, intolerant eyes following his soul in and out on its feeble errands. He comforted himself with the trite consolation that he was suffering from the natural readjustment in a woman's mind. It was too drastic for that, however.

He was in the habit of leaving her in the evenings of the opera. The light was too much for her eyes, and she was often tired. One wet April night, when he returned late, he found her up, sitting by the window that overlooked the steaming boulevard. Somehow his soul was rebellious, and when she asked him about the opera he did not take the pains to lie.

"Oh, I haven't been there," he muttered, "I am beastly tired of it all. Let's get out of it; to St. Petersburg or Norway—for the summer," he added, guiltily.

Now that the understanding impended she trembled, for hitherto she had never actually known. In suspicion there was hope. So she almost entreated.

"We go to Vienna next winter anyway, and I thought we had decided on Switzerland for the summer."

"You decided! But what's the use of keeping up the mill night and day? There's plenty of opportunity over there for an educated gentleman with money, if what you are after is a 'sphere' for me."

"You want to—to go back now?"

"No, I want to be let alone."

"Don't you care to pay for all you have had? Haven't you any sense of justice to Uncle Oliphant, to your opportunities?"

"Oliphant!" Edwards laughed, disagreeably. "Wouldn't he be pleased to have an operetta, a Gilbert and Sullivan affair, dedicated to him! No. I have tried to humor your idea of making myself famous. But what's the use of being wretched?" The topic seemed fruitless. Mrs. Edwards looked over to the slight, careless figure. He was sitting dejectedly on a large fauteuil, smoking. He seemed fagged and spiritless. She almost pitied him and gave in, but suddenly she rose and crossed the room.

"We've made ourselves pretty unhappy," she said, apologetically, resting her hand on the lapel of his coat. "I guess it's mostly my fault, Will. I have wanted so much that you should do something fine with Uncle Oliphant's money, with *yourself*. But we can make it up in other ways."

"What are you so full of that idea for?" Edwards asked, curiously. "Why can't you be happy, even as happy as you were in Harlem?" His voice was hypocritical.

"Don't you know?" she flashed back. "You *do* know, I believe. Tell me, did you look over those papers on the davenport that night Uncle James fainted?"

The unexpected rush of her mind bewildered him. A calm lie would have set matters to rights, but he was not master of it.

"So you were willing—you knew?"

"It wasn't my affair," he muttered, weakly, but she had left him.

He wandered about alone for a few days until the suspense became intolerable. When he turned up one afternoon in their apartments he found preparations on foot for their departure.

"We're going away?" he asked.

"Yes, to New York."

"Not so fast," he interrupted, bitterly. "We might as well face the matter openly. What's the use of going back there?"

"We can't live here, and besides I shall be wanted there."

"You can't do anything now. Talk sensibly about it. I will not go back."

She looked at him coldly, critically. "I cabled Slocum yesterday, and we must live somehow."

"You—" but she laid her hand on his arm. "It makes no difference now, you know, and it can't be changed. I've done everything."

CHICAGO, August, 1895.

A REJECTED TITIAN

"John," my wife remarked in horrified tones, "he's coming to Rome!"

"Who is coming to Rome—the Emperor?"

"Uncle Ezra—see," she handed me the telegram. "Shall arrive in Rome Wednesday morning; have Watkins at the Grand Hotel."

I handed the despatch to Watkins.

"Poor uncle!" my wife remarked.

"He will get it in the neck," I added, profanely.

"They ought to put nice old gentlemen like your uncle in bond when they reach Italy," Watkins mused, as if bored in advance. "The *antichitàs* get after them, like—like confidence-men in an American city, and the same old story is the result; they find, in some mysterious fashion, a wonderful Titian, a forgotten Giorgione, cheap at *cinque mille lire*. Then it's all up with them. His pictures are probably decalcomanias, you know, just colored prints pasted over board. Why, we *know* every picture in Venice; it's simply *impossible*—"

Watkins was a connoisseur; he had bought his knowledge in the dearest school of experience.

"What are you going to do, Mr. Watkins?" my wife put in. "Tell him the truth?"

"There's nothing else to do. I used up all my ambiguous terms over that daub he bought in the Piazza di Spagna—'reminiscential' of half a dozen worthless things, 'suggestive,' etc. I can't work them over again." Watkins was lugubrious.

"Tell him the truth as straight as you can; it's the best medicine." I was Uncle Ezra's heir; naturally, I felt for the inheritance.

"Well," my wife was invariably cheerful, "perhaps he has found something valuable; at least, one of them may be; isn't it possible?"

Watkins looked at my wife indulgently.

"He's been writing me about them for a month, suggesting that, as I was about to go on to Venice, he would like to have me see them; such treasures as I should find them. I have been waiting until he should get out. It isn't a nice job, and your uncle—"

"There are three of them, Aunt Mary writes: Cousin Maud has bought one, with the advice of Uncle Ezra and Professor Augustus Painter, and Painter himself is the last one to succumb."

"They have all gone mad," Watkins murmured.

"Where did Maudie get the cash?" I asked.

"She had a special gift on coming of age, and she has been looking about for an opportunity for throwing it away"—my wife had never sympathized with my cousin, Maud Vantweekle. "She had better save it for her trousseau, if she goes on much more with that young professor. Aunt Mary should look after her."

Watkins rose to go.

"Hold on a minute," I said. "Just listen to this delicious epistle from Uncle Ezra."

"'... We have hoped that you would arrive in Venice before we break up our charming home here.

Mary has written you that Professor Painter has joined us at the Palazzo Palladio, complementing our needs and completing our circle. He has an excellent influence for seriousness upon Maud; his fine, manly qualities have come out. Venice, after two years of Berlin, has opened his soul in a really remarkable manner. All the beauty lying loose around here has been a revelation to him—'"

"Maud's beauty," my wife interpreted.

"'And our treasures you will enjoy so much—such dashes of color, such great slaps of light! I was the first to buy—they call it a Savoldo, but I think no third-rate man could be capable of so much—such reaching out after infinity. However, that makes little difference. I would not part with it, now that I have lived these weeks with so fine a thing. Maud won a prize in her Bonifazio, which she bought under my advice. Then Augustus secured the third one, a Bissola, and it has had the greatest influence upon him already; it has given him his education in art. He sits with it by the hour while he is at work, and its charm has gradually produced a revolution in his character. We had always found him too Germanic, and he had immured himself in that barbarous country for so long over his Semitic books that his nature was stunted on one side. His picture has opened a new world for him. Your Aunt Mary and I already see the difference in his character; he is gentler, less narrowly interested in the world. This precious bit of fine art has been worth its price many times, but I don't think Augustus would part with it for any consideration now that he has lived with it and learned to know its power.'"

"I can't see why he is coming to Rome," Watkins commented at the end. "If they are confident that they know all about their pictures, and don't care anyway who did them, and are having all this spiritual love-feast, what in the world do they want any expert criticism of their text for? Now for such people to buy pictures, when they haven't a mint of money! Why don't they buy something within their means really fine—a coin, a Van Dyck print? I could get your uncle a Whistler etching for twenty-five pounds; a really fine thing, you know—"

This was Watkins's hobby.

"Oh, well, it won't be bad in the end of the hall at New York; it's as dark as pitch there; and then Uncle Ezra can leave it to the Metropolitan as a Giorgione. It will give the critics something to do. And I suppose that in coming on here he has in mind to get an indorsement for his picture that will give it a commercial value. He's canny, is my Uncle Ezra, and he likes to gamble too, like the rest of us. If he should draw a prize, it wouldn't be a bad thing to brag of."

Watkins called again the next morning.

"Have you seen Uncle Ezra?" my wife asked, anxiously.

"No. Three telegrams. Train was delayed—I suppose by the importance of the works of art it's bringing on."

"When do you expect him?"

"About noon."

"Mr. Watkins," my wife flamed out, "I believe you are just shirking it, to meet that poor old man with his pictures. You ought to have been at the station, or at least at the hotel. Why, it's twelve now!"

Watkins hung his head.

"I believe you are a coward," my wife went on. "Just think of his arriving there, all excitement over his pictures, and finding you gone!"

"Well, well," I said, soothingly, "it's no use to trot off now, Watkins; stay to breakfast. He will be in shortly. When he finds you are out at the hotel he will come straight on here, I am willing to bet."

