

Alas! thy sleep is still and deep,  
My agony is vain.

In vain I watch, in vain I wait.  
O God! what mortal spells  
Can open that relentless gate  
Where death's dread silence dwells?  
Go out, my fire; be still, my heart;  
Toll on, ye midnight bells!

*Rose Terry Cooke.*

## THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY.

### VI.

ISABEL ARCHER was a young person of many theories; her imagination was remarkably active. It had been her fortune to possess a finer mind than most of the persons among whom her lot was cast; to have a larger perception of surrounding facts, and to care for knowledge that was tinged with the unfamiliar. It is true that among her contemporaries she passed for a young woman of extraordinary profundity; for these excellent people never withheld their admiration from a reach of intellect of which they themselves were not conscious, and spoke of Isabel as a prodigy of learning, a young lady reputed to have read the classic authors — in translations. Her paternal aunt, Mrs. Varian, once spread the rumor that Isabel was writing a book, Mrs. Varian having a reverence for books, and averring that Isabel would distinguish herself in print. Mrs. Varian thought highly of literature, for which she entertained that esteem that is connected with a sense of privation. Her own large house, remarkable for its assortment of mosaic tables and decorated ceilings, was unfurnished with a library, and in the way of printed volumes contained nothing but half a dozen novels in paper, on a shelf in the apartment of one of the Miss Varians. Prac-

tically, Mrs. Varian's acquaintance with literature was confined to the New York Interviewer; as she very justly said, after you had read the Interviewer, you had no time for anything else. Her tendency, however, was rather to keep the Interviewer out of the way of her daughters; she was determined to bring them up seriously, and they read nothing at all. Her impression with regard to Isabel's labors was quite illusory; the girl never attempted to write a book, and had no desire to do so. She had no talent for expression, and had none of the consciousness of genius; she only had a general idea that people were right when they treated her as if she were rather superior. Whether or no she were superior, people were right in admiring her if they thought her so; for it seemed to her often that her mind moved more quickly than theirs, and this encouraged an impatience that might easily be confounded with superiority. It may be affirmed without delay that Isabel was probably very liable to the sin of self-esteem; she often surveyed with complacency the field of her own nature; she was in the habit of taking for granted, on scanty evidence, that she was right; impulsively, she often admired herself. Meanwhile her errors and delusions were frequently such as a biographer interested in preserving the

dignity of his heroine must shrink from specifying. Her head was full of premature convictions and unproportioned images, which had never been corrected by the judgment of people who seemed to her to speak with authority. Intellectually, morally, she had had her own way, and it had led her into a thousand ridiculous zigzags. Every now and then she found out she was wrong, and then she treated herself to a week of passionate humility. After this she held her head higher than ever again; for it was of no use, — she had an unquenchable desire to think well of herself. She had a theory that it was only on this condition that life was worth living; that one should be one of the best, should be conscious of a fine organization (she could not help knowing her organization was fine), should move in a realm of light, of natural wisdom, of happy impulse, of inspiration gracefully chronic. It was almost as unnecessary to cultivate doubt of one's self as to cultivate doubt of one's best friend; one should try to be one's own best friend, and to give one's self, in this manner, distinguished company. The girl had a certain nobleness of imagination which rendered her a good many services and played her a great many tricks. She spent half her time in thinking of beauty, and bravery, and magnanimity; she had a fixed determination to regard the world as a place of brightness, of free expansion, of irresistible action; she thought it would be detestable to be afraid or ashamed. She had an infinite hope that she should never do anything wrong. She had resented so strongly, after discovering them, her mere errors of feeling (the discovery always made her tremble, as if she had escaped from a trap which might have caught her and smothered her) that the chance of inflicting a sensible injury upon another person, presented only as a contingency, caused her at moments to hold her breath. That always seemed to her the

worst thing that could happen to one. On the whole, reflectively, she was in no uncertainty about the things that were wrong. She had no taste for thinking of them, but whenever she looked at them fixedly she recognized them. It was wrong to be mean, to be jealous, to be false, to be cruel; she had seen very little of the evil of the world, but she had seen women who lied and who tried to hurt each other. Seeing such things had quickened her high spirit; it seemed right to scorn them. Of course the danger of a high spirit is the danger of inconsistency, — the danger of keeping up the flag after the place has surrendered; a sort of behavior so anomalous as to be almost a dishonor to the flag. But Isabel, who knew nothing of the forces that life might bring against her, flattered herself that such contradictions would never be observed in her own conduct. Her life should always be in harmony with the most pleasing impression she should produce. She would be what she appeared, and she would appear what she was. Sometimes she went so far as to wish that she should find herself some day in a difficult position, so that she might have the pleasure of being as largely heroic as the occasion demanded. Altogether, with her meagre knowledge, her inflated ideals, her confidence at once innocent and dogmatic, her temper at once exacting and indulgent, her mixture of curiosity and fastidiousness, of vivacity and indifference, her desire to look very well and to be, if possible, even better; her determination to see, to try, to know; her combination of the delicate, desultory, flame-like spirit and the eager and personal young girl, she would be an easy victim of scientific criticism, if she were not intended to awaken on the reader's part an impulse more tender and more purely expectant.

It was one of her theories that Isabel Archer was very fortunate in being independent, and that she ought to make

some very enlightened use of her independence. She never called it loneliness; she thought that weak; besides, her sister Lily constantly urged her to come and stay with her. She had a friend whose acquaintance she had made shortly before her father's death, who offered so laudable an example of useful activity that Isabel always thought of her as a model. Henrietta Stackpole had the advantage of a remarkable talent; she was thoroughly launched in journalism, and her letters to the *Interviewer*, from Washington, Newport, the White Mountains, and other places, were universally admired. Isabel did not accept them unrestrictedly, but she esteemed the courage, energy, and good-humor of her friend, who, without parents and without property, had adopted three of the children of an infirm and widowed sister, and was paying their school-bills out of the proceeds of her literary labor. Henrietta was a great radical, and had clear-cut views on most subjects; her cherished desire had long been to go to Europe and write a series of letters to the *Interviewer* from the radical point of view, an enterprise the less difficult as she knew perfectly in advance what her opinions would be, and to how many objections most European institutions lay open. When she heard that Isabel was going, she wished to start at once, thinking, naturally, that it would be delightful that they should travel together. She had been obliged, however, to postpone this undertaking. She thought Isabel a glorious creature, and had spoken of her, covertly, in some of her letters, though she never mentioned the fact to her friend, who would not have taken pleasure in it, and was not a regular reader of the *Interviewer*. Henrietta, for Isabel, was chiefly a proof that a woman might suffice to herself and be happy. Her resources were of the obvious kind; but even if one had not the journalistic talent and a genius for guessing, as

Henrietta said, what the public was going to want, one was not therefore to conclude that one had no vocation, no beneficent aptitude of any sort, and resign one's self to being trivial and superficial. Isabel was resolutely determined not to be superficial. If one should wait expectantly and trustfully, one would find some happy work to his hand. Of course, among her theories, this young lady was not without a collection of opinions on the question of marriage. The first on the list was a conviction that it was very vulgar to think too much about it. From lapsing into a state of eagerness on this point, she earnestly prayed that she might be delivered; she held that a woman ought to be able to make up her life in singleness, and that it was perfectly possible to be happy without the society of a more or less coarse-minded person of another sex. The girl's prayer was very sufficiently answered; something pure and proud that there was in her — something cold and stiff, an unappreciated suitor with a taste for analysis might have called it — had hitherto kept her from any great vanity of conjecture on the subject of possible husbands. Few of the men she saw seemed worth an expenditure of imagination, and it made her smile to think that one of them should present himself as an incentive to hope and a reward of patience. Deep in her soul — it was the deepest thing there — lay a belief that if a certain impulse were stirred she could give herself completely; but this image, on the whole, was too formidable to be attractive. Isabel's thoughts hovered about it, but they seldom rested on it long; after a little it ended by frightening her. It often seemed to her that she thought too much about it herself; you could have made her blush, any day in the year, by telling her that she was selfish. She was always planning out her own development, desiring her own perfection, observing

her own progress. Her nature had for her own imagination a certain garden-like quality, a suggestion of perfume and murmuring boughs, of shady bowers and lengthening vistas, which made her feel that introspection was after all an exercise in the open air, and that a visit to the recesses of one's mind was harmless when one returned from it with a lapful of roses. But she was often reminded that there were other gardens in the world than those of her virginal soul, and that there were moreover a great many places that were not gardens at all, only dusky, pestiferous tracts, planted thick with ugliness and misery. In the current of that easy eagerness on which she had lately been floating, which had conveyed her to this beautiful old England and might carry her much further still, she often checked herself with the thought of the thousands of people who were less happy than herself, — a thought which for the moment made her absorbing happiness appear to her a kind of immodesty. What should one do with the misery of the world in a scheme of the agreeable for one's self? It must be confessed that this question never held her long. She was too young, too impatient to live, too unacquainted with pain. She always returned to her theory that a young woman whom, after all, every one thought clever should begin by getting a general impression of life. This was necessary to prevent mistakes, and after it should be secured, she might make the unfortunate condition of others an object of special attention.

