

easily do the work that now taxes the energies of three. With no dirt coming into the house; with no fires to tend; with none of the incessant calls to the door to meet tradesfolk and to receive supplies; with cooking, washing, ironing, cleaning, sweeping, scrubbing, and dusting reduced to an unimagined minimum, domestic service will be shorn of half its terrors, and more than half its cost.

Illustrations may be multiplied showing how economy will be promoted in every branch of home affairs, but space forbids, here, and those interested can institute comparisons for themselves. Furthermore, the savings to be effected by the establishment of the domestic depot cannot be measured in dollars and cents. It will save the household. The oft-repeated cry of distress, "Something *must* be done!" is a warning to be heeded forthwith. Something *will* be

done, either constructively or destructively, and that soon. We must enfranchise our homes, or run the risk of seeing home life degenerate into hotel life, or into other transitory forms even more inimical to the integrity of the family. Society now imposes burdens upon and exacts duties from the household that cannot be borne and performed without the aid of the best devices civilization has at command for carrying and doing in other departments of human affairs. The services of steam and electricity, of machinery and organization, are as much needed in the home as in the market. We must find means for adapting these potent helps to domestic uses, neglecting to do so at our peril. This is the next problem to engage the attention of intelligent minds. Do not the suggestions herein offered point to the right solution?

J. V. Sears.

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY.

XLIII.

THE Countess Gemini was often extremely bored, — bored, in her own phrase, to extinction. She had not been extinguished, however, and she struggled bravely enough with her destiny, which had been to marry an unaccommodating Florentine, who insisted upon living in his native town, where he enjoyed such consideration as might attach to a gentleman whose talent for losing at cards had not the merit of being incidental to an obliging disposition. The Count Gemini was not liked even by those who won from him; and he bore a name which, having a measurable value in Florence, was, like the local coin of the old Italian states, without currency in other parts of the peninsula. In Rome he was simply a

very dull Florentine, and it is not remarkable that he should not have cared to pay frequent visits to a city where, to carry it off, his dullness needed more explanation than was convenient. The countess lived with her eyes upon Rome, and it was the constant grievance of her life that she had not a habitation there. She was ashamed to say how seldom she had been allowed to go there; it scarcely made the matter better that there were other members of the Florentine nobility who never had been there at all. She went whenever she could; that was all she could say. Or, rather, not all, but all she said she could say. In fact, she had much more to say about it, and had often set forth the reasons why she hated Florence, and had wished to end her days in the shadow of St. Peter's. They were rea-

sons, however, which do not closely concern us, and were usually summed up in the declaration that Rome, in short, was the Eternal City, and that Florence was simply a pretty little place, like any other. The countess apparently needed to connect the idea of eternity with her amusements. She was convinced that society was infinitely more interesting in Rome, where you met celebrities all winter at evening parties. At Florence there were no celebrities, — none, at least, that she had ever heard of. Since her brother's marriage her impatience had greatly increased; she was so sure that his wife had a more brilliant life than herself. She was not so intellectual as Isabel, but she was intellectual enough to do justice to Rome: not to the ruins and the catacombs; not even, perhaps, to the church ceremonies and the sceneries; but certainly to all the rest. She heard a great deal about her sister-in-law, and knew perfectly that Isabel was having a beautiful time; she had indeed seen it for herself on the only occasion on which she had enjoyed the hospitality of the Palazzo Roccanera. She had spent a week there during the first winter of her brother's marriage; but she had not been encouraged to renew this satisfaction. Osmond did n't want her, — that she was perfectly aware of; but she would have gone, all the same, for after all she did n't care two straws about Osmond. But her husband would n't let her, and the money question was always a trouble. Isabel had been very nice; the countess, who had liked her sister-in-law from the first, had not been blinded by envy to Isabel's personal merits. She had always observed that she got on better with clever women than with silly ones, like herself; the silly ones could never understand her wisdom, whereas the clever ones — the really clever ones — always understood her silliness. It appeared to her that, different as they were in appearance and general style, Isabel and she had a

patch of common ground somewhere, which they would set their feet upon at last. It was not very large, but it was firm, and they would both know it when once they touched it. And then she lived, with Mrs. Osmond, under the influence of a pleasant surprise; she was constantly expecting that Isabel would "look down" upon her, and she as constantly saw this operation postponed. She asked herself when it would begin; not that she cared much, but she wondered what kept it in abeyance. Her sister-in-law regarded her with none but level glances, and expressed for the poor countess as little contempt as admiration. In reality, Isabel would as soon have thought of despising her as of passing a moral judgment on a cockatoo. She was not indifferent to her husband's sister, however; she was rather a little afraid of her. She wondered at her; she thought her very extraordinary. The countess seemed to her to have no soul; she was like a bright shell, with a polished surface, in which something would rattle when you shook it. This rattle was apparently the countess's spiritual principle; a little loose nut that tumbled about inside of her. She was too odd for disdain, too anomalous for comparisons. Isabel would have invited her again (there was no question of inviting the count); but Osmond, after his marriage, had not scrupled to say frankly that Amy was a fool of the worst species, — a fool whose folly was irrepressible, like genius. He said at another time that she had no heart; and he added in a moment that she had given it all away, — in small pieces, like a wedding-cake. The fact of not having been asked was of course another obstacle to the countess's going again to Rome; but at the period of which this history has now to deal she was in receipt of an invitation to spend several weeks at the Palazzo Roccanera. The proposal had come from Osmond himself, who wrote to his sister that

she must be prepared to be very quiet. Whether or no she found in this phrase all the meaning he had put into it I am unable to say; but she accepted the invitation on any terms. She was curious, moreover; for one of the impressions of her former visit had been that her brother had found his match. Before the marriage she had been sorry for Isabel — so sorry as to have had serious thoughts (if any of the countess's thoughts were serious) of putting her on her guard. But she had let that pass, and after a little she was reassured. Osmond was as lofty as ever, but his wife would not be an easy victim. The countess was not very exact at measurements; but it seemed to her that if Isabel should draw herself up she would be the taller spirit of the two. What she wanted to learn now was whether Isabel had drawn herself up; it would give her immense pleasure to see Osmond overtopped.

Several days before she was to start for Rome a servant brought her the card of a visitor, — a card with the simple superscription, "Henrietta C. Stackpole." The countess pressed her fingertips to her forehead; she did not remember to have known any such Henrietta as that. The servant then remarked that the lady had requested him to say that if the countess should not recognize her name she would know her well enough on seeing her. By the time she appeared before her visitor, she had in fact reminded herself that there was once a literary lady at Mrs. Touchett's, the only woman of letters she had ever encountered; that is, the only modern one, for she was the daughter of a defunct poetess.

She recognized Miss Stackpole immediately, the more so that Miss Stackpole seemed perfectly unchanged; and the countess, who was thoroughly good-natured, thought it rather fine to be called on by a person of that sort of distinction. She wondered whether Miss

Stackpole had come on account of her mother, — whether she had heard of the American Corinne. Her mother was not at all like Isabel's friend; the countess could see at a glance that this lady was much more modern; and she received an impression of the improvements that were taking place, chiefly in distant countries, in the character (the professional character) of literary ladies. Her mother used to wear a Roman scarf thrown over a pair of bare shoulders, and a gold laurel wreath set upon a multitude of glossy ringlets. She spoke softly and vaguely, with a kind of Southern accent; she sighed a great deal, and was not at all enterprising. But Henrietta, the countess could see, was always closely buttoned and compactly braided; there was something brisk and business-like in her appearance, and her manner was almost conscientiously familiar. The countess could not but feel that the correspondent of the Interviewer was much more efficient than the American Corinne.

Henrietta explained that she had come to see the countess because she was the only person she knew in Florence, and that when she visited a foreign city she liked to see something more than superficial travelers. She knew Mrs. Touchett, but Mrs. Touchett was in America, and even if she had been in Florence Henrietta would not have gone to see her, for Mrs. Touchett was not one of her admirations.

"Do you mean by that that I am?" the countess asked, smiling graciously.

"Well, I like you better than I do her," said Miss Stackpole. "I seemed to remember that when I saw you before you were very interesting. I don't know whether it was an accident, or whether it is your usual style. At any rate, I was a good deal struck with what you said. I made use of it afterwards in print."

"Dear me!" cried the countess, starting and half alarmed. "I had no idea I

ever said anything remarkable. I wish I had known it."

"It was about the position of women in this city," Miss Stackpole remarked. "You threw a good deal of light upon it."

"The position of women is very uncomfortable. Is that what you mean? And you wrote it down and published it?" the countess went on. "Ah, do let me see it!"

"I will write to them to send you the paper, if you like," Henrietta said. "I did n't mention your name; I only said a lady of high rank. And then I quoted your views."

The countess threw herself hastily backward, tossing up her clasped hands.

"Do you know, I am rather sorry you did n't mention my name? I should have rather liked to see my name in the papers. I forget what my views were; I have so many! But I am not ashamed of them. I am not at all like my brother; I suppose you know my brother? He thinks it a kind of disgrace to be put into the papers; if you were to quote him he would never forgive you."

"He need n't be afraid; I shall never refer to him," said Miss Stackpole, with soft dryness. "That's another reason," she added, "why I wanted to come and see you. You know Mr. Osmond married my dearest friend."

"Ah, yes; you were a friend of Isabel's. I was trying to think what I knew about you."

"I am quite willing to be known by that," Henrietta declared. "But that is n't what your brother likes to know me by. He has tried to break up my relations with Isabel."

"Don't permit it," said the countess.

"That's what I want to talk about. I am going to Rome."

"So am I!" the countess cried. "We will go together."

"With great pleasure. And when I write about my journey, I will mention you by name as my companion."

The countess sprang from her chair, and came and sat on the sofa beside her visitor.

"Ah, you must send me the paper! My husband won't like it; but he need never see it. Besides, he does n't know how to read."