Watkins looked relieved at my suggestion.

"I believe you meant to run away all along," my wife continued, severely, "and to come here for refuge."

Watkins sulked.

We waited in suspense, straining our ears to hear the sound of a cab stopping in the street. At last one did pull up. My wife made no pretence of indifference, but hurried to the window.

"It's Uncle Ezra, with a big, black bundle. John, run down—No! there's a facchino."

We looked at each other and laughed.

"The three!"

Our patron of art came in, with a warm, gentle smile, his tall, thin figure a little bent with the fatigue of the journey, his beard a little grayer and dustier than usual, and his hands all a-tremble with nervous impatience and excitement. He had never been as tremulous before an opinion from the Supreme Court. My wife began to purr over him soothingly; Watkins looked sheepish; I hurried them all off to breakfast.

The omelette was not half eaten before Uncle Ezra jumped up, and began unstrapping the oil-cloth covering to the pictures. There was consternation at the table. My wife endeavored soothingly to bring Uncle Ezra's interest back to breakfast, but he was not to be fooled. My Uncle Ezra was a courageous man.

"Of course you fellows," he said, smiling at Watkins, in his suave fashion, "are just whetting your knives for me, I know. That's right. I want to know the worst, the hardest things you can say. You can't destroy the intrinsic *worth* of the pictures for us; I have lived with mine too long, and know how precious it is!"

At last the three pictures were tipped up against the wall, and the Madonnas and saints in gold, red, and blue were beaming out insipidly at us. Uncle Ezra affected indifference. Watkins continued with the omelette. "We'll look them over after breakfast," he said, severely, thus getting us out of the hole temporarily.

After breakfast my wife cooked up some engagement, and hurried me off. We left Uncle Ezra in the hands of the physician. Two hours later, when we entered, the operation had been performed—we could see at a glance—and in a bloody fashion. The pictures were lying about the vast room as if they had been spat at. Uncle Ezra smiled wanly at us, with the courage of the patient who is a sceptic about physicians.

"Just what I expected," he said, briskly, to relieve Watkins, who was smoking, with the air of a man who has finished his job and is now cooling off. "Mr. Watkins thinks Painter's picture and Maud's are copies, Painter's done a few years ago and Maud's a little older, the last century. My Savoldo he finds older, but repainted. You said cinque cento, Mr. Watkins?"

"Perhaps, Mr. Williams," Watkins answered, and added, much as a dog would give a final shake to the bird, "*Much* repainted, hardly anything left of the original. There may be a Savoldo underneath, but you don't see it." Watkins smiled at us knowingly. My wife snubbed him.

"Of course, Uncle Ezra, *that's* one man's opinion. I certainly should not put much faith in one critic, no matter how eminent he may be. Just look at the guide-books and see how the 'authorities' swear at one another. Ruskin says every man is a fool who can't appreciate his particular love, and Burckhardt calls it a daub, and Eastlake insipid. Now, there are a set of young fellows who think they know all about paint and who painted what. They're renaming all the great masterpieces. Pretty soon they will discover that some tenth-rate fellow painted the Sistine Chapel."

Watkins put on an aggrieved and expostulatory manner. Uncle Ezra cut in.

"Oh! my dear! Mr. Watkins may be right, quite right. It's his business to know, I am sure, and I anticipated all that he would say; indeed, I have come off rather better than I expected. There is old paint in it somewhere."

"Pretty far down," Watkins muttered. My wife bristled up, but Uncle
Ezra assumed his most superb calm.

"It makes no difference to me, of course, as far as the *worth* of the work of art is concerned. I made up my mind before I came here that my picture was worth a great deal to me, much more than I paid for it." There was a heroic gasp. Watkins interposed mercilessly, "And may I ask, Mr. Williams, what you did give for it?"

Uncle Ezra was an honest man. "Twenty-five hundred lire," he replied, sullenly.

"Excuse me" (Watkins was behaving like a pitiless cad), "but you paid a great deal too much for it, I assure you. I could have got it for——"

"Mr. Watkins," my wife was hardly civil to him, "it doesn't matter much what you could have got it for."

"No," Uncle Ezra went on bravely, "I am a little troubled as to what this may mean to Maud and Professor Painter, for you see their pictures are copies."

"Undoubted modern copies," the unquenchable Watkins emended.

"Maud has learned a great deal from her picture. And as for Painter, it has been an education in art, an education in life. He said to me the night before I came away, 'Mr. Williams, I wouldn't take two thousand for that picture; it's been the greatest influence in my life.'"

I thought Watkins would have convulsions.

"And it has brought those two young souls together in a marvellous way, this common interest in fine art. You will find Maud a much more serious person, Jane. No, if I were Painter I certainly should not care a fig whether it proves to be a copy or not. I shouldn't let that influence me in my love for such an educational wonder."

The bluff was really sublime, but painful. My wife gave a decided hint to Watkins that his presence in such a family scene was awkward. He took his hat and cane. Uncle Ezra rose and grasped him cordially by the hand.

"You have been very generous, Mr. Watkins," he said, in his own sweet way, "to do such an unpleasant job. It's a large draft to make on the kindness of a friend."

"Oh, don't mention it, Mr. Williams; and if you want to buy something really fine, a Van Dyck print—a ——"

Uncle Ezra was shooing him toward the door. From the stairs we could still hear his voice. "Or a Whistler etching for twenty-five pounds, I could get you, now, a very fine——"

"No, thank you, Mr. Watkins," Uncle Ezra said, firmly. "I don't believe
I have any money just now for such an investment."

My wife tiptoed about the room, making faces at the exposed masterpieces. "What shall we do?" Uncle Ezra came back into the room, his face a trifle grayer and more worn. "Capital fellow, that Watkins," he said; "so firm and frank."

"Uncle," I ventured at random, "I met Flügel the other day in the street. You know Flügel's new book on the Renaissance. He's the coming young critic in art, has made a wonderful reputation the last three years, is on the *Beaux Arts* staff, and really *knows*. He is living out at Frascati. I could telegraph and have him here this afternoon, perhaps."

"Well, I don't know;" his tone, however, said "Yes." "I don't care much for expert advice—for specialists. But it wouldn't do any harm to hear what he has to say. And Maud and Painter have made up their minds that Maud's is a Titian."

So I ran out and sent off the despatch. My wife took Uncle Ezra down to the Forum and attempted to console him with the ugliness of genuine antiquity, while I waited for Flügel. He came in a tremendous hurry, his little, muddy eyes winking hard behind gold spectacles.

"Ah, yes," he began to paw the pictures over as if they were live stock, "that was bought for a Bonifazio," he had picked up Maud's ruby-colored prize. "Of course, of course, it's a copy, an old copy, of Titian's picture, No. 3,405, in the National Gallery at London. There is a replica in the Villa Ludovisi here at Rome. It's a stupid copy, some alterations, all for the bad—worthless—well, not to the *antichità*, for it must be 1590, I should say. But worthless for us and in bad condition. I wouldn't give cinque lire for it."

"And the Bissola?" I said. "Oh, that was done in the seventeenth century—it would make good kindling. But this," he turned away from Painter's picture with a gesture of contempt, "this is Domenico Tintoretto fast enough, at least what hasn't been stippled over and painted out. St. Agnes's leg here is entire, and that tree in the background is original. A damn bad man, but there are traces of his slop work. Perhaps the hair is by him, too. Well, good-by, old fellow; I must be off to dinner."

That was slight consolation; a leg, a tree, and some wisps of hair in a picture three feet six by four feet eight. Our dinner that evening was labored. The next morning Uncle Ezra packed his three treasures tenderly, putting in cotton-wool at the edges, my wife helping him to make them comfortable. We urged him to stay over with us for a few days; we would all go on later to Venice. But Uncle Ezra seemed moved by some hidden cause. Back he would trot at once. "Painter will want his picture," he said, "he has been waiting on in Venice just for this, and I must not keep him." Watkins turned up as we were getting into the cab to see Uncle Ezra off, and insisted upon accompanying us to the station. My wife took the opportunity to rub into him Flügel's remarks, which, at least, made Watkins out shady in chronology. At the station we encountered a new difficulty. The ticket collector would not let the

pictures through the gate. My uncle expostulated in pure Tuscan. Watkins swore in Roman.

"Give him five lire, Mr. Williams."

