

Hooper, Kennedy, Charras, and Quinet all wrote during the second French empire, and with the intention of "exploding the *Napoleonic legend*." They were biased by the relation of their subject to the politics of the day. You find them now declaring, as Chesney substantially does, that Grouchy did all that he ought to have done; or else, like Charras, that if he had done all that he ought to have done he could not have affected the result. But in vain will you look for such a temperate and sound criticism as that which Siborne<sup>1</sup> passes on Grouchy's conduct.

In most of the French narratives which defend Napoleon's course we also find unmistakable bias. In the brilliant but very untrustworthy history of the campaign by Thiers, in the quite elaborate and valuable work of the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne, there is much that must be wholly rejected: the former

work is not to be depended on for its facts; the latter draws many unwarranted conclusions. A work which has escaped public notice in great measure, entitled *Souvenirs Militaires, Napoléon à Waterloo*,<sup>2</sup> by an old officer of the Imperial Guard, though rather prolix, is a very sound and valuable discussion of the whole campaign, and is well worth a careful study.

I trust that I have not unnecessarily reviewed this famous controversy. It possesses a constant interest for all students of history. Apart from the dramatic incidents of the catastrophe, the utter defeat in a pitched battle of a captain so wonderfully able and experienced as Napoleon was must in itself always demand some explanation. I have simply endeavored to bring some facts, hitherto not generally known, to light, and to put the responsibility for the defeat where it belongs.

*John C. Ropes.*

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## THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY.

### XXIX.

UNDER her cousin's escort Isabel returned on the morrow to Florence, and Ralph Touchett, though usually he was not fond of railway journeys, thought very well of the successive hours passed in the train which hurried his companion away from the city now distinguished by Gilbert Osmond's preference, — hours that were to form the first stage in a still larger scheme of travel. Miss Stackpole had remained behind; she was planning a little trip to Naples, to be executed with Mr. Bantling's assistance. Isabel was to have but three

<sup>1</sup> History of the War in France and Belgium in 1815, 2d ed., vol. i. pp. 314-323.

<sup>2</sup> The full title is this: *Souvenirs Militaires, Napoléon à Waterloo, ou Précis Rectifié de la Campagne de 1815. Avec des Documents Nouveaux et*

days in Florence before the 4th of June, the date of Mrs. Touchett's departure, and she determined to devote the last of these to her promise to go and see Pansy Osmond. Her plan, however, seemed for a moment likely to modify itself, in deference to a plan of Madame Merle's. This lady was still at Casa Touchett but she too was on the point of leaving Florence, her next station being an ancient castle in the mountains of Tuscany, the residence of a noble family of that country, whose acquaintance (she had known them, as she said, "forever") seemed to Isabel, in the light of certain photographs of their immense

*des Pièces Inédites. Par un Ancien Officier de la Garde Impériale, qui est resté près de Napoléon pendant toute la campagne. Paris: Dumaine. 1866.*

crenelated dwelling which her friend was able to show her, a precious privilege.

She mentioned to Madame Merle that Mr. Osmond had asked her to call upon his daughter; she did not mention to her that he had also made her a declaration of love.

"*Ah, comme cela se trouve!*" the elder lady exclaimed. "I myself have been thinking it would be a kindness to take a look at the child before I go into the country."

"We can go together, then," said Isabel, reasonably. "I say 'reasonably,' because the proposal was not uttered in the spirit of enthusiasm. She had pre-figured her visit as made in solitude; she should like it better so. Nevertheless, to her great consideration for Madame Merle she was prepared to sacrifice this mystic sentiment.

Her friend meditated, with her usual suggestive smile. "After all," she presently said, "why should we both go, having, each of us, so much to do during these last hours?"

"Very good; I can easily go alone."

"I don't know about your going alone, — to the house of a handsome bachelor. He has been married, — but so long ago!"

Isabel stared. "When Mr. Osmond is away, what does it matter?"

"They don't know he is away, you see."

"They? Whom do you mean?"

"Every one. But perhaps it does n't matter."

"If you were going, why should n't I?" Isabel asked.

"Because I am an old frump, and you are a beautiful young woman."

"Granting all that, you have not promised."

"How much you think of your promises!" said Madame Merle, with a smile of genial mockery.

"I think a great deal of my promises. Does that surprise you?"

"You are right," Madame Merle reflected audibly. "I really think you wish to be kind to the child."

"I wish very much to be kind to her."

"Go and see her, then; no one will be the wiser. And tell her I would have come, if you had not. . . . Or rather," Madame Merle added, "don't tell her; she won't care."

As Isabel drove, in the publicity of an open vehicle, along the charming winding way which led to Mr. Osmond's hill-top, she wondered what Madame Merle had meant by no one being the wiser. Once in a while, at large intervals, this lady, in whose discretion as a general thing there was something almost brilliant, dropped a remark of ambiguous quality, struck a note that sounded false. What cared Isabel Archer for the vulgar judgments of obscure people; and did Madame Merle suppose that she was capable of doing a deed in secret? Of course not; she must have meant something else, something which in the press of the hours that preceded her departure she had not had time to explain. Isabel would return to this some day; there were certain things as to which she liked to be clear. She heard Pansy strumming at the piano in another apartment, as she herself was ushered into Mr. Osmond's drawing-room; the little girl was "practicing," and Isabel was pleased to think that she performed this duty faithfully. Presently Pansy came in, smoothing down her frock, and did the honors of her father's house with the wide-eyed conscientiousness of a sensitive child. Isabel sat there for half an hour, and Pansy entertained her like a little lady, — not chattering, but conversing, and showing the same courteous interest in Isabel's affairs that Isabel was so good as to take in hers. Isabel wondered at her; as I have said before, she had never seen a child like that. How well she had been taught, said our keen young lady; how

prettily she had been directed and fashioned; and yet how simple, how natural, how innocent, she had been kept! Isabel was fond of psychological problems, and it had pleased her, up to this time, to be in doubt as to whether Miss Pansy were not all-knowing. Was her infantine serenity but the perfection of self-consciousness? Was it put on to please her father's visitor, or was it the direct expression of a little neat, orderly character? The hour that Isabel spent in Mr. Osmond's beautiful, empty, dusky rooms, — the windows had been half darkened, to keep out the heat, and here and there, through an easy crevice, the splendid summer day peeped in, lighting a gleam of faded color or tarnished gilt in the rich-looking gloom, — Isabel's interview with the daughter of the house, I say, effectually settled this question. Pansy was really a blank page, a pure white surface; she was not clever enough for precocious coquetries. She was not clever; Isabel could see that; she only had nice feelings. There was something touching about her; Isabel had felt it before; she would be an easy victim of fate. She would have no will, no power to resist, no sense of her own importance; only an exquisite taste, and an appreciation, equally exquisite, of such affection as might be bestowed upon her. She would easily be mystified, easily crushed; her force would be solely in her power to cling. She moved about the place with Isabel, who had asked leave to walk through the other rooms again, where Pansy gave her judgment on several works of art. She talked about her prospects, her occupations, her father's intentions; she was not egotistical, but she felt the propriety of giving Isabel the information that so observant a visitor would naturally expect.

"Please tell me," she said, "did papa, in Rome, go to see Madame Catherine? He told me he would if he had time. Perhaps he had not time. Papa likes

a great deal of time. He wished to speak about my education; it is n't finished yet, you know. I don't know what they can do with me more; but it appears it is far from finished. Papa told me one day he thought he would finish it himself; for the last year or two, at the convent, the masters that teach the tall girls are so very dear. Papa is not rich, and I should be very sorry if he were to pay much money for me, because I don't think I am worth it. I don't learn quickly enough, and I have got no memory. For what I am told, yes, — especially when it is pleasant; but not for what I learn in a book. There was a young girl, who was my best friend, and they took her away from the convent when she was fourteen, to make — how do you say it in English? — to make a *dot*. You don't say it in English? I hope it is n't wrong; I only mean they wished to keep the money, to marry her. I don't know whether it is for that that papa wishes to keep the money, — to marry me. It costs so much to marry!" Pansy went on, with a sigh. "I think papa might make that economy. At any rate, I am too young to think about it yet, and I don't care for any gentleman; I mean, for any but him. If he were not my papa, I should like to marry him; I would rather be his daughter than the wife of — of some strange person. I miss him very much, but not so much as you might think, for I have been so much away from him. Papa has always been principally for holidays. I miss Madame Catherine almost more; but you must not tell him that. You shall not see him again? I am very sorry for that. Of every one who comes here I like you the best. That is not a great compliment, for there are not many people. It was very kind of you to come to-day, — so far from your house; for I am as yet only a child. Oh, yes, I have only the occupations of a child. When did you give them up, the occupations

of a child? I should like to know how old you are, but I don't know whether it is right to ask. At the convent they told us that we must never ask the age. I don't like to do anything that is not expected; it looks as if one had not been properly taught. I myself, — I should never like to be taken by surprise. Papa left directions for everything. I go to bed very early. When the sun goes off that side I go into the garden. Papa left strict orders that I was not to get scorched. I always enjoy the view; the mountains are so graceful. In Rome, from the convent, we saw nothing but roofs and bell-towers. I practice three hours. I do not play very well. You play yourself? I wish very much that you would play something for me; papa wishes very much that I should hear good music. Madame Merle has played for me several times; that is what I like best about Madame Merle; she has great facility. I shall never have facility. And I have no voice, — just a little thread."

Isabel gratified this respectful wish, drew off her gloves, and sat down to the piano, while Pansy, standing beside her, watched her white hands move quickly over the keys. When she stopped, she kissed the child good-by, and held her a moment, looking at her.