Henrietta's large eyes became immense.

"Does n't know how to read? May I put that in my letter?"

"In your letter?"

"In the Interviewer. That's my paper."

"Oh, yes, if you like; with his name. Are you going to stay with Isabel?"

Henrietta held up her head, gazing a little in silence at her hostess.

"She has not asked me. I wrote to her I was coming, and she answered that she would engage a room for me at a *pension*."

The countess listened with extreme interest.

"That's Osmond!" she remarked, pregnantly.

"Isabel ought to resist," said Miss Stackpole. "I am afraid she has changed a great deal. I told her she would!"

"I am sorry to hear it; I hoped she would have her own way. Why does n't my brother like you?" the countess added ingenuously.

"I don't know, and I don't care. He is perfectly welcome not to like me; I don't want every one to like me; I should think less of myself if some people did. A journalist can't hope to do much good unless he gets a good deal hated; that's the way he knows how his work goes on. And it's just the same for a lady. But I did n't expect it of Isabel."

"Do you mean that she hates you?" the countess inquired.

"I don't know; I want to see. That's what I am going to Rome for."

"Dear me, what a tiresome errand!" the countess exclaimed.

"She does n't write to me in the same way; it's easy to see there's a difference. If you know anything," Miss Stackpole went on, "I should like to hear it beforehand, so as to decide on the line I shall take."

The countess thrust out her under lip and gave a gradual shrug.

"I know very little; I see and hear very little of Osmond. He does n't like me any better than he appears to like you."

"Yet you are not a lady correspondent," said Henrietta, thoughtfully.

"Oh, he has plenty of reasons. Nevertheless, they have invited me; I am to stay in the house!" And the countess smiled almost fiercely; her exultation, for a moment, took little account of Miss Stackpole's disappointment.

This lady, however, regarded it very placidly.

"I should not have gone, if she had asked me. That is, I think I should not; and I am glad I had n't to make up my mind. It would have been a very difficult question. I should not have liked to turn away from her, and yet I should not have been happy under her roof. A pension will suit me very well. But that is not all."

"Rome is very good just now," said the countess; "there are all sorts of smart people. Did you ever hear of Lord Warburton?"

"Hear of him? I know him very well. Do you consider him very smart?" Henrietta inquired.

"I don't know him, but I am told he is extremely *grand seigneur*. He is making love to Isabel."

"Making love to her?"

"So I'm told; I don't know the details," said the countess lightly. "But Isabel is pretty safe."

Henrietta gazed earnestly at her companion; for a moment she said nothing.

"When do you go to Rome?" she inquired, abruptly.

"Not for a week, I am afraid."

"I shall go to-morrow," Henrietta said. "I think I had better not wait."

"Dear me, I am sorry; I am having some dresses made. I am told Isabel receives immensely. But I shall see you there; I shall call on you at your pension." Henrietta sat still; she was lost in thought, and suddenly the countess cried, "Ah, but if you don't go with me you can't describe our journey!"

Miss Stackpole seemed unmoved by this consideration; she was thinking of something else, and she presently expressed it:—

"I am not sure that I understand you about Lord Warburton."

"Understand me? I mean he's very nice,—that's all."

"Do you consider it nice to make love to married women?" Henrietta inquired, softly.

The countess stared, and then, with a little violent laugh,—

"It's certain that all the nice men do it. Get married, and you'll see!" she added.

"That idea would be enough to prevent me," said Miss Stackpole. "I should want my own husband; I should n't want any one else's. Do you mean that Isabel is guilty—is guilty"—and she paused a little, choosing her expression.

"Do I mean she's guilty? Oh, dear, no; not yet, I hope. I only mean that Osmond is very tiresome, and that Lord Warburton is, as I hear, a great deal at the house. I'm afraid you are scandalized."

"No, I am very anxious," Henrietta said.

"Ah, you are not very complimentary to Isabel! You should have more confidence. I tell you," the countess added quickly, "if it will be a comfort to you, I will engage to draw him off."

Miss Stackpole answered at first only with the deepest solemnity of her eyes.

"You don't understand me," she said,

after a while. "I have n't the idea that you seem to suppose. I am not afraid for Isabel — in that way. I am only afraid she is unhappy, — that's what I want to get at."

The countess gave a dozen turns of the head; she looked impatient and sarcastic.

"That may very well be; for my part, I should like to know whether Osmond is."

Miss Stackpole had begun to bore her a little.

"If she is really changed, that must be at the bottom of it," Henrietta went on.

"You will see; she will tell you," said the countess.

"Ah, she may not tell me, — that's what I am afraid of!"

"Well, if Osmond is n't enjoying himself, I flatter myself I shall discover it," the countess rejoined.

"I don't care for that," said Henrietta.

"I do, immensely! If Isabel is unhappy, I am very sorry for her, but I can't help it. I might tell her something that would make her worse, but I can't tell her anything that would console her. What did she go and marry him for? If she had listened to me she would have got rid of him. I will forgive her, however, if I find she has made things hot for him! If she has simply allowed him to trample upon her, I don't know that I shall even pity her. But I don't think that's very likely. I count upon finding that if she is miserable she has at least made him so."

Henrietta got up; these seemed to her, naturally, very dreadful expectations. She honestly believed that she had no desire to see Mr. Osmond unhappy; and indeed he could not be for her the subject of a flight of fancy. She was on the whole rather disappointed in the countess, whose mind moved in a narrower circle than she had imagined.

"It will be better if they love each other," she said, gravely.

"They can't. He can't love any one."

"I presumed that was the case. But it only increases my fear for Isabel. I shall positively start to-morrow."

"Isabel certainly has devotees," said the countess, smiling very vividly. "I declare, I don't pity her."

"It may be that I can't assist her," said Miss Stackpole, as if it were well not to have illusions.

"You can have wanted to, at any rate, — that's something. I believe that's what you came from America for," the countess suddenly added.

"Yes, I wanted to look after her," Henrietta said, serenely.

Her hostess stood there smiling at her, with her small bright eyes and her eager-looking nose; a flush had come into each of her cheeks.

"Ah, that's very pretty, — *c'est bien gentil!*" she said. "Is n't that what they call friendship?"

"I don't know what they call it. I thought I had better come."

"She is very happy, — she is very fortunate," the countess went on. "She has others, besides." And then she broke out passionately, "She is more fortunate than I! I am as unhappy as she. I have a very bad husband; he is a great deal worse than Osmond. And I have no friends! I thought I had, but they are gone! No one would do for me what you have done for her."

Henrietta was touched; there was nature in this bitter effusion. She gazed at her companion a moment, and then, —

"Look here, countess, I will do anything for you that you like. I will wait over, and travel with you!"

"Never mind," the countess answered, with a quick change of tone; "only describe me in the newspaper!"

Henrietta, before leaving her, however, was obliged to make her under-

stand that she could not give a fictitious representation of her journey to Rome. Miss Stackpole was a strictly veracious reporter.

On quitting the countess she took her way to the Lung' Arno, the sunny quay beside the river, where the bright-faced hotels familiar to tourists stand all in a row. She had learned her way before this through the streets of Florence (she was very quick in such matters), and was therefore able to turn with great decision of step out of the little square which forms the approach to the bridge of the Holy Trinity. She proceeded to the left, towards the Ponte Vecchio, and stopped in front of one of the hotels which overlook that structure. Here she drew forth a small pocket-book, took from it a card and a pencil, and, after meditating a moment, wrote a few words. It is our privilege to look over her shoulder, and if we exercise it we may read the brief query: "Could I see you this evening for a few moments on a very important matter?" Henrietta added that she should start on the morrow for Rome. Armed with this little document, she approached the porter, who now had taken up his station in the door-way, and asked if Mr. Goodwood were at home. The porter replied, as porters always reply, that he had gone out half an hour before; whereupon Henrietta presented her card, and begged it might be handed to him on his return. She left the inn, and took her course along the river to the severe portico of the Uffizzi, through which she presently reached the entrance of the famous gallery of paintings. Making her way in, she ascended the high staircase which leads to the upper chambers. The long corridor, glazed on one side and decorated with antique busts, which gives admission to these apartments, presented an empty vista, in which the bright winter light twinkled upon the marble floor. The gallery is very cold, and during the midwinter weeks is but scantily visited.

Miss Stackpole may appear more ardent in her quest of artistic beauty than she has hitherto struck us as being, but she had after all her preferences and admirations. One of the latter was the little Correggio of the Tribune, — the Virgin kneeling down before the sacred infant, who lies in a litter of straw, and clapping her hands to him while he delightfully laughs and crows. Henrietta had taken a great fancy to this intimate scene; she thought it the most beautiful picture in the world. On her way, at present, from New York to Rome, she was spending but three days in Florence, but she had reminded herself that they must not elapse without her paying another visit to her favorite work of art. She had a great sense of beauty in all ways, and it implied a good many intellectual obligations. She was about to turn into the Tribune when a gentleman came out of it; whereupon she gave a little exclamation, and stood before Caspar Goodwood.

"I have just been at your hotel," she said. "I left a card for you."

"I am very much honored," Caspar Goodwood answered, as if he really meant it.

"It was not to honor you I did it; I have called on you before, and I know you don't like it. It was to talk to you a little about something."

He looked for a moment at the buckle in her hat. "I shall be very glad to hear what you wish to say."

"You don't like to talk with me," said Henrietta. "But I don't care for that; I don't talk for your amusement. I wrote a word to ask you to come and see me; but since I have met you here, this will do as well."

"I was just going away," Goodwood said; "but of course I will stop." He was civil, but he was not enthusiastic.

Henrietta, however, never looked for great professions, and she was so much in earnest that she was thankful he would listen to her on any terms. She

asked him first, however, if he had seen all the pictures.

"All I want to. I have been here an hour."