Poor Uncle Ezra fumbled in his pocket-book for the piece of money. He had never bribed in his life. It was a terrible moral fall, to see him tremblingly offer the piece of scrip. The man refused, "positive orders, *permesso* necessary," etc., etc. The bell rang; there was a rush. Uncle Ezra looked unhappy.

"Here," Watkins shouted, grabbing the precious pictures in a manner far from reverent, "I'll send these on, Mr. Williams; run for your train." Uncle Ezra gave one undecided glance, and then yielded. "You will look after them," he pleaded, "carefully."

"You shall have them safe enough," my wife promised.

"Blast the pasteboards," Watkins put in under his breath, "the best thing to do with them is to chop 'em up." He was swinging them back and forth under his arm. My wife took them firmly from him. "He shall have his pictures, and not from your ribald hands."

A week later Rome became suddenly oppressively warm. We started off for Venice, Watkins tagging on incorrigibly. "I want to see 'Maud,'" he explained. The pictures had been packed and sent ahead by express. "The storm must have burst, tears shed, tempers cooled, mortification set in," I remarked, as we were being shoved up the Grand Canal toward the Palazzo Palladio. "There they are in the balcony," my wife exclaimed, "waving to us. Something is up; Maudie is hanging back, with Aunt Mary, and Professor Painter is at the other end, with Uncle Ezra."

The first thing that caught the eye after the flurry of greetings was the impudent blue and red of Uncle Ezra's "Sancta Conversazione," Domenico Tintoretto, Savoldo, or what not; St. Agnes's leg and all, beaming at us from the wall. The other two were not there. My wife looked at me. Maudie was making herself very gracious with little Watkins. Painter's solemn face began to lower more and more. Aunt Mary and Uncle Ezra industriously poured oil by the bucket upon the social sea.

At last Maud rose: "You *must* take me over there at once, Mr. Watkins.
It will be such an enjoyment to have someone who really knows about
pictures and has taste." This shot at poor Painter; then to my wife,
"Come, Jane, you will like to see your room."

Painter crossed to me and suggested, lugubriously, a cigar on the balcony. He smoked a few minutes in gloomy silence.

"Does that fellow know anything?" he emitted at last, jerking his head at Watkins, who was pouring out information at Uncle Ezra. I began gently to give Charles Henderson Watkins a fair reputation for intelligence. "I mean anything about art? Of course it doesn't matter what he says about my picture, whether it is a copy or not, but Miss Vantweekle takes it very hard about hers. She blames me for having been with her when she bought it, and having advised her and encouraged her to put six hundred dollars into it."

"Six hundred," I gasped.

"Cheap for a Bonifazio, or a *Titian*, as we thought it."

"Too cheap," I murmured.

"Well, I got bitten for about the same on my own account. I sha'n't get that Rachel's library at Berlin, that's all. The next time you catch me fooling in a subject where I don't know my bearings—like fine art —You see Mr. Williams found my picture one day when he was nosing about at an *antichita's*, and thought it very fine. I admire Mr. Williams tremendously, and I valued his opinion about art subjects much more then than I do now. He and Mrs. Williams were wild over it. They had just bought their picture, and they wanted us each to have one. They have lots of sentiment, you know."

"Lots," I assented.

"Mrs. Williams got at me, and well, she made me feel that it would bring me nearer to Miss Vantweekle. You know she goes in for art, and she used to be impatient with me because I couldn't appreciate. I was dumb when she walked me up to some old Madonna, and the others would go on at a great rate. Well, in a word, I bought it for my education, and I guess I have got it!

"Then the man, he's an old Jew on the Grand Canal—Raffman, you know him? He got out another picture, the Bonifazio. The Williamses began to get up steam over that, too. They hung over that thing Mr. Williams bought, that Savoldo or Domenico Tintoretto, and prowled about the churches and the

galleries finding traces of it here in the style of this picture and that; in short, we all got into a fever about pictures, and Miss Vantweekle invested all the money an aunt had given her before coming abroad, in that Bonifazio.

"I must say that Miss Vantweekle held off some time, was doubtful about the picture; didn't feel that she wanted to put all her money into it. But she caught fire in the general excitement, and I may say"—here a sad sort of conscious smile crept over the young professor's face—"at that time I had a good deal of influence with her. She bought the picture, we brought it home, and put it up at the other end of the hall. We spent hours over that picture, studying out every line, placing every color. We made up our minds soon enough that it wasn't a Bonifazio, but we began to think—now don't laugh, or I'll pitch you over the balcony—it was an early work by Titian. There was an attempt in it for great things, as Mr. Williams said: no small man could have planned it. One night we had been talking for hours about them, and we were all pretty well excited. Mr. Williams suggested getting Watkins's opinion. Maud—Miss Vantweekle said, loftily, 'Oh! it does not make any difference what the critics say about it, the picture means everything to me'; and I, like a fool, felt happier than ever before in my life. The next morning Mr. Williams telegraphed you and set off."

He waited.

"And when he returned?"

"It's been hell ever since."

He was in no condition to see the comic side of the affair. Nor was
Miss Vantweekle. She was on my wife's bed in tears.

"All poor Aunt Higgins's present gone into that horrid thing," she moaned, "and all the dresses I was planning to get in Paris. I shall have to go home looking like a perfect dowd!"

"But think of the influence it has been in your life—the education you have received from that picture. How can you call all that color, those noble faces, 'that horrid thing?'" I said, reprovingly. She sat upright.

"See here, Jerome Parker, if you ever say anything like that again, I will never speak to you any more, or to Jane, though you are my cousins."

"They have tried to return the picture," my wife explained. "Professor Painter and Uncle Ezra took it over yesterday; but, of course, the Jew laughed at them."

"'A copy!' he said." Maud explained, "Why, it's no more a copy than Titian's 'Assumption.' He could show us the very place in a palace on the Grand Canal where it had hung for four hundred years. Of course, all the old masters used the same models, and grouped their pictures alike. Very probably Titian had a picture something like it. What of that? He defied us to find the exact original."

"Well," I remarked, soothingly, "that ought to comfort you, I am sure.
Call your picture a new Titian, and sell it when you get home."

"Mr. Watkins says that's an old trick," moaned Maud, "that story about the palace. He says old Raffman has a pal among the Italian nobility, and works off copies through him all the time. I won't say anything about Uncle Ezra; he has been as kind and good as he can be, only a little too enthusiastic. But Professor Painter!"

She tossed her head.

The atmosphere in the Palazzo Palladio for the next few days was highly charged.

At dinner Uncle Ezra placidly made remarks about the Domenico Tintoretto, almost vaingloriously, I thought. "Such a piece of Venice to carry away. We missed it so much, those days you had it in Rome. It is so precious that I cannot bear to pack it up and lose sight of it for five months. Mary, just see that glorious piece of color over there."

Meantime some kind of conspiracy was on foot. Maud went off whole mornings with Watkins and Uncle Ezra. We were left out as unsympathetic. Painter wandered about like a sick ghost. He would sit glowering at Maud and Watkins while they held whispered conversations at the other end of the hall. Watkins was the hero. He had accepted Flügel's judgment with impudent grace.

"A copy of Titian, of course," he said to me; "really, it is quite hard on poor Miss Vantweekle. People, even learned people, who don't know about such things, had better not advise. I have had the photographs of all Titian's pictures sent on, and we have found the original of your cousin's picture.

Isn't it very like?"

It was very like; a figure was left out in the copy, the light was changed, but still it was a happy guess of Flügel.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" I said to Maud, who had just joined us.

"Oh, Mr. Watkins has kindly consented to manage the matter for me; I believe he has a friend here, an artist, Mr. Hare, who will give expert judgment on it. Then the American vice-consul is a personal friend of Mr. Watkins, and also Count Corner, the adviser at the Academy. We shall frighten the old Jew, sha'n't we, Mr. Watkins?"

I walked over to the despised Madonna that was tipped up on its side, ready to be walked off on another expedition of defamation.

"Poor Bonifazio," I sighed, "Maud, how can you part with a work of fine art that has meant so much to you?"

"Do you think, Jerome, I would go home and have Uncle Higgins, with his authentic Rembrandt and all his other pictures, laugh at me and my Titian? I'd burn it first."