"Be a good child," she said; "give pleasure to your father."

"I think that is what I live for," Pansy answered. "He has not much pleasure; he is rather a sad man."

Isabel listened to this assertion with an interest which she felt it to be almost a torment that she was obliged to conceal from the child. It was her pride that obliged her, and a certain sense of decency; there were still other things in her head which she felt a strong impulse, instantly checked, to say to Pansy about her father; there were things it would have given her pleasure to hear the child, to make the child, say. But

she no sooner became conscious of these things than her imagination was hushed with horror at the idea of taking advantage of the little girl, — it was of this she would have accused herself, — and of leaving an audible trace of her emotion behind. She had come, — she had come; but she had stayed only an hour! She rose quickly from the music-stool; even then, however, she lingered a moment, still holding her small companion, drawing the child's little tender person closer, and looking down at her. She was obliged to confess it to herself, — she would have taken a passionate pleasure in talking about Gilbert Osmond to this innocent, diminutive creature who was near to him. But she said not another word; she only kissed Pansy once more. They went together through the vestibule, to the door which opened into the court; and there Pansy stopped, looking rather wistfully beyond.

"I may go no further," she said. "I have promised papa not to go out of this door."

"You are right to obey him; he will never ask you anything unreasonable."

"I shall always obey him. But when will you come again?"

"Not for a long time, I am afraid."

"As soon as you can, I hope. I am only a little girl," said Pansy, "but I shall always expect you."

And the small figure stood in the high, dark door-way, watching Isabel cross the clear, gray court, and disappear into the brightness beyond the big *portone*, which gave a wider gleam as it opened.

### XXX.

Isabel came back to Florence, but only after several months; an interval sufficiently replete with incident. It is not, however, during this interval that we are closely concerned with her; our attention is engaged again on a certain day in the late spring-time, shortly after

her return to the Palazzo Crescentini, and a year from the date of the incidents I have just narrated. She was alone on this occasion, in one of the smaller of the numerous rooms devoted by Mrs. Touchett to social uses, and there was that in her expression and attitude which would have suggested that she was expecting a visitor. The tall window was open, and though its green shutters were partly drawn, the bright air of the garden had come in through a broad interstice, and filled the room with warmth and perfume. Our young lady stood for some time at the window, with her hands clasped behind her, gazing into the brilliant aperture, in the manner of a person relapsing into reverie. She was preoccupied; she was too restless to sit down, to work, to read. It was evidently not her design, however, to catch a glimpse of her visitor before he should pass into the house; for the entrance to the palace was not through the garden, in which stillness and privacy always reigned. She was endeavoring rather to anticipate his arrival by a process of conjecture, and to judge by the expression of her face this attempt gave her plenty to do. She was extremely grave: not sad, exactly, but deeply serious. The lapse of a year may doubtless account for a considerable increase of gravity, though this will depend a good deal upon the manner in which the year has been spent. Isabel had spent hers in seeing the world; she had moved about; she had traveled; she had exerted herself with an almost passionate activity. She was now, to her own sense, a very different person from the frivolous young woman from Albany, who had begun to see Europe upon the lawn at Gardencourt a couple of years before. She flattered herself that she had gathered a rich experience, that she knew a great deal more of life than this light-minded creature had even suspected. If her thoughts just now had inclined themselves to retrospect,

instead of fluttering their wings nervously about the present, they would have evoked a multitude of interesting pictures. These pictures would have been both landscapes and figure-pieces; the latter, however, would have been the more numerous. With several of the figures concerned in these combinations we are already acquainted. There would be, for instance, the conciliatory Lily, our heroine's sister and Edmund Ludlow's wife, who came out from New York to spend five months with Isabel. She left her husband behind her, but she brought her children, to whom Isabel now played, with equal munificence and tenderness, the part of maiden-aunt. Mr. Ludlow, toward the last, had been able to snatch a few weeks from his forensic triumphs, and, crossing the ocean with extreme rapidity, spent a month with the two ladies in Paris, before taking his wife home. The little Ludlows had not yet, even from the American point of view, reached the proper-tourist age; so that while her sister was with her Isabel confined her movements to a narrow circle. Lily and the babies had joined her in Switzerland in the month of July, and they had spent a summer of fine weather in an Alpine valley, where the flowers were thick in the meadows, and the shade of great chestnuts made a resting-place in such upward wanderings as might be undertaken by ladies and children on warm afternoons. Afterwards they had come to Paris, a city beloved by Lily, but less appreciated by Isabel, who in those days was constantly thinking of Rome. Mrs. Ludlow enjoyed Paris, but she was nevertheless somewhat disappointed and puzzled; and after her husband had joined her she was, in addition, a good deal depressed at not being able to induce him to enter into these somewhat subtle and complex emotions. They all had Isabel for their object; but Edmund Ludlow, as he had always done before, declined to be surprised, or distressed, or mystified,

or elated, at anything his sister-in-law might have done or have failed to do. Mrs. Ludlow's feelings were various. At one moment she thought it would be so natural for Isabel to come home and take a house in New York, — the Ros-siters', for instance, which had an elegant conservatory, and was just round the corner from her own; at another she could not conceal her surprise at the girl's not marrying some gentleman of rank in one of the foreign countries. On the whole, as I have said, she was rather disappointed. She had taken more satisfaction in Isabel's accession of fortune than if the money had been left to herself; it had seemed to her to offer just the proper setting for her sister's slender but eminent figure. Isabel had developed less, however, than Lily had thought likely, — development, to Lily's understanding, being somehow mysteriously connected with morning calls and evening parties. Intellectually, doubtless, she had made immense strides; but she appeared to have achieved few of those social conquests of which Mrs. Ludlow had expected to admire the trophies. Lily's conception of such achievements was extremely vague; but this was exactly what she had expected of Isabel, — to give it form and body. Isabel could have done as well as she had done in New York; and Mrs. Ludlow appealed to her husband to know whether there was any privilege that she enjoyed in Europe which the society of that city might not offer her. We know, ourselves, that Isabel had made conquests, — whether inferior or not to those she might have effected in her native land, it would be a delicate matter to decide; and it is not altogether with a feeling of complacency that I again mention that she had not made these honorable victories public. She had not told her sister the history of Lord Warburton, nor had she given her a hint of Mr. Osmond's state of mind; and she had no better reason for her si-

lence than that she did n't wish to speak. It entertained her more to say nothing, and she had no idea of asking poor Lily's advice. But Lily knew nothing of these rich mysteries, and it is no wonder, therefore, that she pronounced her sister's career in Europe rather dull, — an impression confirmed by the fact that Isabel's silence about Mr. Osmond, for instance, was in direct proportion to the frequency with which he occupied her thoughts. As this happened very often, it sometimes appeared to Mrs. Ludlow that her sister was really losing her gayety. So very strange a result of so exhilarating an incident as inheriting a fortune was of course perplexing to the cheerful Lily; it added to her general sense that Isabel was not at all like other people.

Isabel's gayety, however, — superficially speaking, at least, — exhibited itself rather more after her sister had gone home. She could imagine something more poetic than spending the winter in Paris, — Paris was like smart, neat prose, — and her frequent correspondence with Madame Merle did much to stimulate such fancies. She had never had a keener sense of freedom, of the absolute boldness and wantonness of liberty, than when she turned away from the platform at the Euston Station, on one of the latter days of November, after the departure of the train which was to convey poor Lily, her husband, and her children to their ship at Liverpool. It had been good for her to have them with her; she was very conscious of that; she was very observant, as we know, of what was good for her, and her effort was constantly to find something that was good enough. To profit by the present advantage till the latest moment, she had made the journey from Paris with the unenvied travelers. She would have accompanied them to Liverpool as well, only Edmund Ludlow had asked her, as a favor, not to do so; it made Lily so fidgety, and she

asked such impossible questions. Isabel watched the train move away; she kissed her hand to the elder of her small nephews, a demonstrative child, who leaned dangerously far out of the window of the carriage and made separation an occasion of violent hilarity, and then she walked back into the foggy London street. The world lay before her; she could do whatever she chose. There was something exciting in the feeling, but for the present her choice was tolerably discreet; she chose simply to walk back from Euston Square to her hotel. The early dusk of a November afternoon had already closed in; the street-lamps, in the thick, brown air, looked weak and red; our young lady was unattended, and Euston Square was a long way from Piccadilly. But Isabel performed the journey with a positive enjoyment of its dangers, and lost her way almost on purpose, in order to get more sensations, so that she was disappointed when an obliging policeman easily set her right again. She was so fond of the spectacle of human life that she enjoyed even the aspect of gathering dusk in the London streets, — the moving crowds, the hurrying cabs, the lighted shops, the flaring stalls, the dark, shining dampness of everything. That evening, at her hotel, she wrote to Madame Merle that she would start in a day or two for Rome. She made her way down to Rome without touching at Florence, — having gone first to Venice, and then proceeded southward by Ancona. She accomplished this journey without other assistance than that of her servant, for her natural protectors were not now on the ground. Ralph Touchett was spending the winter at Algiers, and Miss Stackpole, in the September previous, had been recalled to America by a telegram from the interviewer. This journal offered its brilliant correspondent a fresher field for her talents than the mouldering cities of Europe, and Henrietta was cheered on