England was a revelation to her, and she found herself as entertained as a child at a pantomime. In her infantine excursions to Europe she had seen only the Continent, and seen it from the nursery window; Paris, not London, was her father's Mecca. The impressions of that time, moreover, had become faint and remote, and the old-world quality in everything that she now saw had all the

charm of strangeness. Her uncle's house seemed a picture made real; no refinement of the agreeable was lost upon Isabel; the rich perfection of Garden-court appealed to her as a spectacle, and gratified her as a sensation. The large, low rooms, with brown ceilings and dusky corners, the deep embrasures and curious casements, the quiet light on dark, polished panels, the deep greenness outside, that seemed always peeping in, the sense of well-ordered privacy, in the centre of a "property," — a place where sounds were felicitously accidental, where the tread was muffled by the earth itself, and in the thick mild air all shrillness dropped out of conversation, — these things were much to the taste of our young lady, whose taste played a considerable part in her emotions. She formed a fast friendship with her uncle, and often sat by his chair when he had had it moved out to the lawn. He passed hours in the open air, sitting placidly with folded hands, like a good old man who had done his work and received his wages, and was trying to grow used to weeks and months made up only of off-days. Isabel amused him more than she suspected, — the effect she produced upon people was often different from what she supposed, — and he frequently gave himself the pleasure of making her chatter. It was by this term that he qualified her conversation, which had much of the vivacity observable in that of the young ladies of her country, to whom the ear of the world is more directly presented than to their sisters in other lands. Like the majority of American girls, Isabel had been encouraged to express herself; her remarks had been attended to; she had been expected to have emotions and opinions. Many of her opinions had doubtless but a slender value, many of her emotions passed away in the utterance; but they had left a trace in giving her the habit of seeming at least to feel and think, and in imparting moreover to her words,

when she was really moved, that maidenly eloquence which so many people had regarded as a sign of superiority. Mr. Touchett used to think that she reminded him of his wife when his wife was in her teens. It was because she was fresh and natural and quick to understand, to speak, — so many characteristics of her niece, — that he had fallen in love with Mrs. Touchett. He never expressed this analogy to the girl herself, however; for if Mrs. Touchett had once been like Isabel, Isabel was not at all like Mrs. Touchett. The old man was full of kindness for her; it was a long time, as he said, since they had had any young life in the house; and our rustling, quickly-moving, clear-voiced heroine was as agreeable to his sense as the sound of flowing water. He wished to do something for her, he wished she would ask something of him. But Isabel asked nothing but questions; it is true that of these she asked a great many. Her uncle had a great fund of answers, though interrogation sometimes came in forms that puzzled him. She questioned him immensely about England, about the British constitution, the English character, the state of politics, the manners and customs of the royal family, the peculiarities of the aristocracy, the way of living and thinking of his neighbors; and in asking to be enlightened on these points she usually inquired whether they corresponded with the descriptions in all the books. The old man always looked at her a little, with his fine dry smile, while he smoothed down the shawl that was spread across his legs.

"The books?" he once said; "well, I don't know much about the books. You must ask Ralph about that. I have always ascertained for myself — got my information in the natural form. I never asked many questions even; I just kept quiet and took notice. Of course, I have had very good opportunities, — better than what a young lady would naturally

have. I am of an inquisitive disposition, though you might n't think it if you were to watch me; however much you might watch me, I should be watching you more. I have been watching these people for upwards of thirty-five years, and I don't hesitate to say that I have acquired considerable information. It's a very fine country on the whole, — finer perhaps than what we give it credit for on the other side. There are several improvements that I should like to see introduced; but the necessity of them does n't seem to be generally felt as yet. When the necessity of a thing is generally felt, they usually manage to accomplish it; but they seem to feel pretty comfortable about waiting till then. I certainly feel more at home among them than I expected to when I first came over; I suppose it's because I have had a considerable degree of success. When you are successful, you naturally feel more at home."

"Do you suppose that, if I am successful, I shall feel at home?" Isabel asked.

"I should think it very probable, and you certainly will be successful. They like American young ladies very much over here; they show them a great deal of kindness. But you must n't feel too much at home, you know."

"Oh, I am by no means sure I shall like it," said Isabel, somewhat judicially. "I like the place very much, but I am not sure I shall like the people."

"The people are very good people; especially if you like them."

"I have no doubt they are good," Isabel rejoined; "but are they pleasant in society? They won't rob me nor beat me; but will they make themselves agreeable to me? That's what I like people to do. I don't hesitate to say so, because I always appreciate it. I don't believe they are very nice to girls; they are not nice to them in the novels."

"I don't know about the novels," said Mr. Touchett. "I believe the novels

have a great deal of ability, but I don't suppose they are very accurate. We once had a lady who wrote novels staying here; she was a friend of Ralph's, and he asked her down. She was very positive, very positive; but she was not the sort of person that you could depend on her testimony. Too much imagination, — I suppose that was it. She afterwards published a work of fiction in which she was understood to have given a representation — something in the nature of a caricature, as you might say — of my unworthy self. I did n't read it, but Ralph just handed me the book, with the principal passages marked. It was understood to be a description of my conversation; American peculiarities, nasal twang, Yankee notions, stars and stripes. Well, it was not at all accurate; she could n't have listened very attentively. I had no objection to her giving a report of my conversation, if she liked; but I did n't like the idea that she had n't taken the trouble to listen to it. Of course I talk like an American, — I can't talk like a Hottentot. However I talk, I have made them understand me pretty well over here. But I don't talk like the old gentleman in that lady's novel. He was n't an American; we would n't have him over there! I just mention that fact to show you that they are not always accurate. Of course, as I have no daughters, and as Mrs. Touchett resides in Florence, I have n't had much chance to notice about the young ladies. It sometimes appears as if the young women in the lower class were not very well treated; but I guess their position is better in the upper class."

"Dear me!" Isabel exclaimed; "how many classes have they? About fifty, I suppose."

"Well, I don't know as I ever counted them. I never took much notice of the classes. That's the advantage of being an American here; you don't belong to any class."

"I hope so," said Isabel. "Imagine one's belonging to an English class!"

"Well, I guess some of them are pretty comfortable, especially towards the top. But for me there are only two classes: the people I trust, and the people I don't. Of those two, my dear Isabel, you belong to the first."

"I am much obliged to you," said the young girl, quickly. Her way of taking compliments seemed sometimes rather dry; she got rid of them as rapidly as possible. But as regards this, she was sometimes misjudged; she was thought insensible to them, whereas in fact she was simply unwilling to show how infinitely they pleased her. To show that was to show too much. "I am sure the English are very conventional," she added.

"They have got everything pretty well fixed," Mr. Touchett admitted. "It's all settled beforehand; they don't leave it to the last moment."

"I don't like to have everything settled beforehand," said the girl. "I like more unexpectedness."

Her uncle seemed amused at her distinctness of preference. "Well, it's settled beforehand that you will have great success," he rejoined. "I suppose you will like that."

"I shall not have success if they are conventional. I am not in the least conventional. I am just the contrary. That's what they won't like."

"No, no, you are all wrong," said the old man. "You can't tell what they will like. They are very inconsistent; that's their principal interest."

"Ah, well," said Isabel, standing before her uncle with her hands clasping the belt of her black dress, and looking up and down the lawn, "that will suit me perfectly!"

## VII.

The two amused themselves time and again with talking of the attitude of the

British public, as if the young lady had been in a position to appeal to it; but in fact the British public remained for the present profoundly indifferent to Miss Isabel Archer, whose fortune had dropped her, as her cousin said, into the dullest house in England. Her gouty uncle received very little company, and Mrs. Touchett, not having cultivated relations with her husband's neighbors, was not warranted in expecting visits from them. She had, however, a peculiar taste; she liked to receive cards. For what is usually called social intercourse she had very little relish; but nothing pleased her more than to find her hall-table whitened with oblong morsels of symbolic pasteboard. She flattered herself that she was a very just woman and had mastered the sovereign truth that nothing in this world is got for nothing. She had played no social part as mistress of Gardencourt, and it was not to be supposed that, in the surrounding country, a minute account should be kept of her comings and goings. But it is by no means certain that she did not feel it to be wrong that so little notice was taken of them, and that her failure (really very gratuitous) to make herself important in the neighborhood had not much to do with the acrimony of her allusions to her husband's adopted country. Isabel presently found herself in the singular situation of defending the British constitution against her aunt; Mrs. Touchett having formed the habit of sticking pins into this venerable instrument. Isabel always felt an impulse to remove the pins; not that she imagined they inflicted any damage on the tough old parchment, but because it seemed to her that her aunt might make better use of her sharpness. She was very critical herself,—it was incidental to her age, her sex, and her nationality; but she was very sentimental as well, and there was something in Mrs. Touchett's dryness that set her own moral fountains flowing.

“Now what is your point of view?” she asked of her aunt. “When you criticise everything here, you should have a point of view. Yours does n't seem to be American,—you thought everything over there so disagreeable. When I criticise, I have mine; it's thoroughly American!”

“My dear young lady,” said Mrs. Touchett, “there are as many points of view in the world as there are people of sense. You may say that does n't make them very numerous! American? Never in the world; that's shockingly narrow. My point of view, thank God, is personal!”