I turned to Uncle Ezra. "Uncle, what strange metamorphosis has happened to this picture? The spiritual light from that color must shine as brightly as ever; the intrinsic value remains forever fixed in Maud's soul; it is desecration to reject such a precious message. Why, it's like sending back the girl you married because her pedigree proved defective, or because she had lost her fortune. It's positively brutal!"

Maud darted a venomous glance at me; however, I had put the judge in a hole.

"I cannot agree with you, Jerome." Uncle Ezra could never be put in a hole. "Maud's case is a very different one from Mr. Painter's or mine. We can carry back what we like personally, but for Maud to carry home a doubtful picture into the atmosphere she has to live in—why, it would be intolerable—with her uncle a connoisseur, all her friends owners of masterpieces." Uncle Ezra had a flowing style. "It would expose her to annoyance, to mortification—constant, daily. Above all, to have taken a special gift, a fund of her aunt's, and to apply it in this mistaken fashion is cruel."

Painter remarked bitterly to me afterward, "He wants to crawl on his share of the responsibility. I'd buy the picture if I could raise the cash, and end the whole miserable business."

Indeed, Watkins seemed the only one blissfully in his element. As my wife remarked, Watkins had exchanged his interest in pictures for an interest in woman. Certainly he had planned his battle well. It came off the next day. They all left in a gondola at an early hour. Painter and I watched them from the balcony. After they were seated, Watkins tossed in carelessly the suspected picture. What went on at the *antichità's* no one of the boat-load ever gave away. Watkins had a hold on the man somehow, and the evidence of the fraud was overwhelming. About noon they came back, Maud holding an enormous envelope in her hand.

"I can never, never thank you enough, Mr. Watkins," she beamed at him. "You have saved me from such mortification and unhappiness, and you were so *clever*."

That night at dinner Uncle Ezra was more than usually genial, and beamed upon Maud and Watkins perpetually. Watkins was quite the hero and did his best to look humble.

"How much rent did the spiritual influence cost, Maud?" I asked. She was too happy to be offended. "Oh, we bought an old ring to make him feel pleased, five pounds, and Mr. Hare's services were worth five pounds, and Mr. Watkins thinks we should give the vice-consul a box of cigars.

"Let's see; ten pounds and a box of cigars, that's three hundred lire at the price of exchange. You had the picture just three weeks, a hundred lire a week for the use of all that education in art, all that spiritual influence. Quite cheap, I should say."

"And Mr. Watkins's services, Maud!" my wife asked, viciously. There was a slight commotion at the table.

"May I, Maud?" Watkins murmured.

"As you please, Charles," Maud replied, with her eyes lowered to the table.

"Maud has given herself," Uncle Ezra said, gleefully.

Painter rose from the table and disappeared into his room. Pretty soon he came out bearing a tray with a dozen champagne glasses, of modern-antique Venetian glass.

"Let me present this to you, Miss Vantweekle," he pronounced, solemnly, "as an engagement token. I, I exchanged my picture for them this morning."

"Some Asti Spumante, Ricci."

"To the rejected Titian—" I suggested for the first toast.

VENICE, May, 1896.

PAYMENT IN FULL

The two black horses attached to the light buggy were chafing in the crisp October air. Their groom was holding them stiffly, as if bolted to the ground, in the approved fashion insisted upon by the mistress of the house. Old Stuart eyed them impatiently from the tower window of the breakfast-room where he was smoking his first cigar; Mrs. Stuart held him in a vise of astounding words.

"They will need not only the lease of a house in London for two years, but a great deal of money besides," she continued in even tones, ignoring his impatience.

"I've done enough for 'em already," the old fellow protested, drawing on his driving gloves over knotted hands stained by age.

Mrs. Stuart rustled the letter that lay, with its envelope, beside her untouched plate. It bore the flourishes of a foreign hotel and a foreign-looking stamp.

"My mother writes that their summer in Wiesbaden has made it surer that Lord Raincroft is interested in Helen. It is evidently a matter of time. I say two years—it may be less."

"Well," her husband broke in. "Haven't they enough to live on?"

"At my marriage," elucidated Mrs. Stuart, imperturbably, "you settled on them securities which yield about five thousand a year. That does not give them the means to take the position which I expect for my family in such a crisis. They must have a large house, must entertain lavishly," she swept an impassive hand toward him in royal emphasis, "and do all that that set expects—to meet them as equals. You could not imagine that Lord Raincroft would marry Helen out of a pension?"

"I don't care a damn how he marries her, or if he marries her at all." He rose, testily. "I guess my family would have thought five thousand a year enough to marry the gals on, and to spare, and it was more'n you ever had in your best days."

"Naturally," her voice showed scorn at his perverse lack of intelligence. "Out contract was made with that understanding."

"Let Helen marry a feller who is willing to go half way for her without a palace. Why didn't you encourage her marrying Blake, as smart a young man as I ever had? She was taken enough with him."

"Because I did not think it fit for my sister to marry your junior partner, who, five years ago, was your best floor-walker."

"Well, Blake is a college-educated man and a hustler. He's bound to get on if I back him. If Blake weren't likely enough, there's plenty more in Chicago like me—smart business men who want a handsome young wife."

"Perhaps we have had enough of Stuart, Hodgson, and Blake. There are other careers in the world outside Chicago."

"Tut, tut! I ain't going to fight here all day. What's the figure?
What's the figure?" He slapped his breeches with the morning paper.

"You will have to take the house in London (the Duke of Waminster's is to let, mamma writes), and give them two hundred thousand dollars in addition to their present income for the two years." She let her eyes fall on his toast and coffee. The old man turned about galvanically and peered at her.

"You're crazy! two hundred thousand these times, so's your sister can get married?"

"She's the last," interposed Mrs. Stuart, deftly.

"I tell you I've done more than most men. I've paid your old bills, your whole family's, your brothers' in college, to the tune of five thousand a year (worthless scamps!) and put 'em in business. You've had all of 'em at Newport and Paris, let alone their living here off and on nearly twenty years. Now you think I can shell out two hundred thousand and a London house as easily as I'd buy pop-corn."

"It was our understanding." Mrs. Stuart began on her breakfast.

"Not much. I've done better by you than I agreed to, because you've been a good wife to me. I settled a nice little fortune on you independent of your widder's rights or your folks."

"Your daughter will benefit by that," Mrs. Stuart corrected.

"Well, what's that to do with it?" He seemed to lose the scent.

"What was our understanding when I agreed to marry you?"

"I've done more'n I promised, I tell you."

"As you very well know, I married you because my family were in desperate circumstances. Our understanding was that I should be a good wife, and you were to make my family comfortable according to my views. Isn't that right?"

The old man blanched at this businesslike presentation; his voice grew feebler.

"And I have, Beatty. I have! I've done everything by you I promised. And I built this great house and another at Newport, and you ain't never satisfied."

"That was our agreement, then," she continued, without mercy. "I was just nineteen, and wise, for a girl, and you had forty-seven pretty wicked years. There wasn't any nonsense between us. I was a stunning girl, the most talked about in New York at that time. I was to be a good wife, and we weren't to have any words. Have I kept my promise?"

"Yes, you've been a good woman, Beatty, better'n I deserved. But won't you take less, say fifty thousand?" He advanced conciliatorily. "That's an awful figure!"

His wife rose, composed as ever and stately in her well-sustained forty years.

"Do you think *any* price is too great in payment for these twenty-one years?" Contempt crept in. "Not one dollar less, two hundred thousand, and I cable mamma to-day."

Stuart shrivelled up.

"Do you refuse?" she remarked, lightly, for he stood irresolutely near the door.

"I won't stand that!" and he went out.

When he had left Mrs. Stuart went on with her breakfast; a young woman Came in hastily from the hall, where she had bade her father good-by. She stood in the window watching the coachman surrender the horses to the old man. The groom moved aside quickly, and in a moment the two horses shot nervously through the ponderous iron gateway. The delicate wheels just grazed the stanchions, lifting the light buggy in the air to a ticklish angle. It righted itself and plunged down the boulevard. Fast horses and cigars were two of the few pleasures still left the old store-keeper. There was another —a costly one—which was not always forthcoming.

Miss Stuart watched the groom close the ornate iron gates, and then turned inquiringly to her mother.

"What's up with papa?"

Mrs. Stuart went on with her breakfast in silence. She was superbly preserved, and queenly for an American woman. It seemed as if something had stayed the natural decay of her powers, of her person, and had put her always at this impassive best. Something had stopped her heart to render her passionless, and thus to embalm her for long years of mechanical activity. She would not decay, but when her time should come she would merely stop—the spring would snap.