her way by a promise from Mr. Bantling that he would soon come over and see her. Isabel wrote to Mrs. Touchett to apologize for not coming just then to Florence, and her aunt replied characteristically enough. Apologies, Mrs. Touchett intimated, were of no more use than soap-bubbles, and she herself never dealt in such articles. One either did the thing, or one did n't, and what one would have done belonged to the sphere of the irrelevant, like the idea of a future life or of the origin of things. Her letter was frank, but (a rare case with Mrs. Touchett) it was not so frank as it seemed. She easily forgave her niece for not stopping at Florence, because she thought it was a sign that there was nothing going on with Gilbert Osmond. She watched, of course, to see whether Mr. Osmond would now go to Rome, and took some comfort in learning that he was not guilty of an absence. Isabel, on her side, had not been a fortnight in Rome before she proposed to Madame Merle that they should make a little pilgrimage to the East. Madame Merle remarked that her friend was restless, but she added that she herself had always been consumed with the desire to visit Athens and Constantinople. The two ladies accordingly embarked on this expedition, and spent three months in Greece, in Turkey, in Egypt. Isabel found much to interest her in these countries, though Madame Merle continued to remark that even among the most classic sites, the scenes most calculated to suggest repose and reflection, her restlessness prevailed. Isabel traveled rapidly, eagerly, audaciously; she was like a thirsty person draining cup after cup. Madame Merle, for the present, was a most efficient duenna. It was on Isabel's invitation she had come, and she imparted all necessary dignity to the girl's uncountenanced condition. She played her part with the sagacity that might have been expected of her; she

effaced herself; she accepted the position of a companion whose expenses were profusely paid. The situation, however, had no hardships, and people who met this graceful pair on their travels would not have been able to tell you which was the patroness and which the client. To say that Madame Merle improved on acquaintance would misrepresent the impression she made upon Isabel, who had thought her from the first a perfectly enlightened woman. At the end of an intimacy of three months Isabel felt that she knew her better; her character had revealed itself, and Madame Merle had also at last redeemed her promise of relating her history from her own point of view, — a consummation the more desirable as Isabel had already heard it related from the point of view of others. This history was so sad a one (in so far as it concerned the late M. Merle, an adventurer of the lowest class, who had taken advantage, years before, of her youth, and of an inexperience in which, doubtless, those who knew her only now would find it difficult to believe), it abounded so in startling and lamentable incidents, that Isabel wondered the poor lady had kept so much of her freshness, her interest in life. Into this freshness of Madame Merle's she obtained a considerable insight; she saw that it was, after all, a tolerably artificial bloom. Isabel liked her as much as ever, but there was a certain corner of the curtain that never was lifted; it was as if Madame Merle had remained after all a foreigner. She had once said that she came from a distance, that she belonged to the Old World, and Isabel never lost the impression that she was the product of a different clime from her own, that she had grown up under other stars. Isabel believed that at bottom she had a different morality. Of course the morality of civilized persons has always much in common; but Isabel suspected that her friend had esoteric views. She believed,

with the presumption of youth, that a morality which differed from her own must be inferior to it; and this conviction was an aid to detecting an occasional flash of cruelty, an occasional lapse from candor, in the conversation of a woman who had raised delicate kindness to an art, and whose nature was too large for the narrow ways of deception. Her conception of human motives was different from Isabel's, and there were several in her list of which our heroine had not even heard. She had not heard of everything, that was very plain; and there were evidently things in the world of which it was not an advantage to hear. Once or twice Isabel had a sort of fright, but the reader will be amused at the cause of it. Madame Merle, as we know, comprehended, responded, sympathized, with wonderful readiness; yet it had nevertheless happened that her young friend mentally exclaimed, "Heaven forgive her, she does n't understand me!" Absurd as it may seem, this discovery operated as a shock; it left Isabel with a vague horror, in which there was even an element of foreboding. The horror of course subsided, in the light of some sudden proof of Madame Merle's remarkable intelligence; but it left a sort of high-water mark in the development of this delightful intimacy. Madame Merle had once said that, in her belief, when a friendship ceased to grow it immediately began to decline; there was no point of equilibrium between liking a person more and liking him less. A stationary affection, in other words, was impossible; it must move one way or the other. Without estimating the value of this doctrine, I may say that if Isabel's imagination, which had hitherto been so actively engaged on her friend's behalf, began at last to languish, she enjoyed her society not a particle less than before. If their friendship had declined, it had declined to a very comfortable level. The truth is that in these days the girl had other uses for her imagina-



tion, which was better occupied than it had ever been. I do not allude to the impulse it received as she gazed at the Pyramids, in the course of an excursion from Cairo, or as she stood among the broken columns of the Acropolis and fixed her eyes upon the point designated to her as the straits of Salamis, deep and memorable as these emotions had been. She came back by the last of March from Egypt and Greece, and made another stay in Rome. A few days after her arrival Gilbert Osmond came down from Florence, and remained three weeks, during which the fact of her being with his old friend Madame Merle, in whose house she had gone to lodge, made it virtually inevitable that he should see her every day. When the last of April came she wrote to Mrs. Touchett that she should now be very happy to accept an invitation given long before, and went to pay a visit at the Palazzo Crescentini; Madame Merle on this occasion remaining in Rome. Isabel found her aunt alone; her cousin was still at Algiers. Ralph, however, was expected in Florence from day to day, and Isabel, who had not seen him for upwards of a year, was prepared to give him the most affectionate welcome.

## XXXI.

It was not of him, nevertheless, that she was thinking while she stood at the window, where we found her a while ago, and it was not of any of the matters that I have just rapidly sketched. She was not thinking of the past, but of the future; of the immediate, impending hour. She had reason to expect a scene, and she was not fond of scenes. She was not asking herself what she should say to her visitor; this question had already been answered. What he would say to her, — that was the interesting speculation. It could be nothing agreeable; Isabel was convinced of this, and

the conviction had something to do with her being rather paler than usual. For the rest, however, she wore her natural brightness of aspect; even deep grief, with this vivid young lady, would have had a certain soft effulgence. She had laid aside her mourning, but she was still very simply dressed, and as she felt a good deal older than she had done a year before it is probable that to a certain extent she looked so. She was not left indefinitely to her apprehensions, for the servant at last came in and presented her a card.

“Let the gentleman come in,” said Isabel, who continued to gaze out of the window after the footman had retired. It was only when she had heard the door close behind the person who presently entered that she looked round.

Caspar Goodwood stood there, — stood and received a moment, from head to foot, the bright, dry gaze with which she rather withheld than offered a greeting. Whether on his side Mr. Goodwood felt himself older than on the first occasion of our meeting him is a point which we shall perhaps presently ascertain; let me say meanwhile that to Isabel’s critical glance he showed nothing of the encroachments of time. Straight, strong, and fresh, there was nothing in his appearance that spoke positively either of youth or of age; he looked too deliberate, too serious, to be young, and too eager, too active, to be old. Old he would never be, and this would serve as a compensation for his never having known the age of chubbiness. Isabel perceived that his jaw had quite the same voluntary look that it had worn in earlier days; but she was prepared to admit that such a moment as the present was not a time for relaxation. He had the air of a man who had traveled hard; he said nothing at first, as if he had been out of breath. This gave Isabel time to make a reflection. “Poor fellow,” she mentally murmured, “what great things he is capable of, and what a pity that he should waste

his splendid force! What a pity, too, that one can't satisfy everybody!" It gave her time to do more, — to say at the end of a minute, —

"I can't tell you how I hoped that you would n't come."

"I have no doubt of that." And Caspar Goodwood looked about him for a seat. Not only had he come, but he meant to stay a little.

"You must be very tired," said Isabel, seating herself, generously, as she thought, to give him his opportunity.

"No, I am not at all tired. Did you ever know me to be tired?"

"Never; I wish I had. When did you arrive here?"

"Last night, very late; in a kind of snail-train they call the express. These Italian trains go at about the rate of an American funeral."

"That is in keeping; you must have felt as if you were coming to a funeral," Isabel said, forcing a smile, in order to offer such encouragement as she might to an easy treatment of their situation. She had reasoned out the matter elaborately; she had made it perfectly clear that she broke no faith, that she falsified no contract; but for all this she was afraid of him. She was ashamed of her fear; but she was devoutly thankful there was nothing else to be ashamed of. He looked at her with his stiff persistency, — a persistency in which there was almost a want of tact; especially as there was a dull, dark beam in his eye, which rested on her almost like a physical weight.

"No, I did n't feel that, because I could n't think of you as dead. I wish I could!" said Caspar Goodwood, plainly.

"I thank you immensely."

"I would rather think of you as dead than as married to another man."

"That is very selfish of you!" Isabel cried, with the ardor of a real conviction. "If you are not happy yourself, others have a right to be."

"Very likely it is selfish; but I don't in the least mind your saying so. I don't mind anything you can say now, — I don't feel it. The cruellest things you could think of would be mere pin-pricks. After what you have done, I shall never feel anything. I mean anything but that. That I shall feel all my life."

Mr. Goodwood made these detached assertions with a sort of dry deliberateness in his hard, slow, American tone, which flung no atmospheric color over propositions intrinsically displeasing. The tone made Isabel angry rather than touched her; but her anger, perhaps, was fortunate, inasmuch as it gave her a further reason for controlling herself. It was under the pressure of this control that she said, after a little, irrelevantly, by way of answer to Mr. Goodwood's speech, "When did you leave New York?"

He threw up his head a moment, as if he were calculating. "Seventeen days ago."

"You must have traveled fast, in spite of your slow trains."

"I came as fast as I could. I would have come five days ago if I had been able."

"It would n't have made any difference, Mr. Goodwood," said Isabel, smiling.

"Not to you, — no. But to me."

"You gain nothing that I see."

"That is for me to judge!"

"Of course. To me it seems that you only torment yourself." And then, to change the subject, Isabel asked him if he had seen Henrietta Stackpole.

