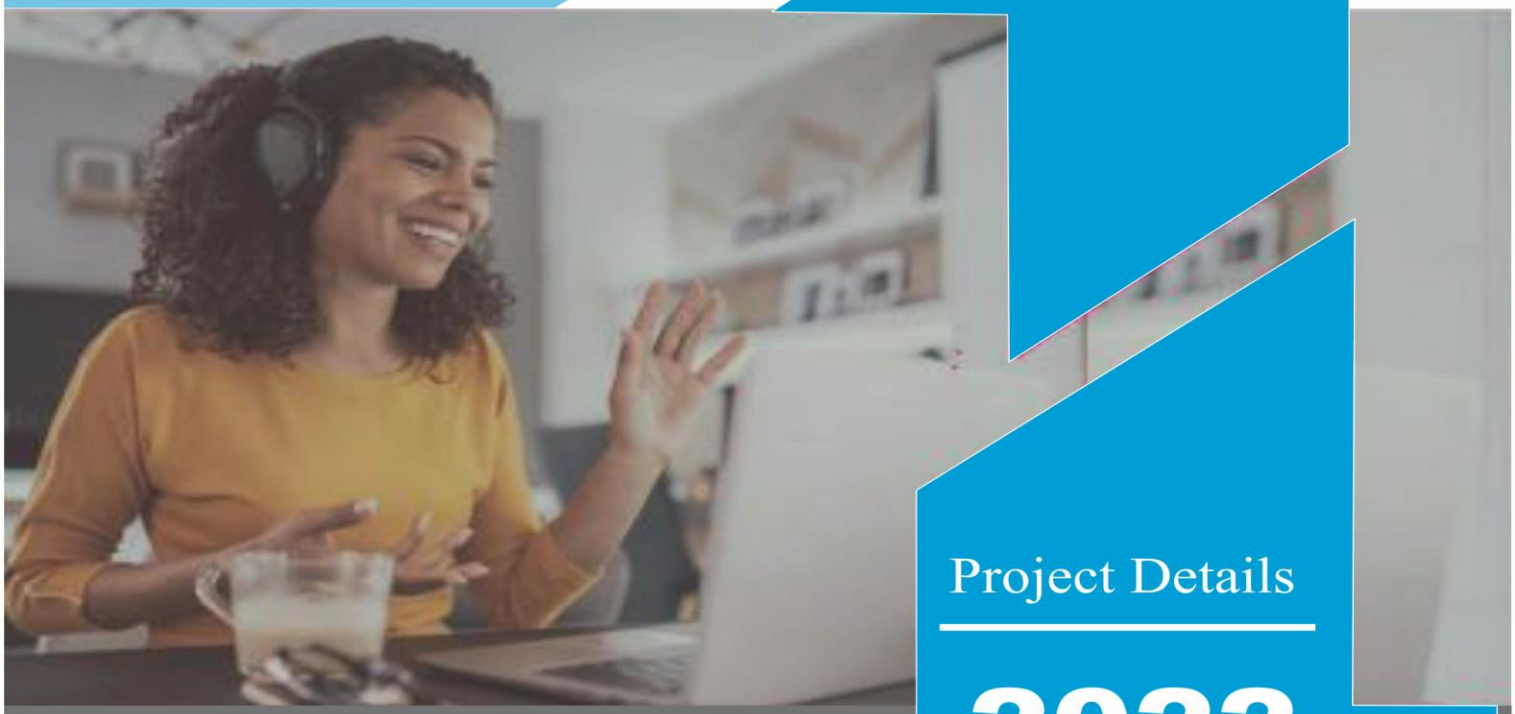

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A Little Journey In The World

By Charles Dudley Warner A

Little Journey In The World I

We were talking about the want of diversity in American life, the lack of salient characters. It was not at a club. It was a spontaneous talk of people who happened to be together, and who had fallen into an uncompelled habit of happening to be together. There might have been a club for the study of the Want of Diversity in American Life. The members would have been obliged to set apart a stated time for it, to attend as a duty, and to be in a mood to discuss this topic at a set hour in the future. They would have mortgaged another precious portion of the little time left us for individual life. It is a suggestive thought that at a given hour all over the United States innumerable clubs might be considering the Want of Diversity in American Life. Only in this way, according to our present methods, could one expect to accomplish anything in regard to this foreign-felt want. It seems illogical that we could produce diversity by all doing the same thing at the same time, but we know the value of congregate effort. It seems to superficial observers that all Americans are born busy. It is not so. They are born with a fear of not being busy; and if they are intelligent and in circumstances of leisure, they have such a sense of their responsibility that they hasten to allot all their time into portions, and leave no hour unprovided for. This is conscientiousness in women, and not restlessness. There is a day for music, a day for painting, a day for the display of tea gowns, a day for Dante, a day for the Greek drama, a day for the Dumb Animals' Aid Society, a day for the Society for the