The daughter had her mother's height and her dark coloring. But her large, almost animal eyes, and her roughly moulded hands spoke of some homely, prairie inheritance. Her voice was timid and hesitating.

At last Mrs. Stuart, her mail and breakfast exhausted at the same moment, Rose to leave the room.

"Oh, Edith," she remarked, authoritatively, "if you happen to drive down town this morning, will you tell your father that we are going to Winetka for a few weeks? Or telephone him, if you find it more convenient. And send the boys to me. Miss Bates will make all arrangements. I think there is a train about three."

"Why, mamma, you don't mean to stay there! I thought we were to be here all winter. And my lessons at the Art Institute?"

Mrs. Stuart smiled contemptuously. "Lessons at the Art Institute are not the most pressing matter for my daughter, who is about to come out. You can amuse yourself with golf and tennis as long as they last. Then, perhaps, you will have a chance to continue your lessons in Paris."

"And papa!" protested the daughter, "I thought he couldn't leave this winter?"

Mrs. Stuart smiled again provokingly. "Yes?"

"Oh, I can't understand!" Her pleading was almost passionate, but still low and sweet. "I want so much to go on with my lessons with the other girls. And I want to go out here with all the girls I know."

"We will have them at Winetka. And Stuyvesant Wheelright—you liked him last summer."

The girl colored deeply. "I don't want him in the house. I had rather go away. I'll go to Vassar with Mary Archer. You needn't hunt up any man for me."

"Pray, do you think I would tolerate a college woman in my house? It's well enough for school-teachers. And what does your painting amount to? You will paint sufficiently well, I dare say, to sell a few daubs, and so take the bread and butter from some poor girl. But I am afraid, my dear, we couldn't admit your pictures to the gallery."

The girl's eyes grew tearful at this tart disdain. "I love it, and papa has money enough to let me paint 'daubs' as long as I like. Please, please let me go on with it!"

* * * * *

That afternoon the little caravan started for the deserted summer home at Winetka, on a high bluff above the sandy lake-shore. It had been bought years before, when not even the richest citizens dreamed of going East for the summer. Of late it had been used only rarely, in the autumn or late spring, or as a retreat in which to rusticate the boys with their tutor. When filled with a large house-party, it made a jolly place, though not magnificent enough for the developed hospitalities of Mrs. Stuart.

Old Stuart came home to an empty palace. He had not believed that his reserved wife would take such high measures, and he felt miserably lonely after the usual round of elaborate dinners to which he had grown grumblingly accustomed. His one senile passion was his pride in her, and he was avaricious of the lost days while she was absent from her usual victorious post as the mistress of that great house. The next day his heart sank still lower, for he saw in the Sunday papers a little paragraph to the effect that Mrs. Stuart had invited a brilliant house-party to her autumn home in Winetka, and that it was rumored she and her lovely young daughter would spend the winter in London with their relatives. It made the old man angry, for he could see with what deliberation she had planned for a long campaign. Even the comforts of his club were denied him; everyone knew him and everyone smiled at the little domestic disturbance. So he asked his secretary, young Spencer, to make his home for the present in the sprawling, brand-new "palace" that frowned out on the South Boulevard. Young Spencer accepted, out of pity for the old man; for he wasn't a toady and he knew his own worth.

People did talk in the clubs and elsewhere about the divided establishments. It would have been worse had the division come earlier, as had been predicted often enough, or had Mrs. Stuart ever given in her younger days a handle for any gossip. But her conduct had been so frigidly correct that it stood in good service at this crisis. She would not have permitted a scandal. That also was in the contract.

Of course there was communication between the two camps, the gay polo-playing, dinner-giving household on the bluff, and the forlorn, tottering old man with his one aide-de-camp, the blithe young secretary. Now and then the sons would turn up at the offices down-town, amiably expectant of large checks. Stuart grimly referred them to their mother. He had some vague idea of starving the opposition out, but his wife's funds were large and her credit, as long as there should be no recognized rupture, perfect.

The daughter, Edith, frequently established connections. In some way she had got permission to take

her lessons at the Art Institute. Her mother's open contempt for her aesthetic impulses had ruined her illusion about her ability, for Mrs. Stuart knew her ground in painting. But she still loved the atmosphere of the great studio-room at the Art Institute. She liked the poor girls and the Western bohemianism and the queer dresses, and above all she liked to linger over her own little easel, undisturbed by the creative flurry around, dreaming of woods and soft English gardens and happy hours along a river where the water went gently, tenderly, on to the sea. And her sweet eyes, large and black like her mother's, but softer and gentler, to go with her low voice, would moisten a bit from the dream. "So nice," he would murmur to her picture, "to sit here and think of the quiet and rest, such as good pictures always paint. I'd like not to go back with Thomas to the train—to Winetka where they play polo and dress up and dance and flirt, but to sail away over the sea——"

Then her eyes would see in the purplish light of her picture a certain face that meant another life. She would blush to herself, and her voice would stop. For she couldn't think aloud about him.

Some days, when the murky twilight came on early, she would steal away altogether from the gay party in Winetka and spend the night with her lonely father. They would have a queer, stately dinner for three served in the grand dining-room by the English butler and footman. Stuart never had much to say to her; she wasn't his "smart," queenly wife who brought all people to her feet. When he came to his cigar and his whiskey, she would take young Spencer to the gallery, where they discussed the new French pictures, very knowingly, Spencer thought. She would describe for him the intricacies of a color-scheme of some tender Diaz, and that would lead them into the leafy woods about Barbizon and other realms of sentiment.

When they returned to the library she would feel that there were compensations for this dreary separation at Winetka and that her enormous home had never been so nice and comfortable before. As she bade the two men good-night, her father would come to the door, rubbing his eyes and forlorn over his great loss, and to her murmured "Good-night" he would sigh, "so like her mother." "Quite the softest voice in the world," thought Spencer.

Once in her old little tower room that she still preferred to keep, covered with her various attempts at sea, and sky, and forest, she was blissfully conscious of independence, so far from Stuyvesant Wheelright and his mother—quite an ugly old dame with no better manners than the plain Chicago people (who despised them all as "pork-packers" and "shop-keepers," nevertheless).

On one of these visits late in October, Edith had found her father ailing from a cold. He asked her, shamefacedly, to tell her mother that "he was very bad." Mrs. Stuart, leaving the house-party in full go, started at once for the town-house. Old Stuart had purposely stayed at home on the chances that his wife would relent. When she came in, she found him lying in the same morning-room, where hostilities had begun three months before. He grew confused, like an erring school-boy, as his wife kissed him and asked after his health in a neutral sort of way. He made out that he was threatened with a complication of diseases that might finally end him.

"Well, what can I do for you now," Mrs. Stuart said, with business-like directness.

"Spencer's looking after things pretty much. He's honest and faithful, but he ain't got any head like yours, Beatty, and times are awful hard. People won't pay rents, and I don't dare to throw 'em out. Stores and houses would lie empty these days. Then there's the North Shore Electric—I was a fool to go in so heavy the Fair year and tie up all my money. I s'pose you know the bonds ain't reached fifty this fall. I'm not so tremendously wealthy as folks think."

Mrs. Stuart exactly comprehended this sly speech; she knew also that there was some truth in it.

"Say, Beatty, it's so nice to have you here!" The old man raised himself and capered about like a gouty old house-dog.

He made the most of his illness, for he suspected that it was a condition of truce, not a bond of peace. While he was in bed Mrs. Stuart drove to the city each day and, with Spencer's help, conducted business for long hours. She had had experience in managing large charities; she knew people, and when a tenant could pay, with a little effort, he found Madam more pitiless than the old shop-keeper. Every afternoon she would take her stenographer to Stuart's room and consult with him.

"Ain't she a wonder?" the old man would exclaim to Spencer, in new admiration for his wife. And Spencer, watching the stately, authoritative woman day after day as she worked quickly, exactly, with the repose and dignity of a perfect machine, shivered back an unwilling assent.

"She's marvellous!"