He looked as if he had not come from Boston to Florence to talk about Henrietta Stackpole; but he answered, distinctly enough, that this young lady had come to see him just before he left America.

"She came to see you?"

"Yes; she was in Boston, and she called at my office. It was the day I had got your letter."

"Did you tell her?" Isabel asked, with a certain anxiety.

"Oh, no," said Caspar Goodwood, simply; "I did n't want to. She will hear it soon enough; she hears everything."

"I shall write to her; and then she will write to me and scold me," Isabel declared, trying to smile again.

Caspar, however, remained sternly grave. "I guess she'll come out," he said.

"On purpose to scold me?"

"I don't know. She seemed to think she had not seen Europe thoroughly."

"I am glad you tell me that," Isabel said. "I must prepare for her."

Mr. Goodwood fixed his eyes for a moment on the floor; then, at last, raising them, "Does she know Mr. Osmond?" he asked.

"A little. And she does n't like him. But of course I don't marry to please Henrietta," Isabel added.

It would have been better for poor Caspar if she had tried a little more to gratify Miss Stackpole; but he did not say so; he only asked, presently, when her marriage would take place.

"I don't know yet. I can only say it will be soon. I have told no one but yourself and one other person, — an old friend of Mr. Osmond's."

"Is it a marriage your friends won't like?" Caspar Goodwood asked.

"I really have n't an idea. As I say, I don't marry for my friends."

He went on, making no exclamation, no comment, only asking questions.

"What is Mr. Osmond?"

"What is he? Nothing at all but a very good man. He is not in business," said Isabel. "He is not rich; he is not known for anything in particular."

She disliked Mr. Goodwood's questions, but she said to herself that she owed it to him to satisfy him as far as possible.

The satisfaction poor Caspar exhibited was certainly small; he sat very upright, gazing at her.

"Where does he come from?" he went on.

"From nowhere. He has spent most of his life in Italy."

"You said in your letter that he was an American. Has n't he a native place?"

"Yes, but he has forgotten it. He left it as a small boy."

"Has he never gone back?"

"Why should he go back?" Isabel asked, flushing a little, and defensively.

"He has no profession."

"He might have gone back for his pleasure. Does n't he like the United States?"

"He does n't know them. Then he is very simple; he contents himself with Italy."

"With Italy and with you," said Mr. Goodwood, with gloomy plainness, and no appearance of trying to make an epigram. "What has he ever done?" he added, abruptly.

"That I should marry him? Nothing at all," Isabel replied, with a smile that had gradually become a trifle defiant. "If he had done great things, would you forgive me any better? Give me up, Mr. Goodwood; I am marrying a non-entity. Don't try to take an interest in him; you can't."

"I can't appreciate him; that's what you mean. And you don't mean in the least that he is a nonentity. You think he is a great man, though no one else thinks so."

Isabel's color deepened; she thought this very clever of her companion, and it was certainly a proof of the clairvoyance of such a feeling as his.

"Why do you always come back to what others think? I can't discuss Mr. Osmond with you."

"Of course not," said Caspar, reasonably. And he sat there with his air of stiff helplessness, as if not only this were true, but there were nothing else that they might discuss.

"You see how little you gain," Isabel

broke out, — “how little comfort or satisfaction I can give you!”

“I did n't expect you to give me much.”

“I don't understand, then, why you came.”

“I came because I wanted to see you once more — as you are.”

“I appreciate that; but if you had waited a while, sooner or later we should have been sure to meet, and our meeting would have been pleasanter for each of us than this.”

“Waited till after you are married? That is just what I did n't want to do. You will be different then.”

“Not very. I shall still be a great friend of yours. You will see.”

“That will make it all the worse,” said Mr. Goodwood grimly.

“Ah, you are unaccommodating! I can't promise to dislike you, in order to allow you to resign yourself.”

“I should n't care if you did!”

Isabel got up, with a movement of repressed impatience, and walked to the window, where she remained a moment, looking out. When she turned round, her visitor was still motionless in his place. She came towards him again and stopped, resting her hand on the back of the chair she had just quitted.

“Do you mean you came simply to look at me? That's better for you, perhaps, than for me.”

“I wished to hear the sound of your voice,” said Caspar.

“You have heard it, and you see it says nothing very sweet.”

“It gives me pleasure, all the same.” And with this he got up.

She had felt pain and displeasure when she received, that morning, the note in which he told her that he was in Florence, and, with her permission, would come within an hour to see her. She had been vexed and distressed, though she had sent back word by his messenger that he might come when he would. She had not been better pleased

when she saw him; his being there at all was so full of implication. It implied things she could never assent to, — rights, reproaches, remonstrance, rebuke, the expectation of making her change her purpose. These things, however, if implied, had not been expressed; and now our young lady, strangely enough, began to resent her visitor's remarkable self-control. There was a dumb misery about him which irritated her; there was a manly staying of his hand which made her heart beat faster. She felt her agitation rising, and she said to herself that she was as angry as a woman who had been in the wrong. She was not in the wrong; she had fortunately not that bitterness to swallow; but, all the same, she wished he would denounce her a little. She had wished his visit would be short; it had no purpose, no propriety; yet now that he seemed to be turning away, she felt a sudden horror of his leaving her without uttering a word that would give her an opportunity to defend herself more than she had done in writing to him, a month before, in a few carefully chosen words, to announce her engagement. If she were not in the wrong, however, why should she desire to defend herself? It was an excess of generosity on Isabel's part to desire that Mr. Goodwood should be angry.

If he had not held himself hard it might have made him so to hear the tone in which she suddenly exclaimed, as if she were accusing him of having accused her, —

“I have not deceived you! I was perfectly free!”

“Yes, I know that,” said Caspar.

“I gave you full warning that I would do as I chose.”

“You said you would probably never marry, and you said it so positively that I pretty well believed it.”

Isabel was silent an instant.

“No one can be more surprised than myself at my present intention.”

"You told me that if I heard you were engaged I was not to believe it," Caspar went on. "I heard it twenty days ago from yourself, but I remembered what you had said. I thought there might be some mistake, and that is partly why I came."

"If you wish me to repeat it by word of mouth, that is soon done. There is no mistake at all."

"I saw that as soon as I came into the room."

"What good would it do you that I should n't marry?" Isabel asked, with a certain fierceness.

"I should like it better than this."

"You are very selfish, as I said before."

"I know that. I am selfish as iron."

"Even iron sometimes melts. If you will be reasonable I will see you again."

"Don't you call me reasonable now?"

"I don't know what to say to you," she answered, with sudden humility.

"I shan't trouble you for a long time," the young man went on. He made a step towards the door, but he stopped. "Another reason why I came was that I wanted to hear what you would say in explanation of your having changed your mind."

Isabel's humbleness as suddenly deserted her.

"In explanation? Do you think I am bound to explain?"

Caspar gave her one of his long dumb looks.

"You were very positive. I did believe it."

"So did I. Do you think I could explain if I would?"

"No, I suppose not. Well," he added, "I have done what I wished. I have seen you."

"How little you make of these terrible journeys!" Isabel murmured.

"If you are afraid I am tired, you may be at your ease about that." He turned away, this time in earnest, and

no hand-shake, no sign of parting, was exchanged between them. At the door he stopped, with his hand on the knob. "I shall leave Florence to-morrow," he said.

"I am delighted to hear it!" she answered, passionately. And he went out. Five minutes after he had gone she burst into tears.

### XXXII.

Her fit of weeping, however, was of brief duration, and the signs of it had vanished when, an hour later, she broke the news to her aunt. I use this expression because she had been sure Mrs. Touchett would not be pleased; Isabel had only waited to tell her till she had seen Mr. Goodwood. She had an odd impression that it would not be honorable to make the fact public before she should have heard what Mr. Goodwood would say about it. He had said rather less than she expected, and she now had a somewhat angry sense of having lost time. But she would lose no more; she waited till Mrs. Touchett came into the drawing-room before the midday breakfast, and then she said to her, —

"Aunt Lydia, I have something to tell you."

Mrs. Touchett gave a little jump, and looked at the girl almost fiercely.

"You need n't tell me; I know what it is."

"I don't know how you know."

"The same way that I know when the window is open, — by feeling a draught. You are going to marry that man."

"What man do you mean?" Isabel inquired, with great dignity.

"Madame Merle's friend — Mr. Osmond."

"I don't know why you call him Madame Merle's friend. Is that the principal thing he is known by?"

"If he is not her friend, he ought to

be, — after what she has done for him !” cried Mrs. Touchett. “I should n’t have expected it of her ; I am disappointed.”

“If you mean that Madame Merle has had anything to do with my engagement, you are greatly mistaken,” Isabel declared, with a sort of ardent coldness.

“You mean that your attractions were sufficient, without the gentleman being urged? You are quite right. They are immense, your attractions, and he would never have presumed to think of you if she had not put him up to it. He has a very good opinion of himself, but he was not a man to take trouble. Madame Merle took the trouble for him.”

“He has taken a great deal for himself !” cried Isabel, with a voluntary laugh.

Mrs. Touchett gave a sharp nod.

“I think he must, after all, to have made you like him.”

“I thought you liked him yourself.”

“I did, and that is why I am angry with him.”

“Be angry with me, not with him,” said the girl.

“Oh, I am always angry with you ; that’s no satisfaction ! Was it for this that you refused Lord Warburton ?”

“Please don’t go back to that. Why should n’t I like Mr. Osmond, since you did ?”

“I never wanted to marry him ; there is nothing of him.”

“Then he can’t hurt me,” said Isabel.

“Do you think you are going to be happy? No one is happy.”