"I wonder if you have seen my Correggio," said Henrietta. "I came up on purpose to have a look at it." She went into the Tribune, and he slowly accompanied her.

"I suppose I have seen it, but I did n't know it was yours. I don't remember pictures, — especially that sort." She had pointed out her favorite work; and he asked her if it was about Correggio that she wished to talk with him.

"No," said Henrietta; "it's about something less harmonious!" They had the small, brilliant room, a splendid cabinet of treasures, to themselves; there was only a custode hovering about the Medicean Venus. "I want you to do me a favor," Miss Stackpole went on.

Caspar Goodwood frowned a little, but he expressed no embarrassment at the sense of not looking eager. His face was that of a much older man than our earlier friend. "I'm sure it's something I shan't like," he said, rather loud.

"No, I don't think you will like it. If you did, it would be no favor."

"Well, let us hear it," he said, in the tone of a man quite conscious of his own reasonableness.

"You may say there is no particular reason why you should do me a favor. Indeed, I only know of one: the fact that if you would let me I would gladly do you one." Her soft, exact tone, in which there was no attempt at effect, had an extreme sincerity; and her companion, although he presented rather a hard surface, could not help being touched by it. When he was touched he rarely showed it, however, by the usual signs; he neither blushed, nor looked away, nor looked conscious. He only fixed his attention more directly; he seemed to consider with added firmness. Henrietta went on, therefore, disinterestedly, without the sense of an ad-

vantage. "I may say now, indeed, — it seems a good time, — that if I have ever annoyed you (and I think sometimes that I have) it is because I know that I was willing to suffer annoyance for you. I have troubled you, doubtless. But I would take trouble for you."

Goodwood hesitated. "You are taking trouble now."

"Yes, I am, some. I want you to consider whether it is better, on the whole, that you should go to Rome."

"I thought you were going to say that!" Goodwood exclaimed, rather artlessly.

"You *have* considered it, then?"

"Of course I have, very carefully. I have looked all round it. Otherwise I should n't have come as far as this. That's what I stayed in Paris two months for; I was thinking it over."

"I am afraid you decided as you liked. You decided it was best, because you were so much attracted."

"Best for whom, do you mean?" Goodwood inquired.

"Well, for yourself, first. For Mrs. Osmond, next."

"Oh, it won't do her any good! I don't flatter myself that."

"Won't it do her harm? — that's the question."

"I don't see what it will matter to her. I am nothing to Mrs. Osmond. But if you want to know, I do want to see her myself."

"Yes, and that's why you go."

"Of course it is. Could there be a better reason?"

"How will it help you? — that's what I want to know," said Miss Stackpole.

"That's just what I can't tell you; it's just what I was thinking about in Paris."

"It will make you more discontented."

"Why do you say more so?" Goodwood asked, rather sternly. "How do you know I am discontented?"

"Well," said Henrietta, hesitating a little, "you seem never to have cared for another."

"How do you know what I care for?" he cried, with a big blush. "Just now I care to go to Rome."

Henrietta looked at him in silence, with a sad yet luminous expression. "Well," she observed, at last, "I only wanted to tell you what I think; I had it on my mind. Of course you think it's none of my business. But nothing is any one's business, on that principle."

"It's very kind of you; I am greatly obliged to you for your interest," said Caspar Goodwood. "I shall go to Rome, and I shan't hurt Mrs. Osmond."

"You won't hurt her, perhaps. But will you help her?—that is the question."

"Is she in need of help?" he asked, slowly, with a penetrating look.

"Most women always are," said Henrietta, with conscientious evasiveness, and generalizing less hopefully than usual. "If you go to Rome," she added, "I hope you will be a true friend,—not a selfish one!" And she turned away and began to look at the pictures.

Caspar Goodwood let her go, and stood watching her while she wandered round the room; then, after a moment, he rejoined her. "You have heard something about her here," he said in a moment. "I should like to know what you have heard."

Henrietta had never prevaricated in her life, and though on this occasion there might have been a fitness in doing so she decided, after a moment's hesitation, to make no superficial exception. "Yes, I have heard," she answered; "but as I don't want you to go to Rome I won't tell you."

"Just as you please. I shall see for myself," said Goodwood. Then, inconsistently for him, "You have heard she is unhappy!" he added.

"Oh, you won't see that!" Henrietta exclaimed.

"I hope not. When do you start?"

"To-morrow, by the evening train. And you?"

Goodwood hesitated; he had no desire to make his journey to Rome in Miss Stackpole's company. His indifference to this advantage was not of the same character as Gilbert Osmond's, but it had at this moment an equal distinctness. It was rather a tribute to Miss Stackpole's virtues than a reference to her faults. He thought her very remarkable, very brilliant, and he had, in theory, no objection to the class to which she belonged. Lady-correspondents appeared to him a part of the natural scheme of things in a progressive country, and though he never read their letters he supposed that they ministered somehow to social progress. But it was this very eminence of their position that made him wish that Miss Stackpole did not take so much for granted. She took for granted that he was always ready for some allusion to Mrs. Osmond; she had done so when they met in Paris, six weeks after his arrival in Europe, and she had repeated the assumption with every successive opportunity. He had no wish whatever to allude to Mrs. Osmond; he was *not* always thinking of her, he was perfectly sure of that. He was the most reserved, the least colloquial, of men, and this inquiring authoress was constantly flashing her lantern into the quiet darkness of his soul. He wished she did n't care so much; he even wished, though it might seem rather brutal of him, that she would leave him alone. In spite of this, however, he just now made other reflections,—which show how widely different, in effect, his ill-humor was from Gilbert Osmond's. He wished to go immediately to Rome; he would have liked to go alone, in the night-train. He hated the European railway carriages, in which one sat for hours in a vise, nose to nose and knee to knee with a foreigner, to whom one presently

found one's self objecting with all the added vehemence of one's wish to have the window open ; and if they were worse at night even than by day, at least at night one could sleep and dream of an American saloon-car. But he could not take a night-train, when Miss Stackpole was starting in the morning ; it seemed to him that this would be an insult to an unprotected woman. Nor could he wait until after she had gone, unless he should wait longer than he had patience for. It would not do to start the next day. She worried him ; she oppressed him ; the idea of spending the day in a European railway-carriage with her offered a complication of irritation. Still, she was a lady traveling alone ; it was his duty to put himself out for her. There could be no two questions about that ; it was a perfectly clear necessity. He looked extremely grave for some moments, and then he said, without a touch of the richness of gallantry, but in a tone of extreme distinctness, "Of course, if you are going to-morrow, I will go too, as I may be of assistance to you."

"Well, Mr. Goodwood, I should hope so!" Henrietta remarked, serenely.

XLIV.

I have already had reason to say that Isabel knew that her husband was displeased by the continuance of Ralph's visit to Rome. This knowledge was very present to her as she walked to her cousin's hotel the day after she had invited Lord Warburton to give a tangible proof of his sincerity ; and at this moment, as at others, she had a sufficient perception of the sources of Osmond's displeasure. He wished her to have no freedom of mind, and he knew perfectly well that Ralph was an apostle of freedom. It was just because he was this, Isabel said to herself, that it was a refreshment to go and see him.

It will be perceived that she partook of this refreshment in spite of her husband's disapproval ; that is, she partook of it, as she flattered herself, discreetly. She had not as yet undertaken to act in direct opposition to Osmond's wishes ; he was her master ; she gazed, at moments, with a sort of incredulous blankness at this fact. It weighed upon her imagination, however ; constantly present to her mind were all the traditional decencies and sanctities of marriage. The idea of violating them filled her with shame as well as with dread, for when she gave herself away she had lost sight of this contingency in the perfect belief that her husband's intentions were as generous as her own. She seemed to see, however, the rapid approach of the day when she should have to take back something that she had solemnly given. Such a ceremony would be odious and monstrous ; she tried to shut her eyes to it, meanwhile. Osmond would do nothing to help it by beginning first ; he would put that burden upon her. He had not yet formally forbidden her to go and see Ralph ; but she felt sure that unless Ralph should very soon depart this prohibition would come. How could poor Ralph depart ? The weather as yet made it impossible. She could perfectly understand her husband's wish for the event ; to be just, she did n't see how he could like her to be with her cousin. Ralph never said a word against him ; but Osmond's objections were none the less founded. If Osmond should positively interpose, then she should have to decide, and that would not be easy. The prospect made her heart beat and her cheeks burn, as I say, in advance ; there were moments when, in her wish to avoid an open rupture with her husband, she found herself wishing that Ralph would start, even at a risk. And it was of no use that, when catching herself in this state of mind, she called herself a feeble spirit, a coward. It was not that she

loved Ralph less, but that almost anything seemed preferable to repudiating the most serious act — the single sacred act — of her life. That appeared to make the whole future hideous. To break with Osmond once would be to break forever; any open acknowledgment of irreconcilable needs would be an admission that their whole attempt had proved a failure. For them there could be no condonement, no compromise, no easy forgetfulness, no formal readjustment. They had attempted only one thing, but that one thing was to have been exquisite. Once they missed it, nothing else would do; there is no substitute for that success. For the moment, Isabel went to the Hôtel de Paris as often as she thought well; the measure of expediency resided in her moral consciousness. It had been very liberal to-day; for, in addition to the general truth that she could not leave Ralph to die alone, she had something important to ask of him. This, indeed, was Gilbert's business as well as her own.

She came very soon to what she wished to speak of.

"I want you to answer me a question," she said. "It's about Lord Warburton."

"I think I know it," Ralph answered, from his arm-chair, out of which his thin legs protruded at greater length than ever.

"It's very possible," said Isabel. "Please, then, answer it."

"Oh, I don't say I can do that."

"You are intimate with him," said Isabel; "you have a great deal of observation of him."

"Very true. But think how he must dissimulate!"

"Why should he dissimulate? That's not his nature."

"Ah, you must remember that the circumstances are peculiar," said Ralph, with an air of private amusement.