All accidents played into the hands of this masterful woman. Her own presence in town kept her

daughter at Winetka *en evidence* for Stuyvesant Wheelright and Mrs. Wheelright. For Mrs. Stuart had determined upon him as, on the whole, the most likely arrangement that she could make. He was American, but of the best, and Mrs. Stuart was wise enough to prefer the domestic aristocracy. So to her mind affairs were not going badly. The truce would conclude ultimately in a senile capitulation; meantime, she could advance money for the household in London.

When Stuart had been nursed back into comparative activity, the grand dinners began once more—a convenient rebuttal for all gossip. The usual lists of distinguished strangers, wandering English story-tellers in search of material for a new "shilling shocker," artists suing to paint her or "Mademoiselle l'Inconnue," crept from time to time into the genial social column of the newspaper.

Stuart spent the evenings in state on a couch at the head of the drawing-room, where he usually remained until the guests departed. In this way he got a few words with his wife before she sent him to bed. One night his enthusiasm over her bubbled out.

"You're a great woman, Beatty!" She looked a little pale, but otherwise unworn by her laborious month. It was not blood that fed those even pulses.

"You will not need my help now. You can see to your business yourself," she remarked.

"Say, Beatty, you won't leave me again, will you!" he quavered, beseechingly. "I need you these last years; 'twon't be for long."

"Oh, you are strong and quite well again," she asserted, not unkindly.

"Will a hundred thousand do?" he pleaded. "Times are bad and ready money is scarce, as you know."

"Sell the electric bonds," she replied, sitting down, as if to settle the matter.

"Sell them bonds at fifty?" The old shop-keeper grew red in the face.

"What's that!" she remarked, disdainfully. "What have I given?" Her husband said nothing. "As I told you when we first talked the matter over, I have done my part to the exact letter of the law. You admit I have been a good and faithful wife, don't you? You know," a note of passion crept into her colorless voice, "You know that there hasn't been a suggestion of scandal with our home. I married you, young, beautiful, admired; I am handsome now." She drew herself up disdainfully. "I have not wanted for opportunity, I think you might know; but not one man in all the world can boast I have dropped an eyelash for his words. Not one syllable of favor have I given any man but you. Am I not right?"

Stuart nodded.

"Then what do you haggle for over a few dollars? Have I ever given you reason to repent our arrangement? Have I not helped you in business, in social matters put you where you never could go by yourself? And do you think my price is high?"

"Money is so scarce," Stuart protested, feebly.

"Suppose it left you only half a million, all told! What's that, in comparison to what I have given? Think of that. I don't complain, but you know we women estimate things differently. And when we sell ourselves, we name the price; and it matters little how big it is,"

Her scorn pierced the old man's somewhat leathery sensibilities.

"Well, if it's a question of price, when is it going to end—when shall
I have paid up? Next year you'll want half a million hard cash."

"There is no end."

The next morning, Mrs. Stuart returned to Winetka; the rupture threatened to prolong itself indefinitely. Stuart found it hard to give in completely, and it made him sore to think that their marriage had remained a business matter for over twenty years. And yet it was hard to face death without all the satisfaction money could buy him. The crisis came, however, in an unexpected manner.

One morning Stuart found his daughter waiting for him at his office.
She had slipped away from Winetka, and taken an early train.

"What's up, Ede?"

"Oh, papa!" the young girl gasped "They make me so unhappy, every day, and I can't stand it. Mamma wants me to marry Stuyvesant Wheelright, and he's there all the time."

"Who's he?" Stuart asked, sharply. His daughter explained briefly.

"He is what mamma calls 'eligible'; he is a great swell in New York, and I don't like him. Oh, papa, I can't be a *grande dame*, like mamma, can I? Won't you tell her so, papa? Make up with her; pay her the money she wants for Aunt Helen, and then perhaps she'll let me paint."

"No, you're not the figure your mother is, and never will be," Stuart said, almost slightingly. "I don't think, Ede, you'll ever make a great lady like her."

"I don't think she is very happy," the girl bridled, in her own defence.

"Well, perhaps not, perhaps not. But who do you want to marry, anyway?
You had better marry someone, Ede, 'fore I die."

"I don't know—that is, it doesn't matter much just now. I should like to go to California, perhaps, with the Stearns girls. I want to paint, just daubs, you know—I can't do any better. But you tell mamma I can't be a great swell. I shouldn't be happy, either."'

The old man resolved to yield. That very afternoon he drove out to Winetka along the lake shore. He had himself gotten up in his stiffest best. He held the reins high and tight, his body erect in the approved form; while now and then he glanced back to see if the footmen were as rigid as my lady demanded. For Mrs. Stuart loved good form, and he felt nervously apprehensive, as if he were again suing for her maiden favors. He was conscious, too, that he had little enough to offer her—the last months had brought humility. Beside him young Spencer lolled, enjoying, with a free heart, his day off in the gentle, spring-like air. Perhaps he divined that his lady would not need so much propitiation.

They surprised a party just setting forth from the Winetka house as they drove up with a final flourish. Their unexpected arrival scattered the guests into little, curious groups; everyone anticipated immediate dissolution. They speculated on the terms, and the opinion prevailed that Stuart's expedition from town indicated complete surrender. Meanwhile Stuart asked for an immediate audience, and husband and wife went up at once to Mrs. Stuart's little library facing out over the bluff that descended to the lake.

"Well, Beatty," old Stuart cried, without preliminary effort, "I just can't live without you—that's the whole of it." She smiled. "I ain't much longer to live, and then you're to have it all. So why shouldn't you take what you want now?" He drew out several checks from his pocket-book.

"You can cable your folks at once and go ahead. You've been the best sort of wife, as you said, and—I guess I owe you more'n I've paid for your puttin' up with an old fellow like me all these years."

Mrs. Stuart had a new sensation of pity for his pathetic surrender.

"There's one thing, Beatty," he continued, "so long as I live you'll own I oughter rule in my own house, manage the boys, and that." Mrs. Stuart nodded. "Now I want you to come back with me and break up this party."

Mrs. Stuart took the checks.

"You've made it a bargain, Beatty. You said I was to pay your family what you wanted, and you were to obey me at that price?"

"Well," replied Mrs. Stuart, good-humoredly. "We'll all go up to-morrow. Isn't that early enough?"

"That ain't all, Beatty. You can't make everybody over; you couldn't brush me up much; you can't make a grand lady out of Edith."

Mrs. Stuart looked up inquiringly.

"Now you've had your way about your family, and I want you to let Ede alone."

"Why?"

"She doesn't want that Wheelright fellow, and if you think it over you'll see that she couldn't do as you have. She ain't the sort."

Mrs. Stuart twitched at the checks nervously.

"I sort of think Spencer wants her; in fact, he said so coming out here."

"Impertinent puppy!"

"And I told him he could have her, if she wanted him. I don't think I should like to see another woman of mine live the sort of life you have with me. It's hard on 'em." His voice quivered.

Beatrice, Lady Stuart of Winetka, as they called her, stood silently looking out to the lake, reviewing "the sort of life she had lived" from the time she had made up her mind to take the shop-keeper's millions to this moment of concession. It was a grim panorama, and she realized now that it had not meant complete satisfaction to either party. Her twenty or more frozen years made her uncomfortable. While they waited, young Spencer and Miss Stuart came slowly up the terraced bluff.

"Well, John," Mrs. Stuart smiled kindly. "I think this is the last payment,—in full. Let's go down to congratulate them."

CHICAGO, March, 1895.

A PROTHALAMION

The best man has gone for a game of billiards with the host. The maid of honor is inditing an epistle to one who must fall. The bridesmaids have withdrawn themselves, each with some endurable usher, to an appropriate retreat upon the other coasts of the veranda. The night is full of starlight in May. The lovers discover themselves at last alone.

He. What was that flame-colored book Maud was reading to young Bishop?

She. The Dolly Dialogues; you remember we read them in London when they came out.

He. What irreverent literature we tolerate nowadays! I suppose it's the aftermath of agnosticism.

She. It didn't occur to me that it was irreligious.

He. Irreverent, I said—the tone of our world.

She. But how I love that world of ours—even the *Dolly Dialogues*!

He. Because you love it, this world you feel, you are reverent toward it. I have hated it so many years; it carried so much pain with it that I thought every expression of life was pain, and now, now, if it were not for Maud and the *Dolly Dialogues*, these last days would seem to launch us afresh upon quite another world.

She. Yes, another world, where there is a new terror, a strange, inhuman terror that I never thought of before, the terror of death.