Isabel thought this a better answer than she admitted; it was a tolerable description of her own manner of judging, and it would not have sounded well for her to say it; on the lips of a person less advanced in life and less enlightened by experience than Mrs. Touchett, such a declaration would savor of immodesty, even of arrogance. She risked it, nevertheless, in talking with Ralph, with whom she talked a great deal, and with whom her conversation was of a sort that gave a large license to violent statements. Her cousin used, as the phrase is, to chaff her; he very soon established with her a reputation for treating everything as a joke, and he was not a man to neglect the privileges such a reputation conferred. She accused him of an odious want of seriousness, of laughing at all things, beginning with herself. Such slender faculty of reverence as he possessed centred wholly upon his father; for the rest, he exercised his wit indiscriminately upon himself, his weak lungs, his useless life, his anomalous mother, his friends (Lord Warburton in especial), his adopted and his native country, his charming new-found cousin. “I keep a band of music in my ante-room,” he said once to her. “It has orders to play without stopping; it renders me two excellent services. It keeps the sounds of the world from reaching the

private apartments, and it makes the world think that dancing is going on within." It was dance-music indeed that you usually heard when you came within ear-shot of Ralph's band; the liveliest waltzes seemed to float upon the air. Isabel often found herself irritated by this barrier of sound; she would have liked to pass through the ante-room, as her cousin called it, and enter the private apartments. It mattered little that he had assured her that they were a very dismal place; she would have been glad to undertake to sweep them and set them in order. It was but half-hospitality to let her remain outside; to punish him for which, Isabel administered innumerable taps with the ferule of her straight young wit. It must be said that her wit was exercised to a large extent in self-defense, for her cousin amused himself with calling her "Columbia," and accusing her of a patriotism so fervid that it scorched. He drew a caricature of her, in which she was represented as a very pretty young woman, dressed, in the height of the prevailing fashion, in the folds of the national banner. Isabel's chief dread in life, at this period of her development, was that she should appear narrow-minded; what she feared next afterwards was that she should be so. But she nevertheless made no scruple of abounding in her cousin's sense, and pretending to sigh for the charms of her native land. She would be as American as it pleased him to regard her, and if he chose to laugh at her, she would give him plenty of occupation. She defended England against his mother, but when Ralph sang its praises, on purpose, as she said, to torment her, she found herself able to differ from him on a variety of points. In reality the quality of this small ripe country seemed as sweet to her as the taste of an October pear; and her satisfaction was at the root of the good spirits which enabled her to take her cousin's chaff and return it in kind.

If her good humor flagged at moments, it was not because she thought herself ill-used, but because she suddenly felt sorry for Ralph. It seemed to her that he was talking as a blind, and had little heart in what he said.

"I don't know what is the matter with you," she said to him once, "but I suspect you are a great humbug."

"That's your privilege," Ralph answered, who had not been used to being so crudely addressed.

"I don't know what you care for; I don't think you care for anything. You don't really care for England when you praise it; you don't care for America even when you pretend to abuse it."

"I care for nothing but you, dear cousin," said Ralph.

"If I could believe even that, I should be very glad."

"Ah, well, I should hope so!" the young man exclaimed.

Isabel might have believed it, and not have been far from the truth. He thought a great deal about her; she was constantly present to his mind. At a time when his thoughts had been a good deal of a burden to him, her sudden arrival, which had promised nothing and was an open-handed gift of fate, had refreshed and quickened them, given them wings and something to fly for. Poor Ralph for many weeks had been steeped in melancholy; his outlook, habitually sombre, lay under the shadow of a deeper cloud. He had grown anxious about his father, whose gout, hitherto confined to his legs, had begun to ascend into regions more perilous. The old man had been gravely ill in the spring, and the doctors had whispered to Ralph that another attack would be less easy to deal with. Just now he appeared tolerably comfortable, but Ralph could not rid himself of a suspicion that this was a subterfuge of the enemy, who was waiting to take him off his guard. If this manœuvre should succeed, there would be little hope of any great resist-

ance. Ralph had always taken for granted that his father would survive him, — that his own name would be the first called. The father and son had been close companions, and the idea of being left alone with the remnant of an alienated life on his hands was not gratifying to the young man, who had always and tacitly counted upon his elder's help in making the best of a poor business. At the prospect of losing his great motive, Ralph was indeed mightily disgusted. If they might die at the same time, it would be all very well ; but without the encouragement of his father's society, he should barely have patience to await his own turn. He had not the incentive of feeling that he was absolutely indispensable to his mother ; it was a rule with his mother to have no regrets. He be thought himself, of course, that it had been a small kindness to his father to wish that, of the two, the active, rather than the passive, party should know the pain of loss ; he remembered that the old man had always treated his own forecast of an uncompleted career as a clever fallacy, which he should be delighted to discredit, so far as he might, by dying first. But of the two triumphs, that of refuting a sophistical son and that of holding on a while longer to a state of being which, with all abatements, he enjoyed, Ralph deemed it no sin to hope that the latter might be vouchsafed to Mr. Touchett.

These were nice questions, but Isabel's arrival put a stop to his puzzling over them. It even suggested that there might be a compensation for the intolerable *ennui* of surviving his genial sire. He wondered whether he were falling in love with this spontaneous young woman from Albany ; but he decided that on the whole he was not. After he had known her for a week, he quite made up his mind to this, and every day he felt a little more sure. Lord Warburton had been right about her ; she was a thoroughly interesting wom-

an. Ralph wondered how Lord Warburton had found it out so soon ; and then he said it was only another proof of his friend's high abilities, which he had always greatly admired. If his cousin were to be nothing more than an entertainment to him, Ralph was conscious that she was an entertainment of a high order. " A character like that," he said to himself, " is the finest thing in nature. It is finer than the finest work of art, — than a Greek bas-relief, than a great Titian, than a Gothic cathedral. It is very pleasant to be so well-treated where one least looked for it. I had never been more blue, more bored, than for a week before she came ; I had never expected less that something agreeable would happen. Suddenly I receive a Titian, by the post, to hang on my wall, — a Greek bas-relief to stick over my chimney-piece. The key of a beautiful edifice is thrust into my hand, and I am told to walk in and admire. My poor boy, you have been sadly ungrateful, and now you had better keep very quiet, and never grumble again." The sentiment of these reflections was very just ; but it was not exactly true that Ralph Touchett had had a key put into his hand. His cousin was a very brilliant girl, who would take, as he said, a good deal of knowing ; but she needed the knowing, and his attitude with regard to her, though it was contemplative and critical, was not judicial. He surveyed the edifice from the outside, and admired it greatly ; he looked in at the windows, and received an impression of proportions equally fair. But he felt that he saw it only by glimpses, and that he had not yet stood under the roof ; the door was fastened, and though he had keys in his pocket, he had a conviction that none of them would fit. She was intelligent and generous ; it was a fine free nature ; but what was she going to do with herself ? This question was irregular, for with most women one had no occasion to ask

it. Most women did with themselves nothing at all; they waited, in attitudes more or less gracefully passive, for a man to come along and furnish them with a destiny. Isabel's originality was that she gave one an impression of having intuitions of her own. "Whenever she executes them," said Ralph, "may I be there to see!"

It naturally devolved upon him to do the honors of the place. Mr. Touchett was confined to his chair, and his wife's position was that of a rather grim visitor; so that in the line of conduct that opened itself to Ralph, duty and inclination were harmoniously mingled. He was not a great walker, but he strolled about the grounds with his cousin, — a pastime for which the weather remained favorable with a persistency not allowed for in Isabel's somewhat lugubrious prevision of the climate; and in the long afternoons, of which the length was but the measure of her gratified eagerness, they took a boat on the river, the dear little river, as Isabel called it, when the opposite shore seemed still a part of the foreground of the landscape; or drove over the country in a phaeton, — a low, capacious, thick-wheeled phaeton, formerly much used by Mr. Touchett, but which he had now ceased to enjoy. Isabel enjoyed it largely, and, handling the reins in a manner which approved itself to the groom as "knowing," was never weary of driving her uncle's capital horses through winding lanes and byways full of the rural incidents she had confidently expected to find: past cottages thatched and timbered, past alehouses latticed and sanded, past patches of ancient common and glimpses of empty parks, between hedgerows made thick by midsummer. When they reached home, they usually found that tea had been served upon the lawn, and that Mrs. Touchett had not absolved herself from the obligation of handing her husband his cup. But the two for the most part sat silent; the old man with his

head back and his eyes closed, his wife occupied with her knitting, and wearing that appearance of extraordinary meditation with which some ladies contemplate the movement of their needles.

One day, however, a visitor had arrived. The two young people, after spending an hour upon the river, strolled back to the house and perceived Lord Warburton sitting under the trees and engaged in conversation, of which even at a distance the desultory character was appreciable, with Mrs. Touchett. He had driven over from his own place with a portmanteau, and had asked, as the father and son had often invited him to do, for a dinner and a lodging. Isabel, seeing him for half an hour on the day of her arrival, had discovered in this brief space that she liked him; he had made indeed a tolerably vivid impression on her mind, and she had thought of him several times. She had hoped that she should see him again, — hoped too that she should see a few others. Garden-court was not dull; the place itself was so delightful, her uncle was such a perfection of an uncle, and Ralph was so, unlike any cousin she had ever encountered, — her view of cousins being rather monotonous. Then her impressions were still so fresh and so quickly renewed that there was as yet hardly a sense of vacancy in the prospect. But Isabel had need to remind herself that she was interested in human nature and that her foremost hope in coming abroad had been that she should see a great many people. When Ralph said to her, as he had done several times, "I wonder you find this endurable; you ought to see some of the neighbors and some of our friends, because we have really got a few, though you would never suppose it;" when he offered to invite what he called a "lot of people," and make the young girl acquainted with English society, she encouraged the hospitable impulse, and promised in advance to be delighted. Little, however, for

the present, had come of Ralph's offers, and it may be confided to the reader that, if the young man delayed to carry them out, it was because he found the labor of entertaining his cousin by no means so severe as to require extraneous help. Isabel had spoken to him very often about "specimens;" it was a word that played a considerable part in her vocabulary; she had given him to understand that she wished to see as many specimens as possible, and specimens of everything.

"Well, now, there's a specimen," he said to her, as they walked up from the river-side, and he recognized Lord Warburton.

"A specimen of what?" asked the girl.

"A specimen of an English gentleman."