"To a certain extent, — yes. But is he really in love?"

"Very much, I think. I can make that out."

"Ah!" said Isabel, with a certain dryness.

Ralph looked at her a moment; a shade of perplexity mingled with his mild hilarity.

"You said that as if you were disappointed."

Isabel got up, slowly, smoothing her gloves, and eying them thoughtfully.

"It's after all no business of mine."

"You are very philosophic," said her cousin. And then, in a moment, "May I inquire what you are talking about?"

Isabel stared a little. "I thought you knew. Lord Warburton tells me he desires to marry Pansy. I have told you that before, without eliciting a comment from you. You might risk one this morning, I think. Is it your belief that he really cares for her?"

"Ah, for Pansy, no!" cried Ralph, very positively.

"But you said just now that he did."

Ralph hesitated a moment. "That he cared for you, Mrs. Osmond."

Isabel shook her head, gravely. "That's nonsense, you know."

"Of course it is. But the nonsense is Warburton's, not mine."

"That would be very tiresome," Isabel said, speaking, as she flattered herself, with much subtlety.

"I ought to tell you, indeed," Ralph went on, "that to me he has denied it."

"It's very good of you to talk about it together! Has he also told you that he is in love with Pansy?"

"He has spoken very well of her, very properly. He has let me know, of course, that he thinks she would do very well at Lockleigh."

"Does he really think it?"

"Ah, what Warburton really thinks" — said Ralph.

Isabel fell to smoothing her gloves again; they were long, loose gloves, upon which she could freely expend herself. Soon, however, she looked up; then, —

"Ah, Ralph, you give me no help!" she cried, abruptly, passionately.

It was the first time she had alluded to the need for help, and the words shook her cousin with their violence. He gave a long murmur of relief, of pity, of tenderness; it seemed to him that at last the gulf between them had been bridged. It was this that made him exclaim in a moment, —

"How unhappy you must be!"

He had no sooner spoken than she recovered her self-possession, and the first use she made of it was to pretend she had not heard him.

"When I talk of your helping me, I talk great nonsense," she said, with a quick smile. "The idea of my troubling you with my domestic embarrassments! The matter is very simple; Lord Warburton must get on by himself. I can't undertake to help him."

"He ought to succeed easily," said Ralph.

Isabel hesitated a moment. "Yes; but he has not always succeeded."

"Very true. You know, however, how that always surprised me. Is Miss Osmond capable of giving us a surprise?"

"It will come from him, rather. I suspect that after all he will let the matter drop."

"He will do nothing dishonorable," said Ralph.

"I am very sure of that. Nothing can be more honorable than for him to leave the poor child alone. She cares for some one else, and it is cruel to attempt to bribe her by magnificent offers to give him up."

"Cruel to the other person, perhaps, — the one she cares for. But Warburton is n't obliged to mind that."

"No, cruel to her," said Isabel. "She would be very unhappy if she were to allow herself to be persuaded to desert poor Mr. Rosier. That idea seems to amuse you; of course you are not in love with him. He has the merit

of being in love with her. She can see at a glance that Lord Warburton is not."

"He would be very good to her," said Ralph.

"He has been good to her already. Fortunately, however, he has not said a word to disturb her. He could come and bid her good-by to-morrow with perfect propriety."

"How would your husband like that?"

"Not at all; and he may be right in not liking it. Only he must obtain satisfaction himself."

"Has he commissioned you to obtain it?" Ralph ventured to ask.

"It was natural that as an old friend of Lord Warburton's — an older friend, that is, than Osmond — I should take an interest in his intentions."

"Take an interest in his renouncing them, you mean."

Isabel hesitated, frowning a little. "Let me understand. Are you pleading his cause?"

"Not in the least. I am very glad he should not become your step-daughter's husband. It makes such a very queer relation to you!" said Ralph, smiling. "But I'm rather nervous lest your husband should think you have n't pushed him enough."

Isabel found herself able to smile as well as he.

"He knows me well enough not to have expected me to push. He himself has no intention of pushing, I presume. I am not afraid I shall not be able to justify myself!" she said lightly.

Her mask had dropped for an instant, but she had put it on again, to Ralph's infinite disappointment. He had caught a glimpse of her natural face, and he wished immensely to look into it. He had an almost savage desire to hear her complain of her husband, — hear her say that she should be held accountable for Lord Warburton's defection. Ralph was certain that this was her situation;

he knew by instinct, in advance, the form that in such an event Osmond's displeasure would take. It could only take the meanest and cruelest. He would have liked to warn Isabel of it, — to let her see, at least, that he knew it. It mattered little that Isabel would know it much better; it was for his own satisfaction more than for hers that he longed to show her that he was not deceived. He tried and tried again to make her betray Osmond; he felt cold-blooded, cruel, dishonorable almost, in doing so. But it scarcely mattered, for he only failed. What had she come for, then, and why did she seem almost to offer him a chance to violate their tacit convention? Why did she ask him his advice, if she gave him no liberty to answer her? How could they talk of her domestic embarrassments, as it pleased her humorously to designate them, if the principal factor was not to be mentioned? These contradictions were themselves but an indication of her trouble, and her cry for help, just before, was the only thing he was bound to consider.

"You will be decidedly at variance, all the same," he said, in a moment. And as she answered nothing, looking as if she scarcely understood, "You will find yourselves thinking very differently," he continued.

"That may easily happen, among the most united couples!" She took up her parasol; he saw that she was nervous, afraid of what he might say. "It's a matter we can hardly quarrel about, however," she added; "for almost all the interest is on his side. That is very natural. Pansy is after all his daughter, — not mine." And she put out her hand to wish him good-by.

Ralph took an inward resolution that she should not leave him without his letting her know that he knew everything; it seemed too great an opportunity to lose. "Do you know what

his interest will make him say?" he asked, as he took her hand. She shook her head, rather dryly, not discouragingly, and he went on: "It will make him say that your want of zeal is owing to jealousy." He stopped a moment; her face made him afraid.

"To jealousy?"

"To jealousy of his daughter."

She blushed red, and threw back her head.

"You are not kind," she said, in a voice that he had never heard on her lips.

"Be frank with me, and you'll see," said Ralph.

But she made no answer; she only shook her hand out of his own, which he tried still to hold, and rapidly went out of the room.

She made up her mind to speak to Pansy, and she took an occasion on the same day, going to the young girl's room before dinner. Pansy was already dressed; she was always in advance of the time; it seemed to illustrate her pretty patience and the graceful stillness with which she could sit and wait. At present she was seated, in her fresh array, before the bedroom fire. She had blown out her candle, on the completion of her toilet, in accordance with the economical habits in which she had been brought up, and which she was now more careful than ever to observe; so that the room was lighted only by a couple of logs. The rooms in the Palazzo Roccanera were as spacious as they were numerous, and Pansy's virginal bower was an immense chamber, with a dark, heavily-timbered ceiling. Its diminutive mistress, in the midst of it, appeared but a speck of humanity, and as she got up, with quick propriety, to welcome Isabel, the latter was more than ever struck with her finished lowliness. Isabel had a difficult task; the only thing was to perform it as simply as possible. She felt bitter and angry, but she warned herself against betraying

it to Pansy. She was afraid, even, of looking too grave, or at least too stern; she was afraid of frightening her. But Pansy seemed to have guessed that she had come a little as a confessor; for after she had moved the chair in which she had been sitting a little nearer to the fire, and Isabel had taken her place in it, she kneeled down on a cushion in front of her, looking up and resting her clasped hands on her step-mother's knees. What Isabel wished to do was to hear from her own lips that her mind was not occupied with Lord Warburton; but if she desired the assurance, she felt herself by no means at liberty to provoke it. The girl's father would have qualified this as rank treachery; and indeed Isabel knew that if Pansy should display the smallest germ of a disposition to encourage Lord Warburton, her own duty was to hold her tongue. It was difficult to interrogate without appearing to suggest; Pansy's supreme simplicity, an innocence even more complete than Isabel had yet judged it, gave to the most tentative inquiry something of the effect of an admonition. As she knelt there in the vague firelight, with her pretty dress vaguely shining, her hands folded half in appeal and half in submission, her soft eyes, raised and fixed, full of the seriousness of the situation, she looked to Isabel like a childish martyr, decked out for sacrifice, and scarcely presuming even to hope to avert it. When Isabel said to her that she had never yet spoken to her of what might have been going on in relation to her getting married, but that her silence had not been indifference nor ignorance, it had only been the desire to leave her at liberty, Pansy bent forward, raised her face nearer and nearer to Isabel's, and with a little murmur, which evidently expressed a deep longing, answered that she had greatly wished her to speak, and that she begged her to advise her now.

"It's difficult for me to advise you," Isabel rejoined. "I don't know how I

can undertake that. That's for your father; you must get his advice, and, above all, you must act upon it."

At this Pansy dropped her eyes; for a moment she said nothing.

"I think I should like your advice better than papa's," she presently remarked.

"That's not as it should be," said Isabel, coldly. "I love you very much, but your father loves you better."

"It is n't because you love me; it's because you're a lady," Pansy answered, with the air of saying something very reasonable. "A lady can advise a young girl better than a man."

"I advise you, then, to pay the greatest respect to your father's wishes."

"Ah, yes," said Pansy, eagerly, "I must do that."

"But if I speak to you now about your getting married, it's not for your own sake; it's for mine," Isabel went on. "If I try to learn from you what you expect, what you desire, it is only that I may act accordingly."

Pansy stared, and then very quickly, —

"Will you do everything I desire?" she asked.

"Before I say yes, I must know what such things are."

Pansy presently told her that the only thing she wished in life was to marry Mr. Rosier. He had asked her, and she had told him that she would do so if her papa would allow it. Now her papa would n't allow it.

"Very well, then, it's impossible," said Isabel.