“I shall set the fashion, then. What does one marry for ?”

“What you will marry for, Heaven only knows ! People usually marry as they go into partnership, — to set up a house. But in your partnership you will bring everything.”

“Is it that Mr. Osmond is not rich? Is that what you are talking about ?” Isabel asked.

“He has no money ; he has no name ; he has no importance. I value such things, and I have the courage to say it ; I think they are very precious. Many other people think the same, and they show it ; but they give some other reason !”

Isabel hesitated a little.

“I think I value everything that is valuable. I care very much for money, and that is why I wish Mr. Osmond to have some.”

“Give it to him, then ; but marry some one else.”

“His name is good enough for me,” the girl went on. “It’s a very pretty name. Have I such a fine one myself ?”

“All the more reason you should improve on it. There are only a dozen American names. Do you marry him out of charity ?”

“It was my duty to tell you, aunt Lydia, but I don’t think it is my duty to explain to you. Even if it were, I should n’t be able. So please don’t remonstrate ; in talking about it you have me at a disadvantage. I can’t talk about it.”

“I don’t remonstrate ; I simply answer you. I must give some sign of intelligence. I saw it coming, and I said nothing. I never meddle.”

“You never do, and I am greatly obliged to you. You have been very considerate.”

“It was not considerate ; it was convenient,” said Mrs. Touchett. “But I shall talk to Madame Merle.”

“I don’t see why you keep bringing her in. She has been a very good friend to me.”

“Possibly ; but she has been a poor one to me.”

“What has she done to you ?”

“She has deceived me. She had as good as promised me to prevent your engagement.”

“She could n’t have prevented it.”

“She can do anything ; that is what

I have always liked her for. I knew she could play any part; but I understood that she played them one by one. I did n't understand that she would play two at the same time."

"I don't know what part she may have played to you," Isabel said; "that is between yourselves. To me she has been honest, and kind, and devoted."

"Devoted, of course; she wished you to marry her candidate. She told me that she was watching you only in order to interpose."

"She said that to please you," the girl answered; conscious, however, of the inadequacy of the explanation.

"To please me by deceiving me? She knows me better. Am I pleased to-day?"

"I don't think you are ever much pleased," Isabel was obliged to reply. "If Madame Merle knew you would learn the truth, what had she to gain by insincerity?"

"She gained time, as you see. While I waited for her to interfere, you were marching away, and she was really beating the drum."

"That is very well. But by your own admission you saw I was marching, and even if she had given the alarm you would not have tried to stop me."

"No, but some one else would."

"Whom do you mean?" Isabel asked, looking very hard at her aunt.

Mrs. Touchett's little bright eyes, active as they usually were, sustained her gaze rather than returned it.

"Would you have listened to Ralph?"

"Not if he had abused Mr. Osmond."

"Ralph does n't abuse people; you know that perfectly. He cares very much for you."

"I know he does," said Isabel; "and I shall feel the value of it now, for he knows that whatever I do I do with reason."

"He never believed you would do

this. I told him you were capable of it, and he argued the other way."

"He did it for the sake of argument," said Isabel, smiling. "You don't accuse him of having deceived you; why should you accuse Madame Merle?"

"He never pretended he would prevent it."

"I am glad of that!" cried the girl, gayly. "I wish very much," she presently added, "that when he comes you would tell him first of my engagement."

"Of course I will mention it," said Mrs. Touchett. "I will say nothing more to you about it, but I give you notice I will talk to others."

"That's as you please. I only meant that it is rather better the announcement should come from you than from me."

"I quite agree with you; it is much more proper!"

And on this the two ladies went to breakfast, where Mrs. Touchett was as good as her word, and made no allusion to Gilbert Osmond. After an interval of silence, however, she asked her companion from whom she had received a visit an hour before.

"From an old friend, — an American gentleman," Isabel said, with a color in her cheek.

"An American, of course. It is only an American that calls at ten o'clock in the morning."

"It was half past ten; he was in a great hurry; he goes away this evening."

"Could n't he have come yesterday, at the usual time?"

"He only arrived last night."

"He spends but twenty-four hours in Florence?" Mrs. Touchett cried. "He's an American, truly."

"He is, indeed," said Isabel, thinking with a perverse admiration of what Caspar Goodwood had done for her.

Two days afterward Ralph arrived; but though Isabel was sure that Mrs. Touchett had lost no time in telling him the

news, he betrayed at first no knowledge of the great fact. Their first talk was naturally about his health; Isabel had many questions to ask about his Algerian winter. She had been shocked by his appearance when he came into the room; she had forgotten how ill he looked. In spite of his Algerian winter he looked very ill to-day, and Isabel wondered whether he were really worse, or whether she were simply disaccustomed to living with an invalid. Poor Ralph grew no handsomer as he advanced in life, and the now apparently complete loss of his health had done little to mitigate the natural oddity of his person. His face wore its perpetual smile, which perhaps suggested wit rather than achieved it; his thin whiskers languished upon a clean cheek; the exorbitant curve of his nose defined itself more sharply. Lean he was, altogether,—lean and long and loose-jointed; an accidental cohesion of relaxed angles. His brown velvet jacket had become perennial; his hands had fixed themselves in his pockets; he shambled and stumbled, he shuffled and strayed, in a manner that denoted great physical helplessness. It was perhaps this whimsical gait that helped to mark his character more than ever as that of the humorous invalid,—the invalid for whom even his own disabilities are part of the general joke. They might well indeed with Ralph have been the chief cause of the want of seriousness with which he appeared to regard a world in which the reason for his own presence was past finding out. Isabel had grown fond of his ugliness; his awkwardness had become dear to her. These things were endeared by association; they struck her as the conditions of his being so charming. Ralph was so charming that her sense of his being ill had hitherto had a sort of comfort in it; the state of his health had seemed not a limitation, but a kind of intellectual advantage; it absolved him from all professional and of-

ficial emotions, and left him the luxury of being simply personal. This personality of Ralph's was delightful; it had none of the staleness of disease; it was always easy and fresh and genial. Such had been the girl's impression of her cousin; and when she had pitied him it was only on reflection. As she reflected a good deal she had given him a certain amount of compassion; but Isabel always had a dread of wasting compassion,—a precious article, worth more to the giver than to any one else. Now, however, it took no great ingenuity to discover that poor Ralph's tenure of life was less elastic than it should be. He was a dear, bright, generous fellow; he had all the illumination of wisdom and none of its pedantry, and yet he was dying. Isabel said to herself that life was certainly hard for some people, and she felt a delicate glow of shame as she thought how easy it now promised to become for herself. She was prepared to learn that Ralph was not pleased with her engagement; but she was not prepared, in spite of her affection for her cousin, to let this fact spoil the situation. She was not even prepared—or so she thought—to resent his want of sympathy; for it would be his privilege—it would be, indeed, his natural line—to find fault with any step she might take toward marriage. One's cousin always pretended to hate one's husband,—that was traditional, classical; it was a part of one's cousin's always pretending to adore one. Ralph was nothing if not critical; and though she would certainly, other things being equal, have been as glad to marry to please Ralph as to please any one, it would be absurd to think it important that her choice should square with his views. What were his views, after all? He had pretended to think she had better marry Lord Warburton; but this was only because she had refused that excellent man. If she had accepted him Ralph would certainly have taken another tone; he always



took the opposite one. You could criticise any marriage; it was of the essence of a marriage to be open to criticism. How well she herself, if she would only give her mind to it, might criticise this business of her own! She had other employment, however, and Ralph was welcome to relieve her of the care. Isabel was prepared to be wonderfully good-humored.

He must have seen that, and this made it the more odd that he should say nothing. After three days had elapsed without his speaking, Isabel became impatient; dislike it as he would, he might at least go through the form. We who know more about poor Ralph than his cousin may easily believe that during the hours that followed his arrival at the Palazzo Crescentini he had privately gone through many forms. His mother had literally greeted him with the great news, which was even more sensibly chilling than Mrs. Touchett's maternal kiss. Ralph was shocked and humiliated; his calculations had been false, and his cousin was lost. He drifted about the house like a rudderless vessel in a rocky stream, or sat in the garden of the palace in a great cane chair, with his long legs extended, his head thrown back, and his hat pulled over his eyes. He felt cold about the heart; he had never liked anything less. What could he do, what could he say? If Isabel were irreclaimable, could he pretend to like it? To attempt to reclaim her was permissible only if the attempt should succeed. To try to persuade her that the man to whom she had pledged her faith was a humbug would be decently discreet only in the event of her being persuaded. Otherwise he should simply have damned himself. It cost him an equal effort to speak his thought and to dissemble; he could neither assent with sincerity nor protest with hope. Meanwhile, he knew — or rather he supposed — that the affianced pair were daily renewing their mutual vows. Osmond, at

this moment, showed himself little at the Palazzo Crescentini; but Isabel met him every day elsewhere, as she was free to do after their engagement had been made public. She had taken a carriage by the month, so as not to be indebted to her aunt for the means of pursuing a course of which Mrs. Touchett disapproved, and she drove in the morning to the Cascine. This suburban wilderness, during the early hours, was void of all intruders, and our young lady, joined by her lover in its quietest part, strolled with him a while in the gray Italian shade, and listened to the nightingales.