"Do you mean they are all like him?"

"Oh, no, they are not all like him."

"He's a favorable specimen, then," said Isabel; "because I am sure he is good."

"Yes, he is very good. And he is very fortunate."

The fortunate Lord Warburton exchanged a hand-shake with our heroine, and hoped she was very well. "But I need n't ask that," he said, "since you have been handling the oars."

"I have been rowing a little," Isabel answered; "but how should you know it?"

"Oh, I know *he* does n't row; he's too lazy," said his lordship, indicating Ralph Touchett, with a laugh.

"He has a good excuse for his laziness," Isabel rejoined, lowering her voice a little.

"Ah, he has a good excuse for everything!" cried Lord Warburton, still with his deep, agreeable laugh.

"My excuse for not rowing is that my cousin rows so well," said Ralph. "She does everything well. She touches nothing that she does n't adorn!"

"It makes one want to be touched, Miss Archer," Lord Warburton declared.

"Be touched in the right sense, and you will never look the worse for it," said Isabel, who, if it pleased her to hear it said that her accomplishments were numerous, was happily able to reflect that such complacency was not the indication of a feeble mind, inasmuch as there were several things in which she excelled. Her desire to think well of herself always needed to be supported by proof; though it is possible that this fact is not the sign of a milder egotism.

Lord Warburton not only spent the night at Gardencourt, but he was persuaded to remain over the second day; and when the second day was ended, he determined to postpone his departure till the morrow. During this period he addressed much of his conversation to Isabel, who accepted this evidence of his esteem with a very good grace. She found herself liking him extremely; the first impression he had made upon her was pleasant, but at the end of an evening spent in his society she thought him quite one of the most laudable persons she had met. She retired to rest with a sense of good fortune, with a quickened consciousness of the pleasantness of life. "It's very nice to know two such charming people as those," she said, meaning by "those" her cousin and her cousin's friend. It must be added, moreover, that an incident had occurred which might have seemed to put her good humor to the test. Mr. Touchett went to bed at half past nine o'clock, but his wife remained in the drawing-room with the other members of the party. She prolonged her vigil for something less than an hour, and then, rising, she said to Isabel that it was time they should bid the gentlemen good-night. Isabel had as yet no desire to go to bed; the occasion wore, to her sense, a festive character, and feasts were not in the habit of terminating so early. So with-

out further thought she replied very simply, —

“Need I go, dear aunt? I will come up in half an hour.”

“It’s impossible I should wait for you,” Mrs. Touchett answered.

“Ah, you need n’t wait! Ralph will light my candle,” said Isabel, smiling.

“I will light your candle; do let me light your candle, Miss Archer!” Lord Warburton exclaimed. “Only, I beg it shall not be before midnight!”

Mrs. Touchett fixed her bright little eyes upon him for a moment, and then transferred them to her niece.

“You can’t stay alone with the gentlemen. You are not — you are not at Albany, my dear!”

Isabel rose, blushing.

“I wish I were!” she said.

“Oh, I say, mother!” Ralph broke out.

“My dear Mrs. Touchett!” Lord Warburton murmured.

“I did n’t make your country, my lord,” Mrs. Touchett said majestically. “I must take it as I find it!”

“Can’t I stay with my own cousin?” Isabel inquired.

“I am not aware that Lord Warburton is your cousin!”

“Perhaps I had better go to bed,” this nobleman exclaimed. “That will arrange it.”

Mrs. Touchett gave a little look of despair, and sat down again.

“Oh, if it’s necessary, I will stay up till midnight,” she said.

Ralph meanwhile handed Isabel her candlestick. He had been watching her; it had seemed to him that her temper was stirred, an accident that might be interesting. But if he had expected an exhibition of temper, he was disappointed, for the girl simply laughed a little, nodded good-night, and withdrew, accompanied by her aunt. For himself he was annoyed at his mother, though he thought she was right. Above stairs, the two ladies separated at Mrs. Touch-

ett’s door. Isabel had said nothing on her way up.

“Of course you are displeased at my interfering with you,” said Mrs. Touchett.

Isabel reflected a moment.

“I am not displeased, but I am surprised, and a good deal puzzled. Was it not proper I should remain in the drawing-room?”

“Not in the least. Young girls here don’t sit alone with the gentlemen late at night.”

“You were very right to tell me, then,” said Isabel. “I don’t understand it, but I am very glad to know it.”

“I shall always tell you,” her aunt answered, “whenever I see you taking what seems to be too much liberty.”

“Pray do; but I don’t say I shall always think your remonstrance just.”

“Very likely not. You are too fond of your liberty.”

“Yes, I think I am very fond of it. But I always want to know the things one should n’t do.”

“So as to do them?” asked her aunt.

“So as to choose,” said Isabel.

## VIII

As she was much interested in the picturesque, Lord Warburton ventured to express a hope that she would come some day and see his house, which was a very curious old place. He extracted from Mrs. Touchett a promise that she would bring her niece to Lockleigh, and Ralph signified his willingness to attend upon the ladies if his father should be able to spare him. Lord Warburton assured our heroine that in the mean time his sisters would come and see her. She knew something about his sisters, having interrogated him, during the hours they spent together while he was at Gardencourt, on many points connected with his family. When Isabel was in-

terested, she asked a great many questions, and as her companion was a copious talker, she asked him on this occasion by no means in vain. He told her that he had four sisters and two brothers, and had lost both his parents. The brothers and sisters were very good people, — “not particularly clever, you know,” he said, “but simple and respectable and trustworthy,” and he was so good as to hope that Miss Archer should know them well. One of the brothers was in the church, settled in the parsonage at Lockleigh, which was rather a largeish parish, and was an excellent fellow in spite of his thinking differently from himself on every conceivable topic. And then Lord Warburton mentioned some of the opinions held by his brother, which were opinions that Isabel had often heard expressed, and that she supposed to be entertained by a considerable portion of the human family. Many of them, indeed, she supposed she had held herself, till he assured her that she was quite mistaken, and that it was really impossible; that she had doubtless imagined she entertained them, but that she might depend that, if she thought them over a little, she would find they were awful rubbish. When she answered that she had already thought several of them over very attentively, he declared that she was only another example of what he had often been struck with, — the fact that, of all the people in the world, the Americans were most plagued with misty superstitions. They were rank Tories and inquisitors, every one of them. There were no conservatives like American conservatives. Her uncle, there, and her cousin were both proof; nothing could be more mediæval than many of their views; they had ideas that people in England nowadays were ashamed to confess to; and they had the impudence, moreover, said his lordship, laughing, to pretend they know more about the needs and dangers of this poor, dear, stupid old

England than he who was born in it, and owned a considerable part of it, — the more shame to him! From all of which Isabel gathered that Lord Warburton was a nobleman of the newest pattern, a reformer, a radical, a contemner of ancient ways. His other brother, who was in the army in India, was rather wild and pig-headed, and had not been of much use as yet but to make debts for Warburton to pay, — one of the most precious privileges of an elder brother. “I don’t think I will pay any more,” said Warburton; “he lives a monstrous deal better than I do, enjoys unheard-of luxuries, and thinks himself a much finer gentleman than I. As I am a consistent radical, I go in only for equality; I don’t go in for the superiority of the younger brothers.” Two of his four sisters, the second and fourth, were married, one of them having done very well, as they said, the other only so-so. The husband of the elder, Lord Haycock, was a very good fellow, but unfortunately a horrid Tory; and his wife, like all good English wives, was worse than her husband. The other had espoused a smallish squire in Norfolk, and, though she was married only the other day, had already five children. This information and much more Lord Warburton imparted to his young American listener, taking pains to make many things clear, and to lay bare to her apprehension the peculiarities of English life. Isabel was often amused at his explicitness and at the small allowance he seemed to make either for her own experience or for her imagination. “He thinks I am a barbarian,” she said, “and that I have never seen forks and spoons;” and she used to ask him artless questions for the pleasure of hearing him answer seriously. Then, when he had fallen into the trap, “It’s a pity you can’t see me in my war-paint and feathers,” she remarked; “if I had known how kind you are to the poor savages, I would have brought over my national costume!”

Lord Warburton had traveled through the United States, and knew much more about them than Isabel; he was so good as to say that America was the most charming country in the world, but his recollections of it appeared to encourage the idea that Americans in England would need to have a great many things explained to them. "If I had only had you to explain things to me in America!" he said. "I was rather puzzled in your country; in fact I was quite bewildered, and the trouble was that the explanations only puzzled me more. You know I think they often gave me the wrong ones on purpose; they are rather clever about that over there. But when I explain, you can trust me; about what I tell you there is no mistake." There was no mistake at least about his being very intelligent and cultivated, and knowing almost everything in the world. Although he said the most interesting and entertaining things, Isabel perceived that he never said them to exhibit himself, and though he had a great good fortune, he was as far as possible from making a merit of it. He had enjoyed the best things of life, but they had not spoiled his sense of proportion. His composition was a mixture of good-humored manly force and a modesty that at times was almost boyish; the sweet and wholesome savor of which — it was as agreeable as something tasted — lost nothing from the addition of a tone of kindness which was not boyish, inasmuch as there was a good deal of reflection and of conscience in it.

"I like your specimen English gentleman very much," Isabel said to Ralph, after Lord Warburton had gone.

"I like him too, — I love him well," said Ralph. "But I pity him more."

Isabel stared.

"Why, that seems to me his only fault, — that one could n't pity him a little. He appears to have everything, to know everything, to be everything!"

"Oh, he's in a bad way," Ralph insisted.

"I suppose you don't mean in health?"