Propagation of Indians, and so on. When the year is over, the amount that has been accomplished by this incessant activity can hardly be estimated. Individually it may not be much. But consider where Chaucer would be but for the work of the Chaucer clubs, and what an effect upon the universal progress of things is produced by the associate concentration upon the poet of so many minds. A cynic says that clubs and circles are for the accumulation of superficial information and unloading it on others, without much individual absorption in anybody. This, like all cynicism, contains only a half-truth, and simply means that the general diffusion of half-digested information does not raise the general level of intelligence, which can only be raised to any purpose by thorough self-culture, by assimilation, digestion, meditation. The busy bee is a favorite simile with us, and we are apt to overlook the fact that the least important part of his example is buzzing around. If the hive simply got together and buzzed, or even brought unrefined treacle from some cyclopaedia, let us say, of treacle, there would be no honey added to the general store. It occurred to some one in this talk at last to deny that there was this tiresome monotony in American life. And this put a new face on the discussion. Why should there be, with every race under the heavens represented here, and each one struggling to assert itself, and no homogeneity as yet established even between the people of the oldest States? The theory is that democracy levels, and that the anxious pursuit of a common object, money, tends to

uniformity, and that facility of communication spreads all over the land the same fashion in dress; and repeats everywhere the same style of house, and that the public schools give all the children in the United States the same superficial smartness. And there is a more serious notion, that in a society without classes there is a sort of tyranny of public opinion which crushes out the play of individual peculiarities, without which human intercourse is uninteresting. It is true that a democracy is intolerant of variations from the general level, and that a new society allows less latitude in eccentricities to its members than an old society. But with all these allowances, it is also admitted that the difficulty the American novelist has is in hitting upon what is universally accepted as characteristic of American life, so various are the types in regions widely separated from each other, such different points of view are had even in conventionalities, and conscience operates so variously on moral problems in one community and another. It is as impossible for one section to impose upon another its rules of taste and propriety in conduct and taste is often as strong to determine conduct as principle as it is to make its literature acceptable to the other. If in the land of the sun and the jasmine and the alligator and the fig, the literature of New England seems passionless and timid in face of the ruling emotions of life, ought we not to thank Heaven for the diversity of temperament as well as of climate which will in the long-run save us from that sameness into which we are supposed to be

drifting? When I think of this vast country with any attention to local developments I am more impressed with the unlikenesses than with the resemblances. And besides this, if one had the ability to draw to the life a single individual in the most homogeneous community, the product would be sufficiently startling. We cannot flatter ourselves, therefore, that under equal laws and opportunities we have rubbed out the saliencies of human nature. At a distance the mass of the Russian people seem as monotonous as their steppes and their commune villages, but the Russian novelists find characters in this mass perfectly individualized, and, indeed, give us the impression that all Russians are irregular polygons. Perhaps if our novelists looked at individuals as intently, they might give the world the impression that social life here is as unpleasant as it appears in the novels to be in Russia. This is partly the substance of what was said one winter evening before the wood fire in the library of a house in Brandon, one of the lesser New England cities. Like hundreds of residences of its kind, it stood in the suburbs, amid forest-trees, commanding a view of city spires and towers on the one hand, and on the other of a broken country of clustering trees and cottages, rising towards a range of hills which showed purple and warm against the pale strawcolor of the winter sunsets. The charm of the situation was that the house was one of many comfortable dwellings, each isolated, and yet near enough together to form a neighborhood; that is to say, a body of neighbors who respected each other's privacy,