He. Why, what a perversity! You think of immortality as so real, so sure! Relief from that terror of death is the proper fruit of your firm belief.

She. But I never cared before about the shape, the form, the kind of that other life. I was content to believe it quite different from this, for I knew this so well, enjoyed it so much. When the jam-pot should be empty, I did not want another one just like it. But now….

He. I know. And I lived so much a stranger to the experiences I could have about me that I was indifferent to what came after. Now, what I am, what I have, is so precious that I cannot believe in any change which should let me know of this life as past and impossible. That would be "the supreme grief of remembering in misery the happy days that have been."

She. It makes me shiver; it is so blasphemous to hate the state of being of a spirit. That would seem to degrade love, if through love we dread to lose our bodies.

He. Strange! You have come to this confession out of a trusting religion and I from doubt—at the best indifference. You are ashamed to confess what seems to you wholly blasphemous against that noble faith and prayer of a Christian; and I find an invigorating pleasure in your blasphemy. There is no conceivable life of a spirit to compare with the pain, even, of the human body; it is better to suffer than to know no difference.

She. But "the resurrection of the body": perhaps the creed, word for word without interpretation, would not mean that empty life which we moderns have grown to consider the supreme and liberal conception of existence.

He. Resurrection in a purified form fit for the bliss, whatever one of all the many shapes men have dreamed it may vision itself in!

She. But this love of life, this excessive joy, must fade away. The record of the world is not that we keep that. Think of the old people who dream peacefully of death, after knowing all the fulness of this life. Think of the wretches who pray for it. That vision of the life of spirits which is so dreadful to us has been the comfort of the ages. There must be some inner necessity for it. Perhaps with our bodies our wills become worn out.

He. That, I think, is the mystery—the wearing out, which is death. For death occurs oftener in life than we think; I know so many dead people who are walking about. As for sick people, physicians say that in a long illness they never have to warn a patient of the coming end. He knows it, subtly, from some dim, underground intimation. Without acknowledging it, he arranges himself, so to speak, for the grave, and comforts himself with those visions that religion holds out. Or does he comfort himself?

But apart from the dying, there are so many out of whose bodies and spirits life is ebbing. It may have been a little flood-tide, but they know it is going. You see it on their faces. They become dull. That leprosy of death attacks their life, joint by joint. They lay aside one pleasure, one function, one employment of their minds after another. The machine may run on, but the soul is dying. That is what I call *death in life*.

THE EPISODE OF LIFE.

Jack Lynton is becoming stone like that. His is a case in point, and a good one, because the atrophy is coming about not from physical disease, or from any dissipation. You would call him sane and full of fire. He was. He married three years ago. Their life was full, too, like ours, and precious. They did not throw it away; they were wise guardians of all its possibilities. The second summer—I was with them, and Jack has told me much besides—Mary began talking, almost in joke, of these matters, of what one must prepare for; of second marriages, and all that. We chatted in as idle fashion as do most people over the utterly useless topics of life. One exquisite September day, all steeped in the essence of sunshine—misty everywhere over the fields—how well I remember it!—she spoke again in jest about something that might happen after her death. I saw a trace of pain on Jack's face. She saw it, and was sad for a moment. Now I know that all through that late summer and autumn those two were fighting death in innuendoes. They were not morbid people, but death went to bed with them each night.

Of course, this apprehension, this miasma, came in slowly, like those autumn sea-mists; appearing once a month, twice this week—a little oftener each time.

Jack is a sensible man; he does not shy at a shadow. His nerves are tranquil, and respond as they ought. They went about the business of life as joyfully as you or I, and in October we were all back in town. Now, Mary is dying; the doctor sees it now. I do not mean that he should have known it before. *She* knew it, and *she* noted how the life was fading away until the time came when what was so full of action, of feeling, of desire, was merely a shell—impervious to sensation.

And Jack is dying, too—his health is good enough, but pain which he cannot master is killing him into numbness. He watches each joy, each experience with which they were both tremulous, depart. And do you suppose it is any comfort for those two honest souls to believe that their spirits will recognize each other in some curious state that has dispensed with sense? Do you suppose that a million of years of a divine communion would make up for one spoken word, for even a shade of agony that passes across Mary's face?

She. If God should change their souls in that other world, then perhaps their longings would be quite different; so that what we think of with chill they would accept as a privilege.

He. In other words, those two, who have learned to know each other in human terms, who have loved and suffered in the body, will have ended their page? Some strange transformation into another two? Why not simply an end to the book? Would that not be easier?

She. If one had the courage to accept these few years of life and ask for no more.

He. I think that it is cowardice which makes one accept the ghostly satisfaction of a surviving spirit.

WHEN THE BODY IN LIFE FEELS THE SPIRIT.

She. But have you never forgotten the body, dreamed what it would be to feel God? You have known those moments when your soul, losing the sense of contact with men or women, groped alone, in an enveloping calm, and knew content. I have had it in times of intoxication from music—not the personal,

passionate music of to-day, but some one or two notes that sink the mazy present into darkness. I knew that my senses were gone for the time, and in their place I held a comfortable consciousness of power. There have been other times—in Lent, at the close of the drama of Christ—beside the sea—after a long dance—illusory moments when one forgot the body and wondered.

He. I know. One night in the Sierras we camped high up above the summits of the range. The altitude, perhaps, or the long ride through the forest, kept me awake. Our fires died down; a chalky mist rose from the valleys, and, filtering through the ravines, at last capped the granite heads. The smouldering tree-trunks we had lit for fires and the little patch of rock where we lay, made an island in that white sea. Between us and the black spaces among the stars there was nothing. How eternally quiet it was! I can feel that isolation now coming over my soul like the stealthy fog, until I lay there, unconscious of my body, in a wondering placidity, watching the stars burn and fade. I could seem to feel them whirl in their way through the heavens. And then a thought detached itself from me, the conception of an eternity passed in placidity like that without the pains of sense, the obligations of action; I loved it then—that cold residence of thought!

She. You have known it, too. Those moments when the body in life feels the state of spirit come rarely and awe one. Dear heart, perhaps if our spirits were purified and experienced we should welcome that perpetual contemplation. We cannot be Janus-faced, but the truth may lie with the monks, who killed this life in order to obtain a grander one.

TWO SOULS IN HEAVEN REMEMBER THE LIFE LIVED ON EARTH.

He. Can you conceive of any heaven for which you would change this shameful world? Any heaven, I mean, of spirits, not merely an Italian palace of delights?

She. There is the heaven of the Pagans, the heaven of glorified earth, but——

He. Would you like to dine without tasting the fruit and the wine? What attainment would it be to walk in fields of asphodel, when all the colors of all the empyrean were equally dazzling, and perceived by the mind alone? For my part, I should prefer to hold one human violet.

She. The heaven of the Christian to-day?

He. That may be interpreted in two ways: the heaven where we know nothing but God, and the heaven where we remember our former life. Let us pass the first, for the second is the heaven passionately desired by those who have suffered here, who have lost their friends.

Suppose that we two had finished with the episode of death, and had come out beyond into that tranquillity of spirit where sorrows change to harmony. You and I would go together, or, perhaps, less fortunate, one should wait the other, but finally both would experience this transformation from body into spirit. Should you like it? Would it fill your heart with content—if you remembered the past? I think not. Suppose we should walk out some fresh morning, as we love to do now, and look at that earth we had been compelled to abandon. Where would be that fierce joy of inrushing life? for, I fancy, we should ever have a level of contentment and repose. Indeed, there would be no evening with its comforting calm, no especially still nights, no mornings: nothing is precious when nothing changes, and where all can be had for eternity.

We should talk, as of old, but the conversation of old men and women would be dramatic and passionate to ours. For everything must needs be known, and there could be no distinctions in feeling. Should you see your sister dying in agony at sea, you would smile tranquilly at her temporary and childish sorrow. All the affairs of this life would not strike you, pierce your heart, or move your pulse. They would repeat themselves in your eyes with a monotonous precision, and they would be done almost before the actors had begun. Indeed, if you should not be incapable of blasphemy, you would rebel at this blind game, played out with such fever.

We must not forget that our creative force would be spent: planning, building, executing, toiling patiently for some end that is mirrored only in our minds—how much of our joy comes from these!—would be laid aside. We should have shaken the world as much as we could: now, *peace*.... Again, I say, peace is felt only after a storm. Like Ulysses, we should look wistfully out from the isolation of heaven to the resounding waves of this unconquered world.