"No, as to that, he is detestably robust. What I mean is that he is a man with a great position, who is playing all sorts of tricks with it. He does n't take himself seriously."

"Does he regard himself as a joke?"

"Much worse; he regards himself as an imposition — as an abuse."

"Well, perhaps he is," said Isabel.

"Perhaps he is, — though on the whole I don't think so. But in that case, what is more pitiable than a sentient, self-conscious abuse, planted by other hands, deeply rooted, but aching with a sense of its injustice? For me, I could take Lord Warburton very seriously; he occupies a position that appeals to my imagination. Great responsibilities, great opportunities, great consideration, great wealth, great power, a natural share in the public affairs of a great country. But he is all in a muddle about himself, his position, his power, and everything else. He is the victim of a critical age; he has ceased to believe in himself, and he does n't know what to believe in. When I attempt to tell him (because if I were he, I know very well what I should believe in), he calls me an old-fashioned and narrow-minded person. I believe he seriously thinks me an awful Philistine; he says I don't understand my time. I understand it certainly better than he, who can neither abolish himself as a nuisance nor maintain himself as an institution."

"He does n't look very wretched," Isabel observed.

"Possibly not; though, being a man of imagination, I think he often has uncomfortable hours. But what is it to say of a man of his opportunities that he is not miserable? I believe he is."

"I don't," said Isabel.

"Well," her cousin rejoined, "if he is not, he ought to be!"

In the afternoon she spent an hour with her uncle on the lawn, where the old man sat, as usual, with his shawl over his legs and his large cup of diluted tea in his hands. In the course of conversation he asked her what she thought of their late visitor.

"I think he is charming," Isabel answered.

"He's a fine fellow," said Mr. Touchett, "but I don't recommend you to fall in love with him."

"I shall not do it then; I shall never fall in love but on your recommendation. Moreover," Isabel added, "my cousin gives me a rather sad account of Lord Warburton."

"Oh, indeed? I don't know what there may be to say, but you must remember that Ralph is rather fanciful."

"He thinks Lord Warburton is too radical,—or not radical enough! I don't quite understand which," said Isabel.

The old man shook his head slowly, smiled, and put down his cup.

"I don't know which, either. He goes very far, but it is quite possible he does n't go far enough. He seems to want to do away with a good many things, but he seems to want to remain himself. I suppose that is natural; but it is rather inconsistent."

"Oh, I hope he will remain himself," said Isabel. "If he were to be done away with, his friends would miss him sadly."

"Well," said the old man, "I guess he'll stay and amuse his friends. I should certainly miss him very much, here at Gardencourt. He always amuses me when he comes over, and I think he amuses himself as well. There is a considerable number like him, round in society; they are very fashionable just now. I don't know what they are trying to do—whether they are trying to get up a revolution; I hope at any rate they will put it off till after I am gone. You see they want to disestablish every-

thing; but I'm a pretty big landowner here, and I don't want to be disestablished. I would n't have come over if I had thought they were going to be, have like that," Mr. Touchett went on, with expanding hilarity. "I came over because I thought England was a safe country. I call it a regular fraud if they are going to introduce any considerable changes; there'll be a large number disappointed in that case."

"Oh, I do hope they will make a revolution!" Isabel exclaimed. "I should delight in seeing a revolution!"

"Let me see," said her uncle, with a humorous intention; "I forget whether you are a liberal or a conservative. I have heard you take such opposite views."

"I am both. I think I am a little of everything. In a revolution—after it was well begun—I think I should be a conservative. One sympathizes more with them, and they have a chance to behave so picturesquely."

"I don't know that I understand what you mean by behaving picturesquely, but it seems to me that you do that always, my dear."

"Oh, you lovely man, if I could believe that!" the girl interrupted.

"I am afraid, after all, you won't have the pleasure of seeing a revolution here just now," Mr. Touchett went on. "If you want to see one, you must pay us a long visit. You see, when you come to the point, it would n't suit them to be taken at their word."

"Of whom are you speaking?"

"Well, I mean Lord Warburton and his friends,—the radicals of the upper class. Of course I only know the way it strikes me. They talk about changes, but I don't think they quite realize. You and I, you know, we know what it is to have lived under democratic institutions; I always thought them very comfortable, but I was used to them from the first. But then, I ain't a lord; you're a lady, my dear, but I ain't a

lord. Now, over here, I don't think it quite comes home to them. It's a matter of every day and every hour, and I don't think many of them would find it as pleasant as what they've got. Of course if they want to try, it's their own business; but I expect they won't try very hard!"

"Don't you think they are sincere?" Isabel asked.

"Well, they are very conscientious," Mr. Touchett allowed; "but it seems as if they took it out in theories, mostly. Their radical views are a kind of amusement. They have got to have some amusement, and they might have coarser tastes than that. You see, they are very luxurious, and these progressive ideas are about their biggest luxury. They make them feel moral, and yet they don't affect their position. They think a great deal of their position; don't let one of them ever persuade you he does n't, for if you were to proceed on that basis, you would find that you had made a great mistake."

Isabel followed her uncle's argument, which he unfolded with his mild, reflective, optimistic accent, most attentively, and though she was unacquainted with the British aristocracy, she found it in harmony with her general impressions of human nature. But she felt moved to put in a protest on Lord Warburton's behalf.

"I don't believe Lord Warburton's a humbug," she said. "I don't care what the others are. I should like to see Lord Warburton put to the test."

"Heaven deliver me from my friends!" Mr. Touchett answered. "Lord Warburton is a very amiable young man, — a very fine young man. He has a hundred thousand a year. He owns fifty thousand acres of the soil of this little island. He has half a dozen houses to live in. He has a seat in Parliament as I have one at my own dinner-table. He has very cultivated tastes; cares for literature, for art, for

science, for charming young ladies. The most cultivated is his taste for the new views. It affords him a great deal of entertainment, more perhaps than anything else, except the young ladies. His old house over there — what does he call it, Lockleigh? — is very attractive; but I don't think it is as pleasant as this. That does n't matter, however, — he has got so many others. His views don't hurt any one, so far as I can see; they certainly don't hurt himself. And if there were to be a revolution, he would come off very easily; they would n't touch him, they would leave him as he is; he is too much liked."

"Ah, he could n't be a martyr even if he wished!" Isabel exclaimed. "That's a very poor position!"

"He will never be a martyr unless you make him one," said the old man.

Isabel shook her head; there might have been something laughable in the fact that she did it with a touch of sadness.

"I shall never make a martyr!"

"You will never be one, I hope."

"I hope not. But you don't pity Lord Warburton, then, as Ralph does?"

Her uncle looked at her awhile, with genial acuteness.

"Yes, I do, after all."

## IX.

The two Misses Molyneux, this nobleman's sisters, came presently to call upon her, and Isabel took a fancy to the young ladies, who appeared to her to have a very original stamp. It is true that, when she spoke of them to her cousin as original, he declared that no epithet could be less applicable than this to the two Misses Molyneux, for that there were fifty thousand young women in England who exactly resembled them. Deprived of this advantage, however, Isabel's visitors retained

that of an extreme sweetness and shyness of demeanor, and of having, as she thought, the kindest eyes in the world.

"They are not morbid, at any rate, whatever they are," our heroine said to herself; and she deemed this a great charm, for two or three of the friends of her girlhood had been regrettably open to the charge (they would have been so nice without it), to say nothing of Isabel's having occasionally suspected that it might become a fault of her own. The Misses Molyneux were not in their first youth, but they had bright, fresh complexions, and something of the smile of childhood. Their eyes, which Isabel admired so much, were quiet and contented, and their figures, of a generous roundness, were incased in sealskin jackets. Their friendliness was great, so great that they were almost embarrassed to show it; they seemed somewhat afraid of the young lady from the other side of the world, and rather looked than spoke their good wishes. But they made it clear to her that they hoped she would come to lunch at Lockleigh, where they lived with their brother, and then they might see her very, very often. They wondered whether she would n't come over some day and sleep; they were expecting some people on the 29th, and perhaps she would come while the people were there.

"I'm afraid it is n't any one very remarkable," said the elder sister, "but I dare say you will take us as you find us."

"I shall find you delightful; I think you are enchanting just as you are," replied Isabel, who was often very liberal in her expressions of esteem.

Her visitors blushed, and her cousin told her, after they were gone, that, if she said such things to those poor girls, they would think she was quizzing them; he was sure it was the first time they had been called enchanting."

"I can't help it," Isabel answered. "I think it's lovely to be so quiet, and

reasonable, and satisfied. I should like to be like that."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Ralph, with ardor.

"I mean to try and imitate them," said Isabel. "I want very much to see them at home."

She had this pleasure a few days later, when, with Ralph and his mother, she drove over to Lockleigh. She found the Misses Molyneux sitting in a vast drawing-room (she perceived afterwards it was one of several), in a wilderness of faded chintz; they were dressed on this occasion in black velveteen. Isabel liked them even better at home than she had done at Gardencourt, and was more than ever struck with the fact that they were not morbid. It had seemed to her before that, if they had a fault, it was a want of vivacity; but she presently saw that they were capable of deep emotion. Before lunch she was alone with them, for some time, on one side of the room, while Lord Warburton, at a distance, talked to Mrs. Touchett.

"Is it true that your brother is such a great radical?" Isabel asked. She knew it was true, but we have seen that her interest in human nature was keen, and she had a desire to draw the Misses Molyneux out.

"Oh, dear, yes; he's immensely advanced," said Mildred, the younger sister.

"At the same time, Warburton is very reasonable," Miss Molyneux observed.