### XXXIII.

One morning, on her return from her drive, some half hour before luncheon, she quitted her vehicle in the court of the palace, and, instead of ascending the great staircase, crossed the court, passed beneath another archway, and entered the garden. A sweeter spot, at this moment, could not have been imagined. The stillness of noontide hung over it; the warm shade was motionless, and the hot light made it pleasant. Ralph was sitting there in the clear gloom, at the base of a statue of Terpsichore, — a dancing nymph, with taper fingers and inflated draperies, in the manner of Bernini; the extreme relaxation of his attitude suggested at first to Isabel that he was asleep. Her light footstep on the grass had not roused him, and before turning away she stood for a moment looking at him. During this instant he opened his eyes; upon which she sat down on a rustic chair that matched with his own. Though in her irritation she had accused him of indifference, she was not blind to the fact that he was visibly preoccupied. But she had attributed his long reveries partly to the languor of his increased weakness, partly to his being troubled about certain arrangements he had made as to

the property inherited from his father, — arrangements of which Mrs. Touchett disapproved, and which, as she had told Isabel, now encountered opposition from the other partners in the bank. He ought to have gone to England, his mother said, instead of coming to Florence; he had not been there for months, and he took no more interest in the bank than in the state of Patagonia.

“I am sorry I waked you,” Isabel said; “you look tired.”

“I feel tired. But I was not asleep. I was thinking of you.”

“Are you tired of that?”

“Very much so. It leads to nothing. The road is long, and I never arrive.”

“What do you wish to arrive at?” Isabel said, drawing off a glove.

“At the point of expressing to myself properly what I think of your engagement.”

“Don’t think too much of it,” said Isabel, lightly.

“Do you mean that it’s none of my business?”

“Beyond a certain point, yes.”

“That’s the point I wish to fix. I had an idea that you have found me wanting in good manners; I have never congratulated you.”

“Of course I have noticed that; I wondered why you were silent.”

“There have been a good many reasons; I will tell you now,” said Ralph.

He pulled off his hat and laid it on the ground; then he sat looking at her. He leaned back, with his head against the marble pedestal of Terpsichore, his arms dropped on either side of him, his hands laid upon the sides of his wide chair. He looked awkward, uncomfortable; he hesitated for a long time. Isabel said nothing; when people were embarrassed she was usually sorry for them; but she was determined not to help Ralph to utter a word that should not be to the honor of her excellent purpose.

“I think I have hardly got over my surprise,” he said, at last. “You were the last person I expected to see caught.”

“I don’t know why you call it caught.”

“Because you are going to be put into a cage.”

“If I like my cage, that need n’t trouble you,” said Isabel.

“That’s what I wonder at; that’s what I have been thinking of.”

“If you have been thinking, you may imagine how I have thought! I am satisfied that I am doing well.”

“You must have changed immensely. A year ago you valued your liberty beyond everything. You wanted only to see life.”

“I have seen it,” said Isabel. “It does n’t seem to me so charming.”

“I don’t pretend it is; only I had an idea that you took a genial view of it, and wanted to survey the whole field.”

“I have seen that one can’t do that. One must choose a corner, and cultivate that.”

“That’s what I think. And one must choose a good corner. I had no idea, all winter, while I read your delightful letters, that you were choosing. You said nothing about it, and your silence put me off my guard.”

“It was not a matter I was likely to write to you about. Besides, I knew nothing of the future. It has all come lately. If you had been on your guard, however,” Isabel asked, “what would you have done?”

“I should have said, ‘Wait a little longer.’”

“Wait for what?”

“Well, for a little more light,” said Ralph, with a rather absurd smile, while his hands found their way into his pockets.

“Where should my light have come from? From you?”

“I might have struck a spark or two!”

Isabel had drawn off her other glove ; she smoothed the two out as they lay upon her knee. The gentleness of this movement was accidental, for her expression was not conciliatory.

"You are beating about the bush, Ralph. You wish to say that you don't like Mr. Osmond, and yet you are afraid."

"I am afraid of you, not of him. If you marry him, it won't be a nice thing to have said."

"If I marry him! Have you had any expectation of dissuading me?"

"Of course that seems to you too fatuous."

"No," said Isabel, after a little ; "it seems to me touching."

"That's the same thing. It makes me so ridiculous that you pity me."

Isabel stroked out her long gloves again.

"I know you have a great affection for me. I can't get rid of that."

"For heaven's sake, don't try! Keep that well in sight. It will convince you how intensely I want you to do well."

"And how little you trust me!"

There was a moment's silence ; the warm noontide seemed to listen.

"I trust you, but I don't trust him," said Ralph.

Isabel raised her eyes, and gave him a wide, deep look.

"You have said it now ; you will suffer for it."

"Not if you are just."

"I am very just," replied Isabel. "What better proof of it can there be than that I am not angry with you? I don't know what is the matter with me, but I am not. I was when you began, but it has passed away. Perhaps I ought to be angry, but Mr. Osmond would n't think so. He wants me to know everything ; that's what I like him for. You have nothing to gain, I know that. I have never been so nice to you as a girl that you should have much reason for wishing me to remain

one. You give very good advice ; you have often done so. No, I am very quiet ; I have always believed in your wisdom," Isabel went on, boasting of her quietness, yet speaking with a kind of contained exaltation. It was her passionate desire to be just ; it touched Ralph to the heart, affected him like a caress from a creature he had injured.

He wished to interrupt, to reassure her ; for a moment he was absurdly inconsistent ; he would have retracted what he had said. But she gave him no chance ; she went on, having caught a glimpse, as she thought, of the heroic line, and desiring to advance in that direction ; "I see you have got some idea ; I should like very much to hear it. I am sure it's disinterested ; I feel that. It seems a strange thing to argue about, and of course I ought to tell you definitely that if you expect to dissuade me you may give it up. You will not move me at all ; it is too late. As you say, I am caught. Certainly it won't be pleasant for you to remember this, but your pain will be in your own thoughts. I shall never reproach you."

"I don't think you ever will," said Ralph. "It is not in the least the sort of marriage I thought you would make."

"What sort of marriage was that, pray?"

"Well, I can hardly say. I had n't exactly a positive view of it, but I had a negative. I did n't think you would marry a man like Mr. Osmond."

"What do you know against him? You know him scarcely at all."

"Yes," Ralph said, "I know him very little, and I know nothing against him. But, all the same, I can't help feeling that you are running a risk."

"Marriage is always a risk, and his risk is as great as mine."

"That's his affair! If he is afraid, let him recede ; I wish he would."

Isabel leaned back in her chair, folded her arms, and gazed a while at her cousin.

"I don't think I understand you," she said at last, coldly. "I don't know what you are talking about."

"I thought you would marry a man of more importance."

Cold, I say, her tone had been, but at this a color like a flame leaped into her face.

"Of more importance to whom? It seems to me enough that one's husband should be important to one's self!"

Ralph blushed as well; his attitude embarrassed him. Physically speaking, he proceeded to change it; he straightened himself, then leaned forward, resting a hand on each knee. He fixed his eyes on the ground; he had an air of the most respectful deliberation.

"I will tell you in a moment what I mean," he presently said. He felt agitated, intensely eager; now that he had opened the discussion he wished to discharge his mind. But he wished also to be superlatively gentle.

Isabel waited a little, and then she went on with majesty:—

"In everything that makes real distinction Mr. Osmond is preëminent. There may be nobler natures, but I have never had the pleasure of meeting one. Mr. Osmond is the best I know; he is important enough for me."

"I had a sort of vision of your future," Ralph said, without answering this. "I amused myself with planning out a kind of destiny for you. There was to be nothing of this sort in it. You were not to come down so easily, so soon."

"To come down? What strange expressions you use! Is that your description of my marriage?"

"It expresses my idea of it. You seemed to me to be soaring far up in the blue, — to be sailing in the bright light, over the heads of men. Suddenly some one tosses up a stone, — a missile that should never have reached you, — and down you drop to the ground. It hurts me," said Ralph, audaciously, "as if I had fallen myself!"

The look of pain and bewilderment deepened in his companion's face.

"I don't understand you in the least," she repeated. "You say you amused yourself with planning out my future, — I don't understand that. Don't amuse yourself too much, or I shall think you are doing it at my expense."

Ralph shook his head.

"I am not afraid of your not believing that I have had great ideas for you."

"What do you mean by my soaring and sailing?" the girl asked. "I have never moved on a higher line than I am moving on now. There is nothing higher for a girl than to marry a — a person she likes," said poor Isabel, wandering into the didactic.

"It's your liking the person we speak of that I venture to criticise, my dear Isabel! I should have said that the man for you would have been a more active, larger, freer sort of nature." Ralph hesitated a moment; then he added, "I can't get over the belief that there's something small in Osmond."

He had uttered these last words with a tremor of the voice; he was afraid that she would flash out again. But, to his surprise, she was quiet; she had the air of considering.

"Something small?" she said, reflectively.

"I think he's narrow, selfish. He takes himself so seriously!"

"He has a great respect for himself; I don't blame him for that," said Isabel. "It's the proper way to respect others."

Ralph for a moment felt almost reassured by her reasonable tone.

"Yes, but everything is relative; one ought to feel one's relations. I don't think Mr. Osmond does that."

"I have chiefly to do with the relation in which he stands to me. In that he is excellent."

"He is the incarnation of taste," Ralph went on, thinking hard how he could best express Gilbert Osmond's

sinister attributes without putting himself in the wrong by seeming to describe him coarsely. He wished to describe him impersonally, scientifically. "He judges and measures, approves and condemns, altogether by that."

"It is a happy thing, then, that his taste should be exquisite."

"It is exquisite, indeed, since it has led him to select you as his wife. But have you ever seen an exquisite taste ruffled?"

"I hope it may never be my fortune to fail to gratify my husband's."

At these words a sudden passion leaped to Ralph's lips. "Ah, that's willful, that's unworthy of you!" he cried. "You were not meant to be measured in that way; you were meant for something better than to keep guard over the sensibilities of a sterile dilettante!"