"Yes, it's impossible," said Pansy, without a sigh, and with the same extreme attention in her clear little face.

"You must think of something else, then," Isabel went on; but Pansy, sighing then, told her that she had attempted this feat without the least success.

"You think of those that think of you," she said, with a faint smile. "I know that Mr. Rosier thinks of me."

"He ought not to," said Isabel, loftily. "Your father has expressly requested he should n't."

"He can't help it, because he knows that I think of him."

"You should n't think of him. There is some excuse for him, perhaps; but there is none for you!"

"I wish you would try to find one!" the girl exclaimed, as if she were praying to the Madonna.

"I should be very sorry to attempt it," said the Madonna, with unusual frigidity. "If you knew some one else was thinking of you, would you think of him?"

"No one can think of me as Mr. Rosier does; no one has the right."

"Ah, but I don't admit Mr. Rosier's right!" Isabel cried, hypocritically.

Pansy only gazed at her; she was evidently deeply puzzled; and Isabel, taking advantage of it, began to represent to her the miserable consequences of disobeying her father. At this Pansy stopped her, with the assurance that she would never disobey him, would never marry without his consent. And she announced, in the serenest, simplest tone, that, though she might never marry Mr. Rosier, she would never cease to think of him. She appeared to have accepted the idea of eternal singleness; but Isabel, of course, was free to reflect that she had no conception of its meaning. She was perfectly sincere; she was prepared to give up her lover. This might seem an important step toward taking another, but for Pansy, evidently, it did not lead in that direction. She felt no bitterness towards her father; there was no bitterness in her heart; there was only the sweetness of fidelity to Edward Rosier, and a strange, exquisite intimation that she could prove it better by remaining single than even by marrying him.

"Your father would like you to make a better marriage," said Isabel. "Mr. Rosier's fortune is not very large."

"How do you mean better, if that would be good enough? And I have very little money; why should I look for a fortune?"

"Your having so little is a reason for looking for more." Isabel was grateful for the dimness of the room; she felt as if her face were hideously insincere. She was doing this for Osmond; this was what one had to do for Osmond! Pansy's solemn eyes, fixed on her own, almost embarrassed her; she was ashamed to think that she had made so light of the girl's preference.

"What should you like me to do?" said Pansy, softly.

The question was a terrible one, and Isabel pusillanimously took refuge in a generalization.

"To remember all the pleasure it is in your power to give your father."

"To marry some one else, you mean, — if he should ask me?"

For a moment Isabel's answer caused itself to be waited for; then she heard herself utter it, in the stillness that Pansy's attention seemed to make: —

"Yes, — to marry some one else."

Pansy's eyes grew more penetrating; Isabel believed that she was doubting her sincerity, and the impression took force from her slowly getting up from her cushion. She stood there a moment, with her small hands unclasped, and then she said, with a timorous sigh, —

"Well, I hope no one will ask me!"

"There has been a question of that. Some one else would have been ready to ask you."

"I don't think he can have been ready," said Pansy.

"It would appear so, — if he had been sure that he would succeed."

"If he had been sure? Then he was not ready!"

Isabel thought this rather sharp; she also got up, and stood a moment looking into the fire. "Lord Warburton has shown you great attention," she said;

"of course you know it's of him I speak." She found herself, against her expectation, almost placed in the position of justifying herself; which led her to introduce this nobleman more crudely than she had intended.

"He has been very kind to me, and I like him very much. But if you mean that he will ask me to marry him, I think you are mistaken."

"Perhaps I am. But your father would like it extremely."

Pansy shook her head, with a little wise smile.

"Lord Warburton won't ask me simply to please papa."

"Your father would like you to encourage him," Isabel went on, mechanically.

"How can I encourage him?"

"I don't know. Your father must tell you that."

Pansy said nothing for a moment; she only continued to smile, as if she were in possession of a bright assurance. "There is no danger, — no danger!" she declared at last.

There was a conviction in the way she said this, and a felicity in her believing it, which made Isabel feel very awkward. She felt accused of dishonesty, and the idea was disgusting. To repair her self-respect, she was on the point of saying that Lord Warburton had let her know that there *was* a danger. But she did not; she only said — in her embarrassment rather wide of the mark — that he surely had been most kind, most friendly.

"Yes, he has been very kind," Pansy answered. "That's what I like him for."

"Why, then, is the difficulty so great?"

"I have always felt sure that he knows that I don't want — what did you say I should do? — to encourage him. He knows I don't want to marry, and he wants me to know that he therefore won't trouble me. That's the

meaning of his kindness. It's as if he said to me, 'I like you very much, but if it does n't please you I will never say it again.' I think that is very kind, very noble," Pansy went on, with deepening positiveness. "That is all we have said to each other. And he does n't care for me, either! Ah, no, there is no danger!"

Isabel was touched with wonder at the depths of perception of which this submissive little person was capable; she felt afraid of Pansy's wisdom, — began almost to retreat before it. "You must tell your father that," she remarked, reservedly.

"I think I would rather not," Pansy answered.

"You ought not to let him have false hopes."

"Perhaps not; but it will be good for me that he should. So long as he believes that Lord Warburton intends anything of the kind you say, papa won't propose any one else. And that will be an advantage for me," said Pansy, very lucidly.

There was something brilliant in her lucidity, and it made Isabel draw a long breath. It relieved her of a heavy responsibility. Pansy had a sufficient illumination of her own, and Isabel felt that she herself just now had no light to spare from her small stock. Nevertheless, it still clung to her that she must be loyal to Osmond; that she was on her honor in dealing with his daughter. Under the influence of this sentiment she threw out another suggestion before she retired, — a suggestion with which it seemed to her that she should have done her utmost.

"Your father takes for granted, at least, that you would like to marry a nobleman."

Pansy stood in the open door-way; she had drawn back the curtain for Isabel to pass.

"I think Mr. Rosier looks like one!" she announced, very gravely.

XLV.

Lord Warburton was not seen in Mrs. Osmond's drawing-room for several days, and Isabel could not fail to observe that her husband said nothing to her about having received a letter from him. She could not fail to observe, either, that Osmond was in a state of expectancy, and that, though it was not agreeable to him to betray it, he thought their distinguished friend kept him waiting quite too long. At the end of four days he alluded to his absence.

"What has become of Warburton? What does he mean by treating one like a tradesman with a bill?"

"I know nothing about him," Isabel said. "I saw him last Friday, at the German ball. He told me then that he meant to write to you."

"He has never written to me."

"So I supposed, from your not having told me."

"He's an odd fish," said Osmond, comprehensively. And on Isabel's making no rejoinder, he went on to inquire whether it took his lordship five days to indite a letter. "Does he form his words with such difficulty?"

"I don't know," said Isabel. "I have never had a letter from him."

"Never had a letter? I had an idea that you were at one time in intimate correspondence."

Isabel answered that this had not been the case, and let the conversation drop. On the morrow, however, coming into the drawing-room late in the afternoon, her husband took it up again.

"When Lord Warburton told you of his intention of writing, what did you say to him?" he asked.

Isabel hesitated a moment. "I think I told him not to forget it."

"Did you believe there was danger of that?"

"As you say, he's an odd fish."

"Apparently he has forgotten it," said Osmond. "Be so good as to remind him."

"Should you like me to write to him?" Isabel asked.

"I have no objection whatever."

"You expect too much of me."

"Ah, yes, I expect a great deal of you."

"I am afraid I shall disappoint you," said Isabel.

"My expectations have survived a good deal of disappointment."

"Of course I know that. Think how I must have disappointed myself! If you really wish to secure Lord Warburton, you must really do it yourself."

For a couple of minutes Osmond answered nothing; then he said, "That won't be easy, with you working against me."

Isabel started; she felt herself beginning to tremble. He had a way of looking at her through half-closed eyelids, as if he were thinking of her but scarcely saw her, which seemed to her to have a wonderfully cruel intention. It appeared to recognize her as a disagreeable necessity of thought, but to ignore her for the time as a presence. That was the expression of his eyes now. "I think you accuse me of something very base," she said.

"I accuse you of not being trustworthy. If he does n't come up to the mark it will be because you have kept him off. I don't know that it's base; it is the kind of thing a woman always thinks she may do. I have no doubt you have the finest ideas about it."

"I have told you I would do what I could," said Isabel.

"Yes, that gained you time."

It came over Isabel, after he had said this, that she had once thought him beautiful. "How much you must wish to capture him!" she exclaimed, in a moment.

She had no sooner spoken than she perceived the full reach of her words,

of which she had not been conscious in uttering them. They made a comparison between Osmond and herself; recalled the fact that she had once held this coveted treasure in her hand, and felt herself rich enough to let it fall. A momentary exultation took possession of her, — a horrible delight in having wounded him; for his face instantly told her that none of the force of her exclamation was lost. Osmond expressed nothing otherwise, however; he only said, quickly, "Yes, I wish it very much."

At this moment a servant came in, as if to usher a visitor, and he was followed the next by Lord Warburton, who received a visible check on seeing Osmond. He looked rapidly from the master of the house to the mistress, — a movement that seemed to denote a reluctance to interrupt, or even a perception of ominous conditions. Then he advanced, with his English address, in which a vague shyness seemed to offer itself as an element of good-breeding; in which the only defect was a difficulty in achieving transitions.

Osmond was embarrassed; he found nothing to say; but Isabel remarked, promptly enough, that they had been in the act of talking about their visitor. Upon this her husband added that they had not known what was become of him; they had been afraid he was gone away.

"No," said Lord Warburton, smiling and looking at Osmond; "I am only on the point of going." And then he explained that he found himself suddenly recalled to England; he should start on the morrow or next day. "I am awfully sorry to leave poor Touchett!" he ended by exclaiming.