Isabel watched him a moment, at the other side of the room; he was evidently trying hard to make himself agreeable to Mrs. Touchett. Ralph was playing with one of the dogs before the fire, which the temperature of an English August, in the ancient, spacious room, had not made an impertinence. "Do you suppose your brother is sincere?" Isabel inquired with a smile.

"Oh, he must be, you know!" Mil-

dred exclaimed, quickly ; while the elder sister gazed at our heroine in silence.

“Do you think he would stand the test?”

“The test?”

“I mean, for instance, having to give up all this!”

“Having to give up Lockleigh?” said Miss Molyneux, finding her voice.

“Yes, and the other places ; what are they called?”

The two sisters exchanged an almost frightened glance. “Do you mean — do you mean on account of the expense?” the younger one asked.

“I dare say he might let one or two of his houses,” said the other.

“Let them for nothing?” Isabel inquired.

“I can’t fancy his giving up his property!” said Miss Molyneux.

“Ah, I am afraid he is an impostor!” Isabel exclaimed. “Don’t you think it’s a false position?”

Her companions, evidently, were rapidly getting bewildered. “My brother’s position?” Miss Molyneux inquired.

“It’s thought a very good position,” said the younger sister. “It’s the first position in the county.”

“I am afraid you think me very irreverent,” Isabel took occasion to observe. “I suppose you revere your brother, and are rather afraid of him.”

“Of course one looks up to one’s brother,” said Miss Molyneux, simply.

“If you do that, he must be very good ; because you, evidently, are very good.”

“He is most kind. It will never be known, the good he does.”

“His ability is known,” Mildred added ; “every one thinks it’s immense.”

“Oh, I can see that,” said Isabel. “But if I were he, I should wish to be a conservative. I should wish to keep everything.”

“I think one ought to be liberal,” Mildred argued, gently. “We have al-

ways been so, even from the earliest times.”

“Ah, well,” said Isabel, “you have made a great success of it ; I don’t wonder you like it. I see you are very fond of crewels.”

When Lord Warburton showed her the house, after lunch, it seemed to her a matter of course that it should be a noble picture. Within, it had been a good deal modernized ; some of its best points had lost their purity ; but as they saw it from the gardens, a stout, gray pile, of the softest, deepest, most weather-fretted hue, rising from a broad, still moat, it seemed to Isabel a castle in a fairy tale. The day was cool and rather lustreless ; the first note of autumn had been struck ; and the watery sunshine rested on the walls in blurred and desultory gleams, washing them, as it were, in places tenderly chosen, where the ache of antiquity was keenest. Her host’s brother, the vicar, had come to lunch, and Isabel had had five minutes’ talk with him, — time enough to institute a search for theological characteristics and give it up as vain. The characteristics of the vicar of Lockleigh were a big, athletic figure, a candid, natural countenance, a capacious appetite, and a tendency to abundant laughter. Isabel learned afterwards from her cousin that, before taking orders, he had been a mighty wrestler, and that he was still, on occasion, — in the privacy of the family circle as it were, — quite capable of flooring his man. Isabel liked him ; she was in the mood for liking everything ; but her imagination was a good deal taxed to think of him as a source of spiritual aid. The whole party, on leaving lunch, went to walk in the grounds ; but Lord Warburton exercised some ingenuity in engaging his youngest visitor in a stroll somewhat apart from the others.

“I wish you to see the place properly, seriously,” he said. “You can’t do so if your attention is distracted by irrel-

evant gossip." His own conversation (though he told Isabel a good deal about the house, which had a very curious history) was not purely archæological; he reverted at intervals to matters more personal, matters personal to the young lady as well as to himself. But at last, after a pause of some duration, returning for a moment to their ostensible theme, "Ah, well," he said, "I am very glad indeed you like the old house. I wish you could see more of it, — that you could stay here a while. My sisters have taken an immense fancy to you, — if that would be any inducement."

"There is no want of inducements," Isabel answered; "but I am afraid I can't make engagements. I am quite in my aunt's hands."

"Ah, excuse me if I say I don't exactly believe that. I am pretty sure you can do whatever you like."

"I am sorry if I make that impression on you; I don't think it's a nice impression to make."

"It has the merit of permitting me to hope." And Lord Warburton paused a moment.

"To hope what?"

"That in future I may see you often."

"Ah," said Isabel, "to enjoy that pleasure, I need n't be so terribly emancipated!"

"Doubtless not; and yet at the same time I don't think your uncle likes me."

"You are very much mistaken. I have heard him speak very highly of you."

"I am glad you have talked about me," said Lord Warburton. "But all the same, I don't think he would like me to keep coming to Gardencourt."

"I can't answer for my uncle's tastes," the girl rejoined, "though I ought, as far as possible, to take them into account. But, for myself, I shall be very glad to see you."

"Now that's what I like to hear you say! I am charmed when you say that."

"You are easily charmed, my lord," said Isabel.

"No, I am not easily charmed!" And then he stopped a moment. "But you have charmed me, Miss Archer," he added.

These words were uttered with an indefinable sound which startled the girl; it struck her as the prelude to something grave; she had heard the sound before, and she recognized it. She had no wish, however, that for the moment such a prelude should have a sequel, and she said, as gayly as possible and as quickly as an appreciable degree of agitation would allow her, "I am afraid there is no prospect of my being able to come here again."

"Never?" said Lord Warburton.

"I won't say 'never;' I should feel very melodramatic."

"May I come and see you, then, some day next week?"

"Most assuredly. What is there to prevent it?"

"Nothing tangible. But with you I never feel safe. I have a sort of sense that you are always judging people."

"You don't of necessity lose by that."

"It is very kind of you to say so; but even if I gain, stern justice is not what I most love. Is Mrs. Touchett going to take you abroad?"

"I hope so."

"Is England not good enough for you?"

"That's a very Machiavellian speech; it does n't deserve an answer. I want very much to see foreign lands as well."

"Then you will go on judging, I suppose."

"Enjoying, I hope, too."

"Yes, that's what you enjoy most; I can't make out what you are up to," said Lord Warburton. "You strike me as having mysterious purposes — vast designs!"

"You are so good as to have a theory about me which I don't at all fill out. Is there anything mysterious in a pur-

pose entertained and executed every year, in the most public manner, by fifty thousand of my fellow-countrymen, — the purpose of improving one's mind by foreign travel?"

"You can't improve your mind, Miss Archer," her companion declared. "It's already a most formidable instrument. It looks down on us all; it despises us."

"Despises you? You are making fun of me," said Isabel, seriously.

"Well, you think us picturesque, — that's the same thing. I won't be thought picturesque, to begin with; I am not so in the least. I protest."

"That protest is one of the most picturesque things I have ever heard," Isabel answered, with a smile.

Lord Warburton was silent a moment. "You judge only from the outside, — you don't care!" he said presently. "You only care to amuse yourself!" The note she had heard in his voice a moment before reappeared, and mixed with it now was an audible strain of bitterness, — a bitterness so abrupt and inconsequent that the girl felt a painful alarm. She had often heard that the English were a highly eccentric people; and she had even read in some ingenious author that they were, at bottom, the most romantic of races. Was Lord Warburton suddenly turning romantic, — was he going to make a scene, in his own house, only the third time they had met? She was reassured, quickly enough, by her sense of his great good manners, which was not impaired by the fact that he had already touched the furthest limit of good taste in expressing his admiration of a young lady who had confided in his hospitality. She was right in trusting to his good manners, for he presently went on, laughing a little, and without a trace of the accent that had discomposed her: "I don't mean, of course, that you amuse yourself with trifles. You select great materials; the foibles, the afflictions of

human nature, the peculiarities of nations!"

"As regards that," said Isabel, "I should find in my own nation entertainment for a lifetime. But we have a long drive, and my aunt will soon wish to start." She turned back toward the others, and Lord Warburton walked beside her in silence. But before they reached the others, "I shall come and see you next week," he said.

She had received an appreciable shock, but as it died away, she felt that she could not pretend to herself that it was altogether a painful one. Nevertheless, she made answer to this declaration, coldly enough, "Just as you please." And her coldness was not coquetry, — a quality which she possessed in a much smaller degree than would have seemed probable to many critics; it came from a certain fear.

## X.

The day after her visit to Lockleigh she received a note from her friend, Miss Stackpole, — a note of which the envelope, exhibiting in conjunction the postmark of Liverpool and the neat calligraphy of the quick-fingered Henrietta, caused her some liveliness of emotion. "Here I am, my lovely friend," Miss Stackpole wrote; "I managed to get off at last. I decided only the night before I left New York, — the Interviewer having come round to my figure. I put a few things into a bag, like a veteran journalist, and came down to the steamer in a street-car. Where are you, and where can we meet? I suppose you are visiting at some castle or other, and have already acquired the correct accent. Perhaps, even, you have married a lord; I almost hope you have, for I want some introductions to the first people, and shall count on you for a few. The Interviewer wants some light on the nobility. My first impressions (of the people at large) are not

rose-colored; but I wish to talk them over with you, and you know that whatever I am, at least I am not superficial. I have also something very particular to tell you. Do appoint a meeting as quickly as you can; come to London (I should like so much to visit the sights with you), or else let me come to you, *wherever you are*. I will do so with pleasure; for you know everything interests me, and I wish to see as much as possible of the inner life."

Isabel did not show this letter to her uncle; but she acquainted him with its purport, and, as she expected, he begged her instantly to assure Miss Stackpole, in his name, that he should be delighted to receive her at Gardencourt. "Though she is a literary lady," he said, "I suppose that, being an American, she won't reproduce me, as that other one did. She has seen others like me."