Isabel rose quickly, and Ralph did the same, so that they stood for a moment looking at each other, as if he had flung down a defiance or an insult.

"You go too far," she murmured.

"I have said what I had on my mind; and I have said it because I love you!"

Isabel turned pale; was he, too, on that tiresome list? She had a sudden wish to strike him off. "Ah, then, you are not disinterested!"

"I love you, but I love without hope," said Ralph, quickly, forcing a smile, and feeling that in that last declaration he had expressed more than he intended.

Isabel moved away, and stood looking into the sunny stillness of the garden; but after a little she turned back to him. "I am afraid your talk, then, is the wildness of despair. I don't understand it, — but it does n't matter. I am not arguing with you; it is impossible that I should; I have only tried to listen to you. I am much obliged to you for attempting to explain," she said gently, as if the anger with which she had just

sprung up had already subsided. "It is very good of you to try to warn me, if you are really alarmed. But I won't promise to think of what you have said; I shall forget it as soon as possible. Try and forget it yourself; you have done your duty, and no man can do more. I can't explain to you what I feel, what I believe, and I would n't if I could." She paused a moment, and then she went on, with an inconsequence that Ralph observed even in the midst of his eagerness to discover some symptom of concession. "I can't enter into your idea of Mr. Osmond; I can't do it justice, because I see him in quite another way. He is not important, — no, he is not important; he is a man to whom importance is supremely indifferent. If that is what you mean when you call him 'small,' then he is as small as you please. I call that large; it's the largest thing I know. I won't pretend to argue with you about a person I am going to marry," Isabel repeated. "I am not in the least concerned to defend Mr. Osmond; he is not so weak as to need my defense. I should think it would seem strange, even to yourself, that I should talk of him so quietly and coldly, as if he were any one else. I would not talk of him at all to any one but you; and you, after what you have said, — I may just answer you once for all. Pray, would you wish me to make a mercenary marriage, — what they call a marriage of ambition? I have only one ambition, — to be free to follow out a good feeling. I had others once; but they have passed away. Do you complain of Mr. Osmond because he is not rich? That is just what I like him for. I have, fortunately, money enough; I have never felt so thankful for it as to-day. There have been moments when I should like to go and kneel down by your father's grave; he did, perhaps, a better thing than he knew when he put it into my power to marry a poor man, — a man who has borne his poverty with such

dignity, with such indifference. Mr. Osmond has never scrambled nor struggled; he has cared for no worldly prize. If that is to be narrow, if that is to be selfish, then it's very well. I am not frightened by such words; I am not even displeased; I am only sorry that you should make a mistake. Others might have done so, but I am surprised that you should. You might know a gentleman when you see one, — you might know a fine mind. Mr. Osmond makes no mistakes! He knows everything; he understands everything; he has the kindest, gentlest, highest spirit. You have got hold of some false idea; it's a pity, but I can't help it; it regards you more than me." Isabel paused a moment, looking at her cousin with an eye illuminated by a sentiment which contradicted the careful calmness of her manner, — a mingled sentiment, to which the angry pain excited by his words and the wounded pride of having needed to justify a choice of which she felt only the nobleness and purity equally contributed. Although she paused, Ralph said nothing; he saw she had more to say. She was superb, but she was eager; she was indifferent, but she was secretly trembling. "What sort of a person should you have liked me to marry?" she asked, suddenly. "You talk about one's soaring and sailing, but if one marries at all one touches the earth. One has human feelings and needs, one has a heart in one's bosom, and one must marry a particular individual. Your mother has never forgiven me for not having come to a better understanding with Lord Warburton, and she is horrified at my contenting myself with a person who has none of Lord Warburton's great advantages, — no property, no title, no honors, no houses, nor lands, nor position, nor reputation, nor brilliant belongings of any sort. It is the total absence of all these things that pleases me. Mr. Osmond is simply a man; he is not a proprietor!"

Ralph had listened with great attention, as if everything she said merited deep consideration; but in reality he was only half thinking of the things she said; he was for the rest simply accommodating himself to the weight of his total impression, — the impression of her passionate good faith. She was wrong, but she believed; she was deluded, but she was consistent. It was wonderfully characteristic of her that she had invented a fine theory about Gilbert Osmond, and loved him, not for what he really possessed, but for his very poverities dressed out as honors. Ralph remembered what he had said to his father about wishing to put it into Isabel's power to gratify her imagination. He had done so, and the girl had taken full advantage of the privilege. Poor Ralph felt sick; he felt ashamed. Isabel had uttered her last words with a low solemnity of conviction which virtually terminated the discussion, and she closed it formally by turning away and walking back to the house. Ralph walked beside her, and they passed into the court together, and reached the big staircase. Here Ralph stopped, and Isabel paused, turning on him a face full of a deep elation at his opposition having made her own conception of her conduct more clear to her.

"Shall you not come up to breakfast?" she asked.

"No; I want no breakfast, — I am not hungry."

"You ought to eat," said the girl; "you live on air."

"I do, very much, and I shall go back into the garden and take another mouthful of it. I came thus far simply to say this: I said to you last year that if you were to get into trouble I should feel terribly sold. That's how I feel to-day."

"Do you think I am in trouble?"

"One is in trouble when one is in error."

"Very well," said Isabel; "I shall

never complain of my trouble to you!" And she moved up the staircase.

Ralph, standing there with his hands in his pockets, followed her with his eyes; then the lurking chill of the high-walled court struck him, and made him shiver, so that he returned to the garden, to breakfast on the Florentine sunshine.

#### XXXIV.

Isabel, when she strolled in the Cas-cine with her lover, felt no impulse to tell him that he was not thought well of at the Palazzo Crescentini. The discreet opposition offered to her marriage by her aunt and her cousin made, on the whole, little impression upon her; the moral of it was simply that they disliked Gilbert Osmond. This dislike was not alarming to Isabel; she scarcely even regretted it; for it served mainly to throw into higher relief the fact, in every way so honorable, that she married to please herself. One did other things to please other people; one did this for a more personal satisfaction; and Isabel's satisfaction was assured by her lover's admirable good conduct. Gilbert Osmond was in love, and he had never deserved less than during these still, bright days, each of them numbered, which preceded the fulfillment of his hopes, the harsh criticism passed upon him by Ralph Touchett. The chief impression produced upon Isabel's mind by this criticism was that the passion of love separated its victim terribly from every one but the loved object. She felt herself disjoined from every one she had ever known before: from her two sisters, who wrote to express a dutiful hope that she would be happy, and a surprise, somewhat more vague, at her not having chosen a consort of whom a richer portrait could be painted; from Henrietta, who, she was sure, would come out, too late, on purpose to remonstrate; from Lord Warburton, who would cer-

tainly console himself, and from Caspar Goodwood, who perhaps would not; from her aunt, who had cold, shallow ideas about marriage, for which she was not sorry to manifest her contempt; and from Ralph, whose talk about having great views for her was surely but a whimsical cover for a personal disappointment. Ralph apparently wished her not to marry at all,—that was what it really meant,—because he was amused with the spectacle of her adventures as a single woman. His disappointment made him say angry things about the man she had preferred even to him. Isabel flattered herself that she believed Ralph had been angry. It was the more easy for her to believe this, because, as I say, she thought, on the whole, but little about it, and accepted as an incident of her lot the idea that to prefer Gilbert Osmond as she preferred him was perforce to break all other ties. She tasted of the sweets of this preference, and they made her feel that there was, after all, something very invidious in being in love, much as the sentiment was theoretically approved of. It was the tragical side of happiness; one's right was always made of the wrong of some one else. Gilbert Osmond was not demonstrative; the consciousness of success, which must now have flamed high within him, emitted very little smoke for so brilliant a blaze. Contentment, on his part, never took a vulgar form; excitement, in the most self-conscious of men, was a kind of ecstasy of self-control. This disposition, however, made him an admirable lover; it gave him a constant view of the amorous character. He never forgot himself, as I say; and so he never forgot to be graceful and tender, to wear the appearance of devoted intention. He was immensely pleased with his young lady; Madame Merle had made him a present of incalculable value. What could be a finer thing to live with than a high spirit attuned to softness? For would not the

softness be all for one's self, and the strenuousness for society, which admired the air of superiority? What could be a happier gift in a companion than a quick, fanciful mind, which saved one repetitions, and reflected one's thought upon a scintillating surface? Osmond disliked to see his thought reproduced literally, — that made it look stale and stupid; he preferred it to be brightened in the reproduction. His egotism, if egotism it was, had never taken the crude form of wishing for a dull wife; this lady's intelligence was to be a silver plate, not an earthen one, — a plate that he might heap up with ripe fruits, to which it would give a decorative value, so that conversation might become a sort of perpetual dessert. He found the silvery quality in perfection in Isabel; he could tap her imagination with his knuckle and make it ring. He knew perfectly, though he had not been told, that the union found little favor among the girl's relations; but he had always treated her so completely as an independent person that it hardly seemed necessary to express regret for the attitude of her family. Nevertheless, one morning, he made an abrupt allusion to it.

"It's the difference in our fortune they don't like," he said. "They think I am in love with your money."

"Are you speaking of my aunt, — of my cousin?" Isabel asked. "How do you know what they think?"