and yet flowed together, on occasion, without the least conventionality. And a real neighborhood, as our modern life is arranged, is becoming more and more rare. I am not sure that the talkers in this conversation expressed their real, final sentiments, or that they should be held accountable for what they said. Nothing so surely kills the freedom of talk as to have some matter-of-fact person instantly bring you to book for some impulsive remark flashed out on the instant, instead of playing with it and tossing it about in a way that shall expose its absurdity or show its value. Freedom is lost with too much responsibility and seriousness, and the truth is more likely to be struck out in a lively play of assertion and retort than when all the words and sentiments are weighed. A person very likely cannot tell what he does think till his thoughts are exposed to the air, and it is the bright fallacies and impulsive, rash ventures in conversation that are often most fruitful to talker and listeners. The talk is always tame if no one dares anything. I have seen the most promising paradox come to grief by a simple "Do you think so?" Nobody, I sometimes think, should be held accountable for anything said in private conversation, the vivacity of which is in a tentative play about the subject. And this is a sufficient reason why one should repudiate any private conversation reported in the newspapers. It is bad enough to be held fast forever to what one writes and prints, but to shackle a man with all his flashing utterances, which may be put into his mouth by some imp in the air, is intolerable

slavery. A man had better be silent if he can only say today what he will stand by tomorrow, or if he may not launch into the general talk the whim and fancy of the moment. Racy, entertaining talk is only exposed thought, and no one would hold a man responsible for the thronging thoughts that contradict and displace each other in his mind. Probably no one ever actually makes up his mind until he either acts or puts out his conclusion beyond his recall. Why should one be debarred the privilege of pitching his crude ideas into a conversation where they may have a chance of being precipitated? I remember that Morgan said in this talk that there was too much diversity. "Almost every church has trouble with it the different social conditions." An Englishman who was present pricked-up his ears at this, as if he expected to obtain a note on the character of Dissenters. "I thought all the churches here were organized on social affinities?" he inquired. "Oh, no; it is a good deal a matter of vicinage. When there is a real-estate extension, a necessary part of the plan is to build a church in the centre of it, in order to " "I declare, Page," said Mrs. Morgan, "you'll give Mr. Lyon a totally erroneous notion. Of course there must be a church convenient to the worshipers in every district." "That is just what I was saying, my dear: As the settlement is not drawn together on religious grounds, but perhaps by purely worldly motives, the elements that meet in the church are apt to be socially incongruous, such as cannot always be fused even by a churchkitchen and a church-parlor."

"Then it isn't the peculiarity of the church that has attracted to it worshipers who would naturally come together, but the church is a neighborhood necessity?" still further inquired Mr. Lyon. "All is," I ventured to put in, "that churches grow up like schoolhouses, where they are wanted." "I beg your pardon," said Mr. Morgan; "I'm talking about the kind of want that creates them. If it's the same that builds a music hall, or a gymnasium, or a railway waiting-room, I've nothing more to say." "Is it your American idea, then, that a church ought to be formed only of people socially agreeable together?" asked the Englishman. "I have no American idea. I am only commenting on facts; but one of them is that it is the most difficult thing in the world to reconcile religious association with the real or artificial claims of social life." "I don't think you try much," said Mrs. Morgan, who carried along her traditional religious observance with grateful admiration of her husband. Mr. Page Morgan had inherited money, and a certain advantageous position for observing life and criticising it, humorously sometimes, and without any serious intention of disturbing it. He had added to his fair fortune by marrying the daintily reared daughter of a cotton-spinner, and he had enough to do in attending meetings of directors and looking out for his investments to keep him from the operation of the State law regarding vagrants, and give greater social weight to his opinions than if he had been compelled to work for his maintenance. The Page Morgans had been a good deal abroad,

and were none the worse Americans for having come in contact with the knowledge that there are other peoples who are reasonably prosperous and happy without any of our advantages. "It seems to me," said Mr. Lyon, who was always in the conversational attitude of wanting to know, "that you Americans are disturbed by the notion that religion ought to produce social equality." Mr. Lyon had the air of conveying the impression that this question was settled in England, and that America was interesting on account of numerous experiments of this sort. This state of mind was not offensive to his interlocutors, because they were accustomed to it in transatlantic visitors. Indeed, there was nothing whatever offensive, and little defensive, in Mr. John Lyon. What we liked in him, I think, was his simple acceptance of a position that required neither explanation nor apology a social condition that banished a sense of his own personality, and left him perfectly free to be absolutely truthful. Though an eldest son and next in succession to an earldom, he was still young. Fresh from Oxford and South Africa and Australia and British Columbia he had come to study the States with a view of perfecting himself for his duties as a legislator for the world when he should be called to the House of Peers. He did not treat himself like an earl, whatever consciousness he may have had that his prospective rank made it safe for him to flirt with the various forms of equality abroad in this generation. "I don't know what Christianity is expected to produce," Mr. Morgan replied, in a