"She has seen no other so delightful!" Isabel answered; but she was not altogether at ease about Henrietta's reproductive instincts, which belonged to that side of her friend's character which she viewed with least complacency. She wrote to Miss Stackpole, however, that she would be very welcome under Mr. Touchett's roof; and this enterprising young woman lost no time in signifying her intention of arriving. She had gone up to London, and it was from the metropolis that she took the train for the station nearest to Gardencourt, where Isabel and Ralph were in waiting to receive the visitor.

"Shall I love her, or shall I hate her?" asked Ralph, while they stood on the platform, before the advent of the train.

"Whichever you do will matter very little to her," said Isabel. "She does n't care a straw what men think of her."

"As a man I am bound to dislike her, then. She must be a kind of monster. Is she very ugly?"

"No, she is decidedly pretty."

"A female interviewer, — a reporter

in petticoats? I am very curious to see her," Ralph declared.

"It is very easy to laugh at her, but it is not easy to be as brave as she."

"I should think not; interviewing requires bravery. Do you suppose she will interview me?"

"Never in the world. She will not think you of enough importance."

"You will see," said Ralph. "She will send a description of us all, including Bunchie, to her newspaper."

"I shall ask her not to," Isabel answered.

"You think she is capable of it, then."

"Perfectly."

"And yet you have made her your bosom friend!"

"I have not made her my bosom friend; but I like her, in spite of her faults."

"Ah, well," said Ralph, "I am afraid I shall dislike her, in spite of her merits."

"You will probably fall in love with her at the end of three days."

"And have my love-letters published in the Interviewer? Never!" cried the young man.

The train presently arrived, and Miss Stackpole, promptly descending, proved to be, as Isabel had said, decidedly pretty. She was a fair, plump person, of medium stature, with a round face, a small mouth, a delicate complexion, a bunch of light brown ringlets at the back of her head, and a peculiarly open, surprised-looking eye. The most striking point in her appearance was the remarkable fixedness of this organ, which rested without impudence or defiance, but as if in conscientious exercise of a natural right, upon every object it happened to encounter. It rested in this manner upon Ralph himself, who was somewhat disconcerted by Miss Stackpole's gracious and comfortable aspect, which seemed to indicate that it would not be so easy as he had assumed to

disapprove of her. She was very well dressed, in fresh, dove-colored draperies, and Ralph saw at a glance that she was scrupulously, fastidiously neat. From top to toe she carried not an ink-stain. She spoke in a clear, high voice, — a voice not rich, but loud, though after she had taken her place, with her companions, in Mr. Touchett's carriage, she struck him, rather to his surprise, as not an abundant talker. She answered the inquiries made of her by Isabel, however, and in which the young man ventured to join, with a great deal of precision and distinctness; and later, in the library at Gardencourt, when she had made the acquaintance of Mr. Touchett (his wife not having thought it necessary to appear), did more to give the measure of her conversational powers.

"Well, I should like to know whether you consider yourselves American or English," she said. "If once I knew, I could talk to you accordingly."

"Talk to us anyhow, and we shall be thankful," Ralph answered, liberally.

She fixed her eyes upon him, and there was something in their character that reminded him of large, polished buttons; he seemed to see the reflection of surrounding objects upon the pupil. The expression of a button is not usually deemed human, but there was something in Miss Stackpole's gaze that made him, as he was a very modest man, feel vaguely embarrassed and uncomfortable. This sensation, it must be added, after he had spent a day or two in her company, sensibly diminished, though it never wholly disappeared. "I don't suppose that you are going to undertake to persuade me that *you* are an American," she said.

"To please you, I will be an Englishman, — I will be a Turk!"

"Well, if you can change about that way, you are very welcome," Miss Stackpole rejoined.

"I am sure you understand everything,

and that differences of nationality are no barrier to you," Ralph went on.

Miss Stackpole gazed at him still. "Do you mean the foreign languages?"

"The languages are nothing. I mean the spirit — the genius."

"I am not sure that I understand *you*," said the correspondent of the Interviewer; "but I expect I shall before I leave."

"He is what is called a cosmopolitan," Isabel suggested.

"That means he's a little of everything and not much of any! I must say I think patriotism is like charity, — it begins at home."

"Ah, but where does home begin, Miss Stackpole?" Ralph inquired.

"I don't know where it begins, but I know where it ends. It ended a long time before I got here."

"Don't you like it over here?" asked Mr. Touchett, with his mild, wise, aged, innocent voice.

"Well, sir, I have n't quite made up my mind what ground I shall take. I feel a good deal cramped. I felt it on the journey from Liverpool to London."

"Perhaps you were in a crowded carriage," Ralph suggested.

"Yes, but it was crowded with friends — a party of Americans whose acquaintance I had made upon the steamer; a most lovely group from Little Rock, Arkansas. In spite of that I felt cramped, — I felt something pressing upon me; I could n't tell what it was. I felt at the very commencement as if I were not going to sympathize with the atmosphere. But I suppose I shall make my own atmosphere. Your surroundings seem very attractive."

"Ah, we too are a lovely group!" said Ralph. "Wait a little and you will see."

Miss Stackpole showed every disposition to wait, and evidently was prepared to make a considerable stay at Gardencourt. She occupied herself in the

mornings with literary labor; but in spite of this Isabel spent many hours with her friend, who, once her daily task performed, was of an eminently social tendency. Isabel speedily found occasion to request her to desist from celebrating the charms of their common sojourn in print, having discovered on the second morning of Miss Stackpole's visit that she was engaged upon a letter to the Interviewer, of which the title, in her exquisitely neat and legible hand (exactly that of the copy-books which our heroine remembered at school), was "Americans and Tudors: Glimpses of Gardencourt." Miss Stackpole, with the best conscience in the world, offered to read her letter to Isabel, who immediately put in her protest.

"I don't think you ought to do that, — I don't think you ought to describe the place."

Henrietta gazed at her, as usual. "Why, it's just what the people want, and it's a lovely place."

"It's too lovely to be put in the newspapers, and it's not what my uncle wants."

"Don't you believe that!" cried Henrietta. "They are always delighted afterwards."

"My uncle won't be delighted — nor my cousin, either. They will consider it a breach of hospitality."

Miss Stackpole showed no sense of confusion; she simply wiped her pen, very neatly, upon an elegant little implement which she kept for the purpose, and put away her manuscript. "Of course if you don't approve, I won't do it; but I sacrifice a beautiful subject."

"There are plenty of other subjects, there are subjects all round you. We will take some drives, and I will show you some charming scenery."

"Scenery is not my department: I always need a human interest. You know I am deeply human, Isabel; I always was," Miss Stackpole rejoined. "I was going to bring in your cousin, —

the alienated American. There is a great demand just now for the alienated American, and your cousin is a beautiful specimen. I should have handled him severely."

"He would have died of it!" Isabel exclaimed. "Not of the severity, but of the publicity."

"Well, I should have liked to kill him a little. And I should have delighted to do your uncle, who seems to me a much nobler type — the American faithful still. He is a grand old man; I don't see how he can object to my paying him honor."

Isabel looked at her companion in much wonderment; it appeared to her so strange that a nature in which she found so much to esteem should exhibit such extraordinary disparities. "My poor Henrietta," she said, "you have no sense of privacy."

Henrietta colored deeply, and for a moment her brilliant eyes were suffused; while Isabel marveled more than ever at her inconsistency. "You do me great injustice," said Miss Stackpole, with dignity. "I have never written a word about myself!"

"I am very sure of that; but it seems to me one should be modest for others also!"

"Ah, that is very good!" cried Henrietta, seizing her pen again. "Just let me make a note of it, and I will put it in a letter!" She was a thoroughly good-natured woman, and half an hour later she was in as cheerful a mood as should have been looked for in a newspaper correspondent in want of material. "I have promised to do the social side," she said to Isabel; "and how can I do it unless I get ideas? If I can't describe this place, don't you know some place I can describe?" Isabel promised she would bethink herself, and the next day, in conversation with her friend, she happened to mention her visit to Lord Warburton's ancient house. "Ah, you must take me there, — that is just the place

for me!" Miss Stackpole exclaimed. "I must get a glimpse of the nobility."

"I can't take you," said Isabel; "but Lord Warburton is coming here, and you will have a chance to see him and observe him. Only if you intend to repeat his conversation, I shall certainly give him warning."

"Don't do that!" her companion begged; "I want him to be natural."

"An Englishman is never so natural as when he is holding his tongue!" Isabel rejoined.

It was not apparent, at the end of three days, that her cousin had fallen in love with their visitor, though he had spent a good deal of time in her society. They strolled about the park together, and sat under the trees, and in the afternoon, when it was delightful to float along the Thames, Miss Stackpole occupied a place in the boat in which hitherto Ralph had had but a single companion. Her society had a less insoluble quality than Ralph had expected in the natural perturbation of his sense of the perfect adequacy of that of his cousin; for the correspondent of the Interviewer made him laugh a good deal, and he had long since decided that abundant laughter should be the embellishment of the remainder of his days. Henrietta, on her side, did not quite justify Isabel's declaration with regard to her indifference to masculine opinion; for poor Ralph appeared to have presented himself to her as an irritating problem, which it would be superficial on her part not to solve.

"What does he do for a living?" she asked of Isabel, the evening of her arrival. "Does he go round all day with his hands in his pockets?"

"He does nothing," said Isabel, smiling; "he's a gentleman of leisure."

"Well, I call that a shame — when I have to work like a cotton-mill," Miss Stackpole replied. "I should like to show him up."

"He is in wretched health; he is quite unfit for work," Isabel urged.