"You have not told me that they are pleased, and when I wrote to Mrs. Touchett, the other day, she never answered my note. If they had been delighted I should have learnt it, and the fact of my being poor and you rich is the most obvious explanation of their want of delight. But of course, when a poor man marries a rich girl, he must be prepared for imputations. I don't mind them; I only care for one thing, — your thinking it's all right. I don't care what others think. I have never

cared much, and why should I begin to-day, when I have taken to myself a compensation for everything? I won't pretend that I am sorry you are rich; I am delighted. I delight in everything that is yours, whether it be money or virtue. Money is a great advantage. It seems to me, however, that I have sufficiently proved that I can get on without it; I never in my life tried to earn a penny, and I ought to be less subject to suspicion than most people. I suppose it is their business to suspect, — that of your own family; it's proper, on the whole, they should. They will like me better some day; so will you, for that matter. Meanwhile, my business is not to bother, but simply to be thankful for life and love. . . . It has made me better, loving you," he said, on another occasion; "it has made me wiser, and easier, and brighter. I used to want a great many things before, and to be angry that I did n't have them. Theoretically, I was satisfied, as I once told you. I flattered myself that I had limited my wants. But I was subject to irritation; I used to have morbid, sterile, hateful fits of hunger, of desire. Now I am really satisfied, because I can't think of anything better. It is just as when one has been trying to spell out a book in the twilight, and suddenly the lamp comes in. I had been putting out my eyes over the book of life, and finding nothing to reward me for my pains; but now that I can read it properly I see that it's a delightful story. My dear girl, I can't tell you how life seems to stretch there before us, — what a long summer afternoon awaits us. It's the latter half of an Italian day, with a golden haze, and the shadows just lengthening, and that divine delicacy in the light, the air, the landscape, which I have loved all my life, and which you love to-day. Upon my word, I don't see why we should n't get on. We have got what we like, — to say nothing of having each other. We have the fac-



ulty of admiration, and several excellent beliefs. We are not stupid, we are not heavy, we are not under bonds to any dull limitations. You are very fresh, and I am well seasoned. We have got my poor child to amuse us ; we will try and make up some little life for her. It is all soft and mellow ; it has the Italian coloring."

They made a good many plans, but they left themselves also a good deal of latitude ; it was a matter of course, however, that they should live for the present in Italy. It was in Italy that they had met ; Italy had been a party to their first impressions of each other, and Italy should be a party to their happiness. Osmond had the attachment of old acquaintance, and Isabel the stimulus of new, which seemed to assure her a future of beautiful hours. The desire for unlimited expansion had been succeeded in her mind by the sense that life was vacant without some private duty which gathered one's energies to a point. She told Ralph that she had "seen life" in a year or two, and that she was already tired, not of life, but of observation. What had become of all her ardors, her aspirations, her theories, her high estimate of her independence, and her incipient conviction that she should never marry ? These things had been absorbed in a more primitive sentiment, — the joy of Gilbert Osmond's being dear to her, the bliss of being dear to him. This feeling answered all questions, satisfied all needs, solved all difficulties. It simplified the future at a stroke ; it came down from above, like the light of the stars, and it needed no explanation. There was explanation enough in the fact that he was her lover, her own, and that she was able to be of use to him. She could marry him with a kind of pride ; she was not only taking, but giving.

He brought Pansy with him two or three times to the Cascine, — Pansy, who was very little taller than a year before,

and not much older. That she would always be a child was the conviction expressed by her father, who held her by the hand when she was in her sixteenth year, and told her to go and play while he sat down a while with the pretty lady. Pansy wore a short dress and a long coat ; her hat always seemed too big for her. She amused herself with walking off, with quick, short steps, to the end of the alley, and then walking back, with a smile that seemed an appeal for approbation. Isabel gave her approbation in abundance, and it was of that demonstrated personal kind which the child's affectionate nature craved. She watched her development with a kind of amused suspense ; Pansy had already become a little daughter. She was treated so completely as a child that Osmond had not yet explained to her the new relation in which he stood to the elegant Miss Archer. "She does n't know," he said to Isabel, "she does n't suspect ; she thinks it perfectly natural that you and I should come and walk here together, simply as good friends. There seems to me something enchantingly innocent in that ; it's the way I like her to be. No, I am not a failure, as I used to think ; I have succeeded in two things. I am to marry the woman I adore, and I have brought up my child as I wished, in the old way."

He was very fond, in all things, of the "old way ;" that had struck Isabel as an element in the picturesqueness of his character.

"It seems to me you will not know whether you have succeeded until you have told her," she said. "You must see how she takes your news. She may be horrified, she may be jealous."

"I am not afraid of that ; she is too fond of you on her own account. I should like to leave her in the dark a little longer, to see if it will come into her head that if we are not engaged we ought to be."

Isabel was impressed by Osmond's

æsthetic relish of Pansy's innocence, her own appreciation of it being more moral. She was perhaps not the less pleased when he told her, a few days later, that he had broken the news to his daughter, who made such a pretty little speech: "Oh, then I shall have a sister!" She was neither surprised nor alarmed; she had not cried, as he expected.

"Perhaps she had guessed it," said Isabel.

"Don't say that; I should be disgusted if I believed that. I thought it would be just a little shock; but the way she took it proves that her good manners are paramount. That is also what I wished. You shall see for yourself; to-morrow she shall make you her congratulations in person."

The meeting, on the morrow, took place at the Countess Gemini's, whither Pansy had been conducted by her father, who knew that Isabel was to come in the afternoon to return a visit made her by the countess on learning that they were to become sisters-in-law. Calling at Casa Touchett, the visitor had not found Isabel at home; but after our young lady had been ushered into the countess' drawing-room, Pansy came in to say that her aunt would presently appear. Pansy was spending the day with her aunt, who thought she was of an age when she should begin to learn how to carry herself in company. It was Isabel's view that the little girl might have given lessons in deportment to the elder lady, and nothing could have justified this conviction more than the manner in which Pansy acquitted herself while they waited together for the countess. Her father's decision, the year before, had finally been to send her back to the convent to receive the last graces, and Madame Catherine had evidently carried out her theory that Pansy was to be fitted for the great world.

"Papa has told me that you have kindly consented to marry him," said

the good woman's pupil. "It is very delightful; I think you will suit very well."

"You think I will suit you?"

"You will suit me beautifully; but what I mean is that you and papa will suit each other. You are both so quiet and so serious. You are not so quiet as he, or even as Madame Merle; but you are more quiet than many others. He should not, for instance, have a wife like my aunt. She is always moving, to-day especially; you will see when she comes in. They told us at the convent it was wrong to judge our elders, but I suppose there is no harm if we judge them favorably. You will be a delightful companion for papa."

"For you, too, I hope," Isabel said.

"I speak first of him on purpose. I have told you already what I myself think of you; I liked you from the first. I admire you so much that I think it will be a great good fortune to have you always before me. You will be my model; I shall try to imitate you, though I am afraid it will be very feeble. I am very glad for papa; he needed something more than me. Without you, I don't see how he could have got it. You will be my stepmother; but we must not use that word. You don't look at all like the word; it is somehow so ugly. They are always said to be cruel; but I think you will never be cruel. I am not afraid."

"My good little Pansy," said Isabel, gently, "I shall be very kind to you."

"Very well, then; I have nothing to fear," the child declared, lightly.

Her description of her aunt had not been incorrect; the Countess Gemini was less than ever in a state of repose. She entered the room with a great deal of expression, and kissed Isabel, first on her lips and then on each cheek, in the short, quick manner of a bird drinking. She made Isabel sit down on the sofa beside her, and, looking at our heroine with a variety of turns of the head, de-

livered herself of a hundred remarks, from which I offer the reader but a brief selection.

“If you expect me to congratulate you, I must beg you to excuse me. I don’t suppose you care whether I do or not; I believe you are very proud. But I care myself whether I tell fibs or not; I never tell them unless there is something to be gained. I don’t see what there is to be gained with you, especially as you would not believe me. I don’t make phrases; I never made a phrase in my life. My fibs are always very crude. I am very glad for my own sake that you are going to marry Osmond; but I won’t pretend I am glad for yours. You are very remarkable, — you know that’s what people call you; you are an heiress, and very good-looking and clever, very original; so it’s a good thing to have you in the family. Our family is very good, you know, — Osmond will have told you that, — and my mother was rather distinguished; she was called the American Corinne. But we are rather fallen, I think, and perhaps you will pick us up. I have great confidence in you; there are ever so many things I want to talk to you about. I never congratulate any girl on marrying; I think it’s the worst thing she can do. I sup-

pose Pansy ought n’t to hear all this; but that’s what she has come to me for, — to acquire the tone of society. There is no harm in her knowing that it is n’t such a blessing to get married. When first I got an idea that my brother had designs upon you, I thought of writing to you, to recommend you, in the strongest terms, not to listen to him. Then I thought it would be disloyal, and I hate anything of that kind. Besides, as I say, I was enchanted, for myself; and, after all, I am very selfish. By the way, you won’t respect me, and we shall never be intimate. I should like it, but you won’t. Some day, all the same, we shall be better friends than you will believe at first. My husband will come and see you, though, as you probably know, he is on no sort of terms with Osmond. He is very fond of going to see pretty women, but I am not afraid of you. In the first place, I don’t care what he does. In the second, you won’t care a straw for him; you will take his measure at a glance. Some day I will tell you all about him. Do you think my niece ought to go out of the room? Pansy, go and practice a little in my boudoir.”

“Let her stay, please,” said Isabel. “I would rather hear nothing that Pansy may not!”

*Henry James, Jr.*

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## CHANCE.

A LADY comes on the morning mist;  
 Lovely and terrible she, I wist;  
 Bands of iron on willful tresses,  
 Gold and topaz about her wrist.

Both day and dark her lips have kissed;  
 With prince and peasant she makes her tryst;  
 She soothes and stings, and beaks her jesses,  
 And flees, exulting, to whom she list.