meditative way; "but I have an idea that the early Christians in their assemblies all knew each other, having met elsewhere in social intercourse, or, if they were not acquainted, they lost sight of distinctions in one paramount interest. But then I don't suppose they were exactly civilized." "Were the Pilgrims and the Puritans?" asked Mrs. Fletcher, who now joined the talk, in which she had been a most animated and stimulating listener, her deep gray eyes dancing with intellectual pleasure. "I should not like to answer 'no' to a descendant of the Mayflower. Yes, they were highly civilized. And if we had adhered to their methods, we should have avoided a good deal of confusion. The meeting-house, you remember, had a committee for seating people according to their quality. They were very shrewd, but it had not occurred to them to give the best pews to the sitters able to pay the most money for them. They escaped the perplexity of reconciling the mercantile and the religious ideas." "At any rate," said Mrs. Fletcher, "they got all sorts of people inside the same meeting-house." "Yes, and made them feel they were all sorts; but in those, days they were not much disturbed by that feeling." "Do you mean to say," asked Mr. Lyon, "that in this country you have churches for the rich and other churches for the poor?" "Not at all. We have in the cities rich churches and poor churches, with prices of pews according to the means of each sort, and the rich are always glad to have the poor come, and if they do not give them the best seats, they equalize it by taking up a collection

for them." "Mr. Lyon," Mrs. Morgan interrupted, "you are getting a travesty of the whole thing. I don't believe there is elsewhere in the world such a spirit of Christian charity as in our churches of all sects." "There is no doubt about the charity; but that doesn't seem to make the social machine run any more smoothly in the church associations. I'm not sure but we shall have to go back to the old idea of considering the churches places of worship, and not opportunities for sewing-societies, and the cultivation of social equality." "I found the idea in Rome," said Mr. Lyon, "that the United States is now the most promising field for the spread and permanence of the Roman Catholic faith." "How is that?" Mr. Fletcher asked, with a smile of Puritan incredulity. "A high functionary at the Propaganda gave as a reason that the United States is the most democratic country and the Roman Catholic is the most democratic religion, having this one notion that all men, high or low, are equally sinners and equally in need of one thing only. And I must say that in this country I don't find the question of social equality interfering much with the work in their churches." "That is because they are not trying to make this world any better, but only to prepare for another," said Mrs. Fletcher. "Now, we think that the nearer we approach the kingdom-ofheaven idea on earth, the better off we shall be hereafter. Is that a modern idea?" "It is an idea that is giving us a great deal of trouble. We've got into such a sophisticated state that it seems easier to take care of the future than of the present."

"And it isn't a very bad doctrine that if you take care of the present, the future will take care of itself," rejoined Mrs. Fletcher. "Yes, I know," insisted Mr. Morgan; "it's the modern notion of accumulation and compensation take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves the gospel of Benjamin Franklin." "Ah," I said, looking up at the entrance of a newcomer, "you are just in time, Margaret, to give the coup de grace, for it is evident by Mr. Morgan's reference, in his Bunker Hill position, to Franklin, that he is getting out of powder." The girl stood a moment, her slight figure framed in the doorway, while the company rose to greet her, with a halfhesitating, halfinquiring look in her bright face which I had seen in it a thousand times. II I remember that it came upon me with a sort of surprise at the moment that we had never thought or spoken much of Margaret Debree as beautiful. We were so accustomed to her; we had known her so long, we had known her always. We had never analyzed our admiration of her. She had so many qualities that are better than beauty that we had not credited her with the more obvious attraction. And perhaps she had just become visibly beautiful. It may be that there is an instant in a girl's life corresponding to what the Puritans called conversion in the soul, when the physical qualities, long maturing, suddenly glow in an effect which we call beauty. It cannot be that women do not have a consciousness of it, perhaps of the instant of its advent. I remember when I was a child that I used to think that a stick of

peppermint candy must burn with a consciousness of its own deliciousness. Margaret was just turned twenty. As she paused there in the doorway her physical perfection flashed upon me for the first time. Of course I do not mean perfection, for perfection has no promise in it, rather the sad note of limit, and presently recession. In the rounded, exquisite lines of her figure there was the promise of that ineffable fullness and delicacy of womanhood which all the world raves about and destroys and mourns. It is not fulfilled always in the most beautiful, and perhaps never except to the woman who loves passionately, and believes she is loved with a devotion that exalts her body and soul above every other human being. It is certain that Margaret's beauty was not classic. Her features were irregular even to piquancy. The chin had strength; the mouth was sensitive and not too small; the shapely nose with thin nostrils had an assertive quality that contradicted the impression of humility in the eyes when downcast; the large gray eyes were uncommonly soft and clear, an appearance of alternate tenderness and brilliancy as they were veiled or uncovered by the long lashes. They were gently commanding eyes, and no doubt her most effective point. Her abundant hair, brown with a touch of red in it in some lights, fell over her broad forehead in the fashion of the time. She had a way of carrying her head, of throwing it back at times, that was not exactly imperious, and conveyed the impression of spirit rather than of mere vivacity. These details seem to me all inadequate and