For a moment neither of his companions spoke; Osmond only leaned back in his chair, listening. Isabel did not look at him; she could only fancy how he looked. Her eyes were upon Lord Warburton's face, where they were the more free to rest than those of his lord-

ship carefully avoided them. Yet Isabel was sure that had she met her visitor's glance she should have found it expressive. "You had better take poor Touchett with you," she heard her husband say, lightly enough, in a moment.

"He had better wait for warmer weather," Lord Warburton answered. "I should not advise him to travel just now."

He sat there for a quarter of an hour, talking as if he might not soon see them again, — unless, indeed, they should come to England, a course which he strongly recommended. Why should not they come to England in the autumn? That struck him as a very happy thought. It would give him such pleasure to do what he could for them, — to have them come and spend a month with him! Osmond, by his own admission, had been to England but once, which was an absurd state of things. It was just the country for him; he would be sure to get on well there. Then Lord Warburton asked Isabel if she remembered what a good time she had there, and if she did not want to try it again. Did not she want to see Gardencourt once more? Gardencourt was really very good. Touchett did not take proper care of it, but it was the sort of place you could hardly spoil by letting it alone. Why did not they come and pay Touchett a visit? He surely must have asked them. Had not asked them? What an ill-mannered wretch! And Lord Warburton promised to give the master of Gardencourt a piece of his mind. Of course it was a mere accident; he would be delighted to have them. Spending a month with Touchett and a month with himself, and seeing all the rest of the people they must know there, they really would not find it half bad. Lord Warburton added that it would amuse Miss Osmond as well, who had told him that she had never been to England, and whom he had assured it was a country she deserved to see. Of course she did not

need to go to England to be admired, — that was her fate everywhere; but she would be immensely liked in England, Miss Osmond would, if that was any inducement. He asked if she were not at home: could n't he say good-by? Not that he liked good-bys; he always funk'd them. When he left England, the other day, he had not said good-by to any one. He had had half a mind to leave Rome without troubling Mrs. Osmond for a final interview. What could be more dreary than a final interview? One never said the things one wanted to; one remembered them all an hour afterwards. On the other hand, one usually said a lot of things one should n't, simply from a sense that one had to say something. Such a sense was bewildering; it made one nervous. He had it at present, and that was the effect it produced on him. If Mrs. Osmond did n't think he spoke as he ought, she must set it down to agitation; it was no light thing to part with Mrs. Osmond. He was really very sorry to be going. He had thought of writing to her instead of calling; but he would write to her, at any rate, to tell her a lot of things that would be sure to occur to him as soon as he had left the house. They must think seriously about coming to Lockleigh.

If there was anything awkward in the circumstances of his visit or in the announcement of his departure, it failed to come to the surface. Lord Warburton talked about his agitation; but he showed it in no other manner, and Isabel saw that, since he had determined on a retreat, he was capable of executing it gallantly. She was very glad for him; she liked him quite well enough to wish him to appear to carry a thing off. He would do that on any occasion, not from impudence, but simply from the habit of success; and Isabel perceived that it was not in her husband's power to frustrate this faculty. A double operation, as she sat there, went on in her mind. On one side, she listened to Lord War-

burton; said what was proper to him; read, more or less, between the lines of what he said himself; and wondered how he would have spoken if he had found her alone. On the other, she had a perfect consciousness of Osmond's emotion. She felt almost sorry for him; he was condemned to the sharp pain of loss without the relief of cursing. He had had a great hope, and now, as he saw it vanish into smoke, he was obliged to sit and smile and twirl his thumbs. Not that he troubled himself to smile very brightly; he treated Lord Warburton, on the whole, to as vacant a countenance as so clever a man could very well wear. It was indeed a part of Osmond's cleverness that he could look consummately uncompromised. His present appearance, however, was not a confession of disappointment; it was simply a part of Osmond's habitual system, which was to be inexpressive exactly in proportion as he was really intent. He had been intent upon Lord Warburton from the first; but he had never allowed his eagerness to irradiate his refined face. He had treated his possible son-in-law as he treated every one, — with an air of being interested in him only for his own advantage, not for Gilbert Osmond's. He would give no sign now of an inward rage which was the result of a vanished prospect of gain — not the faintest nor subtlest. Isabel could be sure of that, if it was any satisfaction to her. Strangely, very strangely, it was a satisfaction; she wished Lord Warburton to triumph before her husband, and at the same time she wished her husband to be very superior before Lord Warburton. Osmond, in his way, was admirable; he had, like their visitor, the advantage of an acquired habit. It was not that of succeeding, but it was something almost as good, — that of not attempting. As he leaned back in his place, listening but vaguely to Lord Warburton's friendly offers and suppressed explanations, — as

if it were only proper to assume that they were addressed essentially to his wife, — he had at least, since so little else was left him, the comfort of thinking how well he personally had kept out of it, and how the air of indifference, which he was now able to wear, had the added beauty of consistency. It was something to be able to look as if their visitor's movements had no relation to his own mind. Their visitor did well, certainly; but Osmond's performance was in its very nature more finished. Lord Warburton's position was after all an easy one; there was no reason in the world why he should not leave Rome. He had benevolent inclinations, but they had stopped short of fruition; he had never committed himself, and his honor was safe. Osmond appeared to take but a moderate interest in the proposal that they should go and stay with him, and in his allusion to the success Pansy might extract from their visit. He murmured a recognition, but left Isabel to say that it was a matter requiring grave consideration. Isabel, even while she made this remark, could see the great vista which had suddenly opened out in her husband's mind, with Pansy's little figure marching up the middle of it.

Lord Warburton had asked leave to bid good-by to Pansy, but neither Isabel nor Osmond had made any motion to send for her. He had the air of giving out that his visit must be short; he sat on a small chair, as if it were only for a moment, keeping his hat in his hand. But he stayed and stayed; Isabel wondered what he was waiting for. She believed it was not to see Pansy; she had an impression that on the whole he would rather not see Pansy. It was of course to see herself alone; he had something to say to her. Isabel had no great wish to hear it, for she was afraid it would be an explanation, and she could perfectly dispense with explanations. Osmond, however, presently got

up, like a man of good taste, to whom it had occurred that so inveterate a visitor might wish to say just the last word of all to the ladies.

"I have a letter to write before dinner," he said; "you must excuse me. I will see if my daughter is disengaged, and if she is she shall know you are here. Of course, when you come to Rome, you will always look us up. Isabel will talk to you about the English expedition; she decides all those things."

The nod with which, instead of a hand-shake, he terminated this little speech was perhaps a rather meagre form of salutation; but on the whole it was all the occasion demanded. Isabel reflected that after he left the room Lord Warburton would have no pretext for saying, "Your husband is very angry," which would have been extremely disagreeable to her. Nevertheless, if he had done so, she would have said, "Oh, don't be anxious. He does n't hate *you*; it's me that he hates!"

It was only when they had been left alone together that Lord Warburton showed a certain vague awkwardness, — sitting down in another chair, handling two or three of the objects that were near him. "I hope he will make Miss Osmond come," he presently remarked. "I want very much to see her."

"I'm glad it's the last time," said Isabel.

"So am I. She does n't care for me."

"No, she does n't care for you."

"I don't wonder at it," said Lord Warburton. Then he added, with inconsequence, "You will come to England, won't you?"

"I think we had better not."

"Ah, you owe me a visit. Don't you remember that you were to have come to Lockleigh once, and you never did?"

"Everything is changed since then," said Isabel.

“Not changed for the worse, surely, — as far as we are concerned. To see you under my roof” — and he hesitated a moment — “would be a great satisfaction.”

She had feared an explanation; but that was the only one that occurred. They talked a little of Ralph, and in another moment Pansy came in, already dressed for dinner, and with a little red spot in either cheek. She shook hands with Lord Warburton, and stood looking up into his face with a fixed smile, — a smile that Isabel knew, though his lordship probably never suspected it, to be near akin to a burst of tears.

“I am going away,” he said. “I want to bid you good-by.”

“Good-by, Lord Warburton.” The young girl’s voice trembled a little.

“And I want to tell you how much I wish you may be very happy.”

“Thank you, Lord Warburton,” Pansy answered.

He lingered a moment, and gave a glance at Isabel. “You ought to be very happy; you have got a guardian angel.”

“I am sure I shall be happy,” said Pansy, in the tone of a person whose certainties are always cheerful.

“Such a conviction as that will take you a great way. But if it should ever fall you, remember — remember” — and Lord Warburton stammered a little. “Think of me sometimes, you know,” he said, with a vague laugh. Then he shook hands with Isabel, in silence, and presently he was gone.

When he had left the room Isabel expected an effusion of tears from her step-daughter; but Pansy in fact treated her to something very different.

“I think you are my guardian angel!” she exclaimed, very sweetly.

Isabel shook her head. “I am not an angel of any kind. I am at the most your good friend.”

“You are a very good friend, then, to have asked papa to be gentle with me.”

“I have asked your father nothing,” said Isabel, wondering.

“He told me just now to come to the drawing-room, and then he gave me a very kind kiss.”

“Ah,” said Isabel, “that was quite his own idea!”

She recognized the idea perfectly; it was very characteristic, and she was to see a great deal more of it. Even with Pansy, Osmond could not put himself the least in the wrong. They were dining out that day, and after their dinner they went to another entertainment; so that it was not till late in the evening that Isabel saw him alone. When Pansy kissed him, before going to bed, he returned her embrace with even more than his usual munificence, and Isabel wondered whether he meant it as a hint that his daughter had been injured by the machinations of her step-mother. It was a partial expression, at any rate, of what he continued to expect of his wife. Isabel was about to follow Pansy, but he remarked that he wished she would remain; he had something to say to her. Then he walked about the drawing-room a little, while she stood waiting, in her cloak. “I don’t understand what you wish to do,” he said in a moment. “I should like to know, so that I may know how to act.”

“Just now I wish to go to bed. I am very tired.”