Of course, one may say that the mind might fashion cures for all this; that a greater architect would build a saner heaven. But, remember, that we must not change the personal sense; in heaven, however you plan it, no mortal must lose that "I" so painfully built from the human ages. If you destroy his sense of the past life, his treasures acquired in this earth, you break the rules of the game: you begin again

and we have nothing to do with it.

She. You have not yet touched upon the cruellest condition of the life of the spirit.

He. Ah, dearest, I know that. You mean the love of the person. Indeed, so quick it hurts me that I doubt if you would be walking that morning in heaven with me alone. Perhaps, however, the memories of our common life on earth would make you single me out. Let us think so. We should walk on to some secluded spot, apart from the other spirits, and with our eyes cast down so that we might not see that earth we were remembering. You would look up at last with a touch of that defiance I love so now, as if a young goddess were tossing away divine cares to shine out again in smiles. Ah, how sad!

I should have some stir about the heart, some desire to kiss you, to embrace you, to possess you, as the inalienable joy of my life. My hand could not even touch you! Would our eyes look love? Could we have any individual longing for one-another, any affection kept apart to ourselves, not swallowed up in that general loving-kindness and universal beatification proper to spirits?

I know upon earth to-day some women, great souls, too, who are incapable of an individual love. They may be married, they may have children; they are good wives and good mothers; but their souls are too large for a single passion. Their world blesses them, worships them, makes saints of them, but no man has ever touched the bottom of their hearts. I suppose their husbands are happy in the general happiness, yet they must be sad some days, over this barren love. Hours come when they must long, even for the little heart of a coquette that has dedicated itself to one other and with that other would trustingly venture into hell.

Well, that universal love is the only kind such spirits as you and I should be, could know. Would that content you?

We should sit mournfully silent, two impotent hearts, and remember, remember. I should worship your exquisite body as I had known it on earth. I should see that head as it bends to-night; I should hear again your voice in those words you were singing when I passed your way that first time; and your eyes would burn with the fire of our relinquished love. It would all come faintly out of the past, deadened by a thin film of recollection; now it strikes with a fierce joy, almost like a physical blow, and wakes me to life, to desire.

She. Yes. We women say we love the spirit of the man we have chosen, but it is a spirit that acts and expresses itself in the body. To that body, with all its habits, so unconscious! its sure force and power, we are bound—more than the man is bound to the loveliness of the woman he adores. We—I, it is safer so, perhaps—understand what I see, what I feel, what I touch, what I have kissed and loved. That is mine and becomes mine more each day I live with it and possess it. That love of the concrete is our limitation, so we are told, but it is our joy.

He. So we should sit, without words, for we would shrink from speech as too sad, and we should know swiftly the thought of the other. And when the sense of our loss became quite intolerable, we should walk on silently, in a growing horror of the eternity ahead. At last one of us, moved by some acute remembrance of our deadened selves, would go to the Master of the Spirits and, standing before him in rebellion, would say: "Cast us out as unfit for this heaven, and if Thou canst not restore us into that past state at least give us Hell, where we may suffer a common pain, instead of this passive calm and contemplation."

THE MEASURE OF JOY IN LIFE.

She. Yet, how short it will be! How awful to have the days and weeks and months slip by, and know that at the best there is only a reprieve of a few years. I think from this night I shall have my shadow of death. I shall always be doing things for the last time; a sad life that! And perhaps we change; as you say, we may become dead in life, prepared for a different state; and in that change we may find a new joy—a longing for perfection and peace.

He. That would be an acknowledgment of defeat, indeed, and that is the sad result of so much living. The world has been too hard, we cry—there is so much heartbreaking, so much misery, so few arrive! We look to another world where all that will be made right, and where we shall suffer no more.

Let the others have their opiate. You, at least, I think, are too brave for that kind of comfort. Does it not seem a little grasping to ask for eternity, because we have fifty years of action? And an eternity of passivity, because we have not done well with action? No, the world has had too much of that coddling, that kind of shuffle through, as if it were a way station where we must spend the night and make the best of sorry accommodations. Our benevolence, our warmheartedness, goes overmuch to making the

beds a bit better, especially for the feeble and the sick and old, and those who come badly fitted out. We help the unfortunate to slide through: I think it would be more sensible to make it worth their while to stay. The great philanthropists are those who ennoble life, and make it a valuable possession. It would be well to poison the forlorn, hurry them post haste to some other world where they may find the conditions better suited. Then give their lot of misery and opportunity to another who can find joy in his burden.

She. A world without mercy would be hard—it would be full of a strident clamor like a city street.

He. Mercy for all; no favoritism for a few. Whoever could find a new joy, a lasting activity; whoever could keep his body and mind in full health and could show what a tremendous reality it is to live—would be the merciful man. There would be less of that leprosy, death in life, and the last problem of death itself would not be insurmountable.

So I think the common men who know things, concrete things,—the price of grain, if you will; the men of affairs who have their minds on the struggle; the artists who in paint or words explore new possibilities—all these are the merciful men, the true comforters whom we should honor. They make life precious—aside from its physical value.

You know the keen movement that runs through your whole being when you come face to face with some great Rembrandt portrait. How much the man knew who made it, who saw it unmade! Or that Bellini's Pope we used to watch, whose penetrating smile taught us about life. And the greater Titian, the man with a glove, that looks at you like a live soul, one whom a man created to live for the joy of other men. In another form, I feel the same gift of life in a new enterprise: a railroad carried through; a corrupt government cleaned for the day. And, again, that Giorgione at Paris, where the men and women are doing nothing in particular, but living in the sunlight, a joyful, pagan band.

And then think of the simpler, deeper notes of the symphony, the elements of light and warmth and color in our world, the very seeds of existence. I count that day the richest when we floated into the Cape harbor in the little rowboat, bathed in the afternoon sun. The fishermen were lazily winging in, knowing, like birds, the storm that would soon be on them. We drank the sun in all our pores. It rained down on you, and glorified your face and the flesh of your arms and your hands. We landed, and walked across the evening fields to that little hut. Then nature lived and glowed with the fervor of actual experience. You and the air and the sun-washed ocean, all were some great throbs of actualities.

She. You remember how I liked to ride with you and sail, the stormy days. How I loved to feel your body battling even feebly with the wind and rain. I loved to see your face grow crimson under the lash of the waves, and then to *feel* you, alive and mine!

He. It would not be bad, a heaven like that, of perpetual physical presentiment, of storms and sun, and rich fields, and long waves rolling up the beaches. For nerves ever alive and strung healthily all along the gamut of sensation! Days with terrific gloom, like the German forests of the Middle Ages; days with small nights spent on the sea; September days with a concealed meaning in the air. One would ride and battle and sail and eat. Then long kisses of love in bodies that spoke.

She. And yet, how strange to life as it is is that picture—like some mediæval song with the real people left out; strange to the dirty streets, the breakfasts in sordid rooms, the ignoble faces, the houses with failure written across the door-posts; strange to the life of papa and mamma; to the comfortable home; the chatter of the day; the horses; the summer trips—everything we have lived, you and I.

He. Incomplete, and hence merely a literary paradise. It is well, too, as it is, for until we can go to bed with the commonplace, and dine with sorrow, we are but children,—brilliant children, but with the unpleasant mark of the child. Not sorrow accepted, my love, and bemoaned; but sorrow fought and dislodged. He is great who feels the pain and sorrow and absorbs it and survives—he who can remain calm in it and believe in it. It is a fight; only the strong hold their own. That fight we call duty.

And duty makes the only conceivable world given the human spirit and the human frame: even should we believe that the world is a revolving palæstrinum without betterment. And the next world—the next? It must be like ours, too, in its action; it must call upon the same activities, the same range of desires and loves and hates. Grander, perhaps, more adorned, with greater freedom, with more swing, with a less troubled song as it rushes on its course. But a world like unto ours, with effort, with the keen jangle of persons in effort, with sorrow, aye, and despair: for there must be forfeits!

Is that not better than to slink away to death with the forlorn comfort of a

"*Requiescat in pace?*"

PARIS, December, 1895.

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it

away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation’s EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state’s laws.

The Foundation’s business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation’s website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment

including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.