misleading, for the attraction of the face that made it interesting is still undefined. I hesitate to say that there was a dimple near the corner of her mouth that revealed itself when she smiled lest this shall seem mere prettiness, but it may have been the keynote of her face. I only knew there was something about it that won the heart, as a too conscious or assertive beauty never does. She may have been plain, and I may have seen the loveliness of her nature, which I knew well, in features that gave less sign of it to strangers. Yet I noticed that Mr. Lyon gave her a quick second glance, and his manner was instantly that of deference, or at least attention, which he had shown to no other lady in the room. And the whimsical idea came into my mind we are all so warped by international possibilities to observe whether she did not walk like a countess (that is, as a countess ought to walk) as she advanced to shake hands with my wife. It is so easy to turn life into a comedy! Margaret's great-grandmother no, it was her greatgreatgrandmother, but we have kept the Revolutionary period so warm lately that it seems near was a Newport belle, who married an officer in the suite of Rochambeau what time the French defenders of liberty conquered the women of Rhode Island. After the war was over, our officer resigned his love of glory for the heart of one of the loveliest women and the care of the best plantation on the Island. I have seen a miniature of her, which her lover wore at Yorktown, and which he always swore that Washington coveted a miniature painted by a wandering artist of the day, which

entirely justifies the French officer in his abandonment of the trade of a soldier. Such is man in his best estate. A charming face can make him campaign and fight and slay like a demon, can make a coward of him, can fill him with ambition to win the world, and can tame him into the domesticity of a drawing-room cat. There is this noble capacity in man to respond to the divinest thing visible to him in this world. Etienne Debree became, I believe, a very good citizen of the republic, and in '93 used occasionally to shake his head with satisfaction to find that it was still on his shoulders. I am not sure that he ever visited Mount Vernon, but after Washington's death Debree's intimacy with our first President became a more and more important part of his life and conversation. There is a pleasant tradition that Lafayette, when he was here in 1784, embraced the young bride in the French manner, and that this salute was valued as a sort of heirloom in the family. I always thought that Margaret inherited her New England conscience from her great-great-grandmother, and a certain esprit or gayety that is, a sub-gayety which was never frivolity from her French ancestor. Her father and mother had died when she was ten years old, and she had been reared by a maiden aunt, with whom she still lived. The combined fortunes of both required economy, and after Margaret had passed her school course she added to their resources by teaching in a public school. I remember that she taught history, following, I suppose, the American notion that any one can teach history who has a text book, just as he or she

can teach literature with the same help. But it happened that Margaret was a better teacher than many, because she had not learned history in school, but in her father's well-selected library. There was a little stir at Margaret's entrance; Mr. Lyon was introduced to her, and my wife, with that subtle feeling for effect which women have, slightly changed the lights. Perhaps Margaret's complexion or her black dress made this readjustment necessary to the harmony of the room. Perhaps she felt the presence of a different temperament in the little circle. I never can tell exactly what it is that guides her in regard to the influence of light and color upon the intercourse of people, upon their conversation, making it take one cast or another. Men are susceptible to these influences, but it is women alone who understand how to produce them. And a woman who has not this subtle feeling always lacks charm, however intellectual she may be; I always think of her as sitting in the glare of disenchanting sunlight as indifferent to the exposure as a man would be. I know in a general way that a sunset light induces one kind of talk and noonday light another, and I have learned that talk always brightens up with the addition of a fresh crackling stick to the fire. I shouldn't have known how to change the lights for Margaret, although I think I had as distinct an impression of her personality as had my wife. There was nothing disturbing in it; indeed, I never saw her otherwise than serene, even when her voice betrayed strong emotion. The quality that impressed me most, however, was