"Pshaw! don't you believe it. I work when I am sick," cried her friend. Later, when she stepped into the boat, on joining the water-party, she remarked to Ralph that she supposed he hated her, — he would like to drown her.

"Ah, no," said Ralph, "I keep my victims for a slower torture. And you would be such an interesting one!"

"Well, you do torture me, I may say that. But I shock all your prejudices; that's one comfort."

"My prejudices? I have n't a prejudice to bless myself with. There's intellectual poverty for you."

"The more shame to you! I have some delicious prejudices. Of course I spoil your flirtation, or whatever it is you call it, with your cousin; but I don't care for that, for I render your cousin the service of drawing you out. She will see how thin you are!"

"Ah, do draw me out!" Ralph exclaimed. "So few people will take the trouble."

Miss Stackpole, in this undertaking, appeared to shrink from no trouble, resorting largely, whenever the opportunity offered, to the natural expedient of interrogation. On the following day the weather was bad, and in the afternoon the young man, by way of providing indoor amusement, offered to show her the pictures. Henrietta strolled through the long gallery in his society, while he pointed out its principal ornaments and mentioned the painters and subjects. Miss Stackpole looked at the pictures in perfect silence, committing herself to no opinion, and Ralph was gratified by the fact that she delivered herself of none of the little ready-made ejaculations of delight of which the visitors to Gardencourt were so frequently lavish. This young lady indeed, to do her justice, was but little addicted to the use of conventional phrases; there was something earnest and inventive in her tone, which at

times, in its brilliant deliberation, suggested a person of high culture speaking a foreign language. Ralph Touchett subsequently learned that she had at one time officiated as art-critic to a transatlantic journal; but she appeared in spite of this fact to carry in her pocket none of the small change of admiration. Suddenly, just after he had called her attention to a charming Constable, she turned and looked at him as if he himself had been a picture.

"Do you always spend your time like this?" she demanded.

"I seldom spend it so agreeably," said Ralph.

"Well, you know what I mean,—without any regular occupation."

"Ah," said Ralph, "I am the idlest man living."

Miss Stackpole turned her gaze to the Constable again, and Ralph bespoke her attention for a small Watteau hanging near it, which represented a gentleman in a pink doublet and hose and a ruff, leaning against the pedestal of the statue of a nymph in a garden, and playing the guitar to two ladies seated on the grass.

"That's my ideal of a regular occupation," he said.

Miss Stackpole turned to him again, and though her eyes had rested upon the picture, he saw that she had not apprehended the subject. She was thinking of something much more serious.

"I don't see how you can reconcile it to your conscience," she said.

"My dear lady, I have no conscience!"

"Well, I advise you to cultivate one. You will need it the next time you go to America."

"I shall probably never go again."

"Are you ashamed to show yourself?"

Ralph meditated, with a gentle smile.

"I suppose that, if one has no conscience, one has no shame."

"Well, you have got plenty of assur-

ance," Henrietta declared. "Do you consider it right to give up your country?"

"Ah, one does n't give up one's country, any more than one gives up one's grandmother. It's antecedent to choice."

"I suppose that means that you would give it up if you could. What do they think of you over here?"

"They delight in me."

"That's because you truckle to them."

"Ah, set it down a little to my natural charm!" Ralph urged.

"I don't know anything about your natural charm. If you have got any charm, it's quite unnatural; it's wholly acquired,—or at least you have tried hard to acquire it, living over here. I don't say you have succeeded! It's a charm that I don't appreciate, any way. Make yourself useful in some way, and then we will talk about it."

"Well, now, tell me what I shall do," said Ralph.

"Go right home, to begin with."

"Yes, I see. And then?"

"Take right hold of something."

"Well, now, what sort of thing?"

"Anything you please, so long as you take hold. Some new idea, some big work."

"Is it very difficult to take hold?" Ralph inquired.

"Not if you put your heart into it."

"Ah, my heart," said Ralph. "If it depends upon my heart"—

"Have n't you got any?"

"I had one a few days ago, but I have lost it since."

"You are not serious," Miss Stackpole remarked. "That's what's the matter with you." But for all this, in a day or two she again permitted him to occupy her mind, and on this occasion assigned a different cause to his mysterious perversity. "I know what's the matter with you, Mr. Touchett," she said. "You think you are too good to get married."

"I thought so till I knew you, Miss

Stackpole," Ralph answered; "and then I suddenly changed my mind."

"Oh, pshaw!" Henrietta exclaimed impatiently.

"Then it seemed to me," said Ralph, "that I was not good enough."

"It would improve you. Besides, it's your duty."

"Ah," cried the young man, "one has so many duties! Is that a duty too?"

"Of course it is. Did you never know that before? It's every one's duty to get married."

Ralph meditated a moment; he was disappointed. There was something in Miss Stackpole he had begun to like; it seemed to him that, if she was not a charming woman, she was at least a very good fellow. She was wanting in distinction, but, as Isabel had said, she was brave, and there is always something fine about that. He had not supposed her to be capable of vulgar arts; but these last words struck him as a false note. When a marriageable young woman urges matrimony upon an unencumbered young man, the most obvious explanation of her conduct is not the altruistic impulse.

"Ah, well, now, there is a good deal to be said about that," Ralph rejoined.

"There may be, but that is the principal thing. I must say I think it looks very exclusive, going round all alone, as if you thought no woman was good enough for you. Do you think you are better than any one else in the world? In America it's usual for people to marry."

"If it's my duty," Ralph asked, "is it not, by analogy, yours as well?"

Miss Stackpole's brilliant eyes expanded still further.

"Have you the fond hope of finding a flaw in my reasoning? Of course I have got as good a right to marry as any one else."

"Well, then," said Ralph, "I won't say it vexes me to see you single. It delights me, rather."

"You are not serious yet. You never will be."

"Shall you not believe me to be so on the day that I tell you I desire to give up the practice of going round alone?"

Miss Stackpole looked at him for a moment in a manner which seemed to announce a reply that might technically be called encouraging. But to his great surprise this expression suddenly resolved itself into an appearance of alarm, and even of resentment.

"No, not even then," she answered, dryly. After which she walked away.

"I have not fallen in love with your friend," Ralph said that evening to Isabel, "though we talked some time this morning about it."

"And you said something she didn't like," the girl replied.

Ralph stared. "Has she complained of me?"

"She told me she thinks there is something very low in the tone of Europeans towards women."

"Does she call me a European?"

"One of the worst. She told me you had said to her something that an American never would have said. But she did n't repeat it."

Ralph treated himself to a burst of resounding laughter.

"She is an extraordinary combination. Did she think I was making love to her?"

"No; I believe Americans do that. But she apparently thought you mistook the intention of something she had said, and put an unkind construction on it."

"I thought she was proposing marriage to me, and I accepted her. Was that unkind?"

Isabel smiled. "It was unkind to me. I don't want you to marry."

"My dear cousin, what is one to do among you all?" Ralph demanded. "Miss Stackpole tells me it's my bounden duty, and that it's hers to see I do mine!"

"She has a great sense of duty," said Isabel, gravely. "She has, indeed, and it's the motive of everything she says. That's what I like her for. She thinks it's very frivolous for you to be single; that's what she meant to express to you. If you thought she was trying to — to attract you, you were very wrong."

"It is true it was an odd way; but I did think she was trying to attract me. Excuse my superficiality."

"You are very conceited. She had no interested views, and never supposed you would think she had."

"One must be very modest, then, to talk with such women," Ralph said, humbly. "But it's a very strange type. She is too personal, — considering that she expects other people not to be. She walks in without knocking at the door."

"Yes," Isabel admitted, "she does n't sufficiently recognize the existence of knockers; and indeed I am not sure that she does n't think them a rather pretentious ornament. She thinks one's door should stand ajar. But I persist in liking her."

"I persist in thinking her too familiar," Ralph rejoined, naturally somewhat uncomfortable under the sense of having been doubly deceived in Miss Stackpole.

"Well," said Isabel, smiling, "I am afraid it is because she is rather vulgar that I like her."

"She would be flattered by your reason!"

"If I should tell her, I would not express it in that way. I should say it is because there is something of the 'people' in her."

"What do you know about the people? and what does she, for that matter?"

"She knows a great deal, and I know

enough to feel that she is a kind of emanation of the great democracy — of the continent, the country, the nation. I don't say that she sums it all up; that would be too much to ask of her. But she suggests it; she reminds me of it."

"You like her then for patriotic reasons. I am afraid it is on those very grounds that I object to her."

"Ah," said Isabel, with a kind of joyous sigh, "I like so many things! If a thing strikes me in a certain way, I like it. I don't want to boast, but I suppose I am rather versatile. I like people to be totally different from Henrietta, — in the style of Lord Warburton's sisters, for instance. So long as I look at the Misses Molyneux, they seem to me to answer a kind of ideal. Then Henrietta presents herself, and I am immensely struck with her; not so much for herself as what stands behind her."

"Ah, you mean the back view of her," Ralph suggested.

"What she says is true," his cousin answered; "you will never be serious. I like the great country stretching away beyond the rivers and across the prairies, blooming and smiling and spreading till it stops at the blue Pacific! A strong, sweet, fresh odor seems to rise from it, and Henrietta — excuse my simile — has something of that odor in her garments."

Isabel blushed a little as she concluded this speech, and the blush, together with the momentary ardor she had thrown into it, was so becoming to her that Ralph stood smiling at her for a moment after she had ceased speaking.

"I am not sure the Pacific is blue," he said; "but you are a woman of imagination. Henrietta, however, is fragrant — Henrietta is decidedly fragrant!"

*Henry James, Jr.*