“Sit down and rest; I shall not keep you long. Not there; take a comfortable place.” And he arranged a multitude of cushions that were scattered in picturesque disorder upon a vast divan. This was not, however, where she seated herself; she dropped into the nearest chair. The fire had gone out; the lights in the great room were few. She drew her cloak about her; she felt mortally cold. “I think you are trying to humiliate me,” Osmond went on. “It’s a most absurd undertaking.”

“I have n’t the least idea what you mean,” said Isabel.

"You have played a very deep game; you have managed it beautifully."

"What is it that I have managed?"

"You have not quite settled it, however; we shall see him again." And he stopped in front of her, with his hands in his pockets, looking down at her thoughtfully, in his usual way, which seemed meant to let her know that she was not an object, but only a rather disagreeable incident, of thought.

"If you mean that Lord Warburton is under an obligation to come back, you are wrong," Isabel said. "He is under none whatever."

"That's just what I complain of. But when I say he will come back, I don't mean that he will come from a sense of duty."

"There is nothing else to make him. I think he has quite exhausted Rome."

"Ah, no, that's a shallow judgment. Rome is inexhaustible." And Osmond began to walk about again. "However, about that, perhaps, there is no hurry," he added. "It's rather a good idea of his that we should go to England. If it were not for the fear of finding your cousin there, I think I should try to persuade you."

"It may be that you will not find my cousin," said Isabel.

"I should like to be sure of it. However, I shall be as sure as possible. At the same time, I should like to see his house, that you told me so much about at one time, — what do you call it? — Gardencourt. It must be a charming thing. And then, you know, I have a devotion to the memory of your uncle; you made me take a great fancy to him. I should like to see where he lived and died. That, however, is a detail. Your friend was right; Pansy ought to see England."

"I have no doubt she would enjoy it," said Isabel.

"But that's a long time hence. Next autumn is far off," Osmond continued; "and meantime there are things that

more nearly interest us. Do you think me so very proud?" he asked, suddenly.

"I think you very strange."

"You don't understand me."

"No, not even when you insult me."

"I don't insult you; I am incapable of it. I merely speak of certain facts, and if the allusion is an injury to you the fault is not mine. It is surely a fact that you have kept all this matter quite in your own hands."

"Are you going back to Lord Warburton?" Isabel asked. "I am very tired of his name."

"You shall hear it again before we have done with it."

She had spoken of his insulting her, but it suddenly seemed to her that this ceased to be a pain. He was going down, down: the vision of such a fall made her almost giddy; that was the only pain. He was too strange, too different; he did n't touch her. Still, the working of his strange passion was extraordinary, and she felt a rising curiosity to know in what light he saw himself justified. "I might say to you that I judge you have nothing to say to me that is worth hearing," she rejoined, in a moment. "But I should perhaps be wrong. There is a thing that would be worth my hearing, — to know in the plainest words of what it is you accuse me."

"Of preventing Pansy's marriage to Warburton. Are those words plain enough?"

"On the contrary, I took a great interest in it. I told you so; and when you told me that you counted on me — that, I think, was what you said — I accepted the obligation. I was a fool to do so, but I did it."

"You pretended to do it, and you even pretended reluctance, to make me more willing to trust you. Then you began to use your ingenuity to get him out of the way."

"I think I see what you mean," said Isabel.

"Where is the letter that you told me he had written me?" her husband asked.

"I have n't the least idea; I have n't asked him."

"You stopped it on the way," said Osmond.

Isabel slowly got up; standing there, in her white cloak, which covered her to her feet, she might have represented the angel of disdain, first-cousin to that of pity. "Oh, Osmond, for a man that was so fine!" she exclaimed, in a long murmur.

"I was never so fine as you! You have done everything you wanted. You have got him out of the way without appearing to do so, and you have placed me in the position in which you wished to behold me, — that of a man who tried to marry his daughter to a lord, but did n't succeed."

"Pansy does n't care for him; she is very glad he is gone," said Isabel.

"That has nothing to do with the matter."

"And he does n't care for Pansy."

"That won't do; you told me he did. I don't know why you wanted this particular satisfaction," Osmond continued; "you might have taken some other. It does n't seem to me that I have been presumptuous, — that I have taken too much for granted. I have been very modest about it, very quiet. The idea did n't originate with me. He began to show that he liked her before I ever thought of it. I left it all to you."

"Yes, you were very glad to leave it to me. After this you must attend to such things yourself."

He looked at her a moment, and then he turned away. "I thought you were very fond of my daughter."

"I have never been more so than today."

"Your affection is attended with immense limitations. However, that, perhaps, is natural."

"Is this all you wished to say to

me?" Isabel asked, taking a candle that stood on one of the tables.

"Are you satisfied? Am I sufficiently disappointed?"

"I don't think that on the whole you are disappointed. You have had another opportunity to try to bewilder me."

"It's not that. It's proved that Pansy can aim high."

"Poor little Pansy!" said Isabel, turning away with her candle.

XLVI.

It was from Henrietta Stackpole that she learned that Caspar Goodwood had come to Rome, — an event that took place three days after Lord Warburton's departure. This latter event had been preceded by an incident of some importance to Isabel, — the temporary absence, once again, of Madame Merle, who had gone to Naples to stay with a friend, the happy possessor of a villa at Posilippo. Madame Merle had ceased to minister to Isabel's happiness, who found herself wondering whether the most discreet of women might not also by chance be the most dangerous. Sometimes, at night, she had strange visions: she seemed to see her husband and Madame Merle in dim, indistinguishable combination. It seemed to her that she had not done with her; this lady had something in reserve. Isabel's imagination applied itself actively to this elusive point, but every now and then it was checked by a nameless dread; so that when her brilliant friend was away from Rome she had almost a consciousness of respite. She had already learned from Miss Stackpole that Caspar Goodwood was in Europe, Henrietta having written to inform her of this fact immediately after meeting him in Paris. He himself never wrote to Isabel, and, though he was in Europe, she thought it very possible he might not desire to see her. Their last interview, before her

marriage, had had quite the character of a complete rupture; if she remembered rightly, he had said he wished to take his last look at her. Since then he had been the most inharmonious survival of her earlier time, — the only one, in fact, with which a permanent pain was associated. He left her, that morning, with the sense of an unnecessary shock; it was like a collision between vessels in broad daylight. There had been no mist, no hidden current, to excuse it, and she herself had only wished to steer skillfully. He had bumped against her prow, however, while her hand was on the tiller, and, to complete the metaphor, had given the lighter vessel a strain, which still occasionally betrayed itself in a faint creaking. It had been painful to see him, because he represented the only serious harm that, to her belief, she had ever done in the world; he was the only person with an unsatisfied claim upon her. She had made him unhappy, — she could n't help it; and his unhappiness was a great reality. She cried with rage, after he had left her, at — she hardly knew what: she tried to think it was his want of consideration. He had come to her with his unhappiness when her own bliss was so perfect; he had done his best to darken the brightness of these pure rays. He had not been violent, and yet there was a violence in that. There was a violence, at any rate, in something, somewhere; perhaps it was only in her own fit of weeping, and that after-sense of it which lasted for three or four days. The effect of Caspar Goodwood's visit faded away, and during the first year of Isabel's marriage he dropped out of her books. He was a thankless subject of reference; it was disagreeable to have to think of a person who was unhappy on your account, and whom you could do nothing to relieve. It would have been different if she had been able to doubt, even a little, of his unhappiness, as she doubted of Lord Warburton's; unfor-

tunately it was beyond question, and this aggressive, uncompromising look of it was just what made it unattractive. She could never say to herself that Caspar Goodwood had great compensations, as she was able to say in the case of her English suitor. She had no faith in his compensations, and no esteem for them. A cotton-factory was not a compensation for anything, — least of all for having failed to marry Isabel Archer. And yet, beyond that, she hardly knew what he had, save of course his intrinsic qualities. Oh, he was intrinsic enough; she never thought of his even looking for artificial aids. If he extended his business, — that, to the best of her belief, was the only form exertion could take with him, — it would be because it was an enterprising thing, or good for the business; not in the least because he might hope it would overlay the past. This gave his figure a kind of bareness and bleakness, which made the accident of meeting it in one's meditations always a sort of shock; it was deficient in the social drapery which muffles the sharpness of human contact. His perfect silence, moreover, the fact that she never heard from him and very seldom heard any mention of him, deepened this impression of his loneliness. She asked Lily for news of him, from time to time. But Lily knew nothing about Boston; her imagination was confined within the limits of Manhattan. As time went on, Isabel thought of him oftener, and with fewer restrictions; she had more than once the idea of writing to him. She had never told her husband about him, — never let Osmond know of his visits to her in Florence; a reserve not dictated in the early period by a want of confidence in Osmond, but simply by the consideration that Caspar Goodwood's disappointment was not her secret, but his own. It would be wrong of her, she believed, to convey it to another, and Mr. Goodwood's affairs could have, after all, but little interest for

Gilbert. When it came to the point she never wrote to him; it seemed to her that, considering his grievance, the least she could do was to let him alone. Nevertheless, she would have been glad to be in some way nearer to him. It was not that it ever occurred to her that she might have married him; even after the consequences of her marriage became vivid to her, that particular reflection, though she indulged in so many, had not the assurance to present itself. But when she found herself in trouble he became a member of that circle of things with which she wished to set herself right. I have related how passionately she desired to feel that her unhappiness should not have come to her through her own fault. She had no near prospect of dying, and yet she wished to make her peace with the world, — to put her spiritual affairs in order. It came back to her, from time to time, that there was an account still to be settled with Caspar Goodwood; it seemed to her that she would settle it to-day on terms easy for him. Still, when she learned that he was coming to Rome she felt afraid; it would be more disagreeable for him than for any one else to learn that she was unhappy. Deep in her breast she believed that he had invested his all in her happiness, while the others had invested only a part. He was one more person from whom she should have to conceal her misery. She was reassured, however, after he arrived in Rome, for he spent several days without coming to see her.

Henrietta Stackpole, it may well be imagined, was much more punctual, and Isabel was largely favored with the society of her friend. Isabel threw herself into it, for now that she had made such a point of keeping her conscience clear, that was one way of proving that she had not been superficial, — the more so that the years, in their flight, had rather enriched than blighted those peculiarities which had been humorously

criticised by persons less interested than Isabel, and were striking enough to give friendship a spice of heroism. Henrietta was as keen and quick and fresh as ever, and as neat and bright and fair. Her eye had lost none of its serenity, her toilet none of its crispness, her opinions none of their national flavor. She was by no means quite unchanged, however; it seemed to Isabel that she had grown restless. Of old she had never been restless; though she was perpetually in motion, it was impossible to be more deliberate. She had a reason for everything she did; she fairly bristled with motives. Formerly, when she came to Europe, it was because she wished to see it; but now, having already seen it, she had no such excuse. She did not for a moment pretend that the desire to examine decaying civilizations had anything to do with her present enterprise; her journey was rather an expression of her independence of the Old World than of a sense of further obligations to it. "It's nothing to come to Europe," she said to Isabel; "it does n't seem to me one needs so many reasons for that. It is something to stay at home; this is much more important." It was not, therefore, with a sense of doing anything very important that she treated herself to another pilgrimage to Rome. She had seen the place before, and carefully inspected it; the actual episode was simply a sign of familiarity, of one's knowing all about it, of one's having as good a right as any one else to be there. This was all very well, and Henrietta was restless; she had a perfect right to be restless, too, if one came to that. But she had after all a better reason for coming to Rome than that she cared for it so little. Isabel easily recognized it, and with it the worth of her friend's fidelity. She had crossed the stormy ocean in midwinter because she guessed that Isabel was unhappy. Henrietta guessed a great deal, but she had never guessed so happily as

that. Isabel's satisfactions just now were few, but even if they had been more numerous, there would still have been something of individual joy in her sense of being justified in having always thought highly of Henrietta. She had made large concessions with regard to her, but she had insisted that, with all abatements, she was very valuable. It was not her own triumph, however, that Isabel found good; it was simply the relief of confessing to Henrietta, the first person to whom she had owned it, that she was not contented. Henrietta had herself approached this point with the smallest possible delay, and had accused her to her face of being miserable. She was a woman, she was a sister; she was not Ralph, nor Lord Warburton, nor Caspar Goodwood, and Isabel could speak.

"Yes, I am miserable," she said, very gently. She hated to hear herself say it; she tried to say it as judicially as possible.

"What does he do to you?" Henrietta asked, frowning as if she were inquiring into the operations of a quack doctor.

"He does nothing. But he does n't like me."

"He's very difficult!" cried Miss Stackpole. "Why don't you leave him?"

"I can't change, that way," Isabel said.

"Why not, I should like to know? You won't confess that you have made a mistake. You are too proud."

"I don't know whether I am too proud. But I can't publish my mistake. I don't think that's decent. I would much rather die."

"You won't think so always," said Henrietta.

"I don't know what great unhappiness might bring me to; but it seems to me I shall always be ashamed. One must accept one's deeds. I married him before all the world; I was perfectly

free; it was impossible to do anything more deliberate. One can't change, that way," Isabel repeated.

"You have changed, in spite of the impossibility. I hope you don't mean to say that you like him."

Isabel hesitated a moment. "No, I don't like him. I can tell you, because I am weary of my secret. But that's enough; I can't tell all the world."

Henrietta gave a rich laugh. "Don't you think you are rather too considerate?"

"It's not of him that I am considerate; it's of myself!" Isabel answered.

It was not surprising that Gilbert Osmond should not have taken comfort in Miss Stackpole; his instinct had naturally set him in opposition to a young lady capable of advising his wife to withdraw from the conjugal mansion. When she arrived in Rome he said to Isabel that he hoped she would leave her friend the interviewer alone; and Isabel answered that he at least had nothing to fear from her. She said to Henrietta that, as Osmond did n't like her, she could not invite her to dine; but they could easily see each other in other ways. Isabel received Miss Stackpole freely in her own sitting-room, and took her repeatedly to drive, face to face with Pansy, who, bending a little forward, on the opposite seat of the carriage, gazed at the celebrated authoress with a respectful attention which Henrietta occasionally found irritating. She complained to Isabel that Miss Osmond had a little look as if she should remember everything one said. "I don't want to be remembered that way," Miss Stackpole declared; "I consider that my conversation refers only to the moment, like the morning papers. Your step-daughter, as she sits there, looks as if she kept all the back numbers, and would bring them out some day against me." She could not bring herself to think favorably of Pansy, whose absence of initiation, of conversation, and of per-

sonal claims seemed to her, in a girl of twenty, unnatural and even sinister. Isabel presently saw that Osmond would have liked her to urge a little the cause of her friend, insist a little upon his receiving her, so that he might appear to suffer for good manners' sake. Her immediate acceptance of his objections put him too much in the wrong, — it being in effect one of the disadvantages of expressing contempt that you cannot enjoy at the same time the credit of expressing sympathy. Osmond held to his credit, and yet he held to his objections, all of which were elements difficult to reconcile. The right thing would have been that Miss Stackpole should come to dine at the Palazzo Roccanera once or twice, so that in spite of his superficial civility, always so great, she might judge for herself how little pleasure it gave him. From the moment, however, that both the ladies were so unaccommodating, there was nothing for Osmond but to wish that Henrietta would take herself off. It was surprising how little satisfaction he got from his wife's friends; he took occasion to call Isabel's attention to it.

"You are certainly not fortunate in your intimates; I wish you might make a new collection," he said to her one morning, in reference to nothing visible at the moment, but in a tone of ripe reflection which deprived the remark of all brutal abruptness. "It's as if you had taken the trouble to pick out the people in the world that I have least in common with. Your cousin I have always thought a conceited ass, besides his being the most ill-favored animal I know. Then it's insufferably tiresome that one can't tell him so; one must spare him on account of his health. His health seems to me the best part of him; it gives him privileges enjoyed by no one else. If he is so desperately ill there is only one way to prove it; but he seems to have no mind for that. I can't say much more for the great War-

burton. When one really thinks of it, the cool insolence of that performance was something rare! He comes and looks at one's daughter as if she were a suite of apartments; he tries the door-handles and looks out of the windows, raps on the walls, and almost thinks he will take the place. Will you be so good as to draw up a lease? Then, on the whole, he decides that the rooms are too small; he does n't think he could live on a third floor; he must look out for a *piano nobile*. And he goes away, after having got a month's lodging in the poor little apartment for nothing. Miss Stackpole, however, is your most wonderful invention. She strikes me as a kind of monster. One has n't a nerve in one's body that she does n't set quivering. You know I never have admitted that she is a woman. Do you know what she reminds me of? Of a new steel pen, — the most odious thing in nature. She talks as a steel pen writes; are n't her letters, by the way, on ruled paper? She thinks and moves, and walks and looks, exactly as she talks. You may say that she does n't hurt me, inasmuch as I don't see her. I don't see her, but I hear her; I hear her all day long. Her voice is in my ears; I can't get rid of it. I know exactly what she says, and every inflection of the tone in which she says it. She says charming things about me, and they give you great comfort. I don't like at all to think she talks about me; I feel as I should feel if I knew the footman were wearing my hat!"

Henrietta talked about Gilbert Osmond, as his wife assured him, rather less than he suspected. She had plenty of other subjects, in two of which the reader may be supposed to be especially interested. She let Isabel know that Caspar Goodwood had discovered for himself that she was unhappy, though indeed her ingenuity was unable to suggest what comfort he hoped to give her by coming to Rome, and yet not calling on her. They met him twice in the street, but he had

no appearance of seeing them; they were driving, and he had a habit of looking straight in front of him, as if he proposed to contemplate but one object at a time. Isabel could have fancied she had seen him the day before; it must have been with just that face and step that he walked out of Mrs. Touchett's door at the close of their last interview. He was dressed just as he had been dressed on that day, — Isabel remembered the color of his cravat; and yet, in spite of this familiar look, there was a strangeness in his figure, too, — something that made her feel afresh that it was rather terrible he should have come to Rome. He looked bigger and more overtopping than of old, and in those days he certainly was lofty enough. She noticed that the people whom he passed looked back after him, but he went straight forward, lifting above them a face like a February sky.

Henry James, Jr.

POST PRANDIAL.

PHI BETA KAPPA.

1881.

“THE Dutch have taken Holland,” — so the schoolboys used to say;
 The Dutch have taken Harvard, — no doubt of that to-day!
 For the Wendells were low Dutchmen, and all their vrows were Vans
 And the Breitmanns are high Dutchmen, and here is honest Hans.

Mynheers, you both are welcome! Fair cousin Wendell P.,
 Our ancestors were dwellers beside the Zuyder Zee;
 Both Grotius and Erasmus were countrymen of we,
 And Vondel was our namesake, though he spelt it with a V.

It is well old Evert Jansen sought a dwelling over sea
 On the margin of the Hudson, where he sampled you and me
 Through our grandsires and great grandsires, for you would n't quite agree
 With the steady-going burghers along the Zuyder Zee.

Like our Motley's John of Barnveld, you have always been inclined
 To speak, — well, — somewhat frankly, — to let us know your mind,
 And the Mynheers would have told you to be cautious what you said,
 Or else that silver tongue of yours might cost your precious head.

But we're very glad you've kept it; it was always Freedom's own,
 And whenever Reason chose it she found a royal throne;
 You have whacked us with your sceptre; our backs were little harmed,
 And while we rubbed our bruises we owned we had been charmed.

And you, our *quasi* Dutchman, what welcome should be yours
 For all the wise prescriptions that work your laughter-cures?