her sincerity, coupled with intellectual courage and clearness that had almost the effect of brilliancy, though I never thought of her as a brilliant woman. "What mischief have you been attempting, Mr. Morgan?" asked Margaret, as she took a chair near him. "Were you trying to make Mr. Lyon comfortable by dragging in
Bunker Hill?" "No; that was Mr. Fairchild, in his capacity as host." "Oh, I'm sure you needn't mind me," said Mr. Lyon, goodhumoredly. "I landed in Boston, and the first thing I went to see was the Monument. It struck me as so odd, you know, that the Americans should begin life by celebrating their first defeat." "That is our way," replied Margaret, quickly. "We have started on a new basis over here; we win by losing. He who loses his life shall find it. If the red slayer thinks he slays he is mistaken. You know the Southerners say that they surrendered at last simply because they got tired of beating the North." "How odd!" "Miss Debree simply means," I exclaimed, "that we have inherited from the English an inability to know when we are whipped." "But we were not fighting the battle of Bunker Hill, or fighting about it, which is more serious, Miss Debree. What I wanted to ask you was whether you think the domestication of religion will affect its power in the regulation of conduct." "Domestication? You are too deep for me, Mr. Morgan. I don't any more understand you than I comprehend the writers who write about the feminization of literature." "Well, taking the mystery out of it, the

predominant element of worship, making the churches sort of good-will charitable associations for the spread of sociability and good-feeling." "You mean making Christianity practical?" "Partially that. It is a part of the general problem of what women are going to make of the world, now they have got hold of it, or are getting hold of it, and are discontented with being women, or with being treated as women, and are bringing their emotions into all the avocations of life." "They cannot make it any worse than it has been." "I'm not sure of that. Robustness is needed in churches as much as in government. I don't know how much the cause of religion is advanced by these church clubs of Christian Endeavor if that is the name, associations of young boys and girls who go about visiting other like clubs in a sufficiently hilarious manner. I suppose it's the spirit of the age. I'm just wondering whether the world is getting to think more of having a good time than it is of salvation." "And you think woman's influence for you cannot mean anything else is somehow taking the vigor out of affairs, making even the church a soft, purring affair, reducing us all to what I suppose you would call a mush of domesticity." "Or femininity." "Well, the world has been brutal enough; it had better try a little femininity now." "I hope it will not be more cruel to women." "That is not an argument; that is a stab. I fancy you are altogether skeptical about woman. Do you believe in her education?" "Up to a certain point, or rather, I should say, after a certain point." "That's it," spoke up my wife, shading her eyes

from the fire with a fan. "I begin to have my doubts about education as a panacea. I've noticed that girls with only a smattering and most of them in the nature of things can go, no further are more liable to temptations." "That is because 'education' is mistaken for the giving of information without training, as we are finding out in England," said Mr. Lyon. "Or that it is dangerous to awaken the imagination without a heavy ballast of principle," said Mr. Morgan. "That is a beautiful sentiment," Margaret exclaimed, throwing back her head, with a flash from her eyes. "That ought to shut out women entirely. Only I cannot see how teaching women what men know is going to give them any less principle than men have. It has seemed to me a long while that the time has come for treating women like human beings, and giving them the responsibility of their position." "And what do you want, Margaret?" I asked. "I don't know exactly what I do want," she answered, sinking back in her chair, sincerity coming to modify her enthusiasm. "I don't want to go to Congress, or be a sheriff, or a lawyer, or a locomotive engineer. I want the freedom of my own being, to be interested in everything in the world, to feel its life as men do. You don't know what it is to have an inferior person condescend to you simply because he is a man." "Yet you wish to be treated as a woman?" queried Mr. Morgan. "Of course. Do you think I want to banish romance out of the world?" "You are right, my dear," said my wife. "The only thing that makes society any better than

an industrial ant-hill is the love between women and men, blind and destructive as it often is." "Well," said Mrs. Morgan, rising to go, "having got back to first principles " "You think it is best to take your husband home before he denies even them," Mr. Morgan added. When the others had gone, Margaret sat by the fire, musing, as if no one else were in the room. The Englishman, still alert and eager for information, regarded her with growing interest. It came into my mind as odd that, being such an uninteresting people as we are, the English should be so curious about us. After an interval, Mr. Lyon said: "I beg your pardon, Miss Debree, but would you mind telling me whether the movement of Women's Rights is gaining in America?" "I'm sure I don't know, Mr. Lyon," Margaret replied, after a pause, with a look of weariness. "I'm tired of all the talk about it. I wish men and women, every soul of them, would try to make the most of themselves, and see what would come of that." "But in some places they vote about schools, and you have conventions " "Did you ever attend any kind of convention yourself, Mr. Lyon?" "I? No. Why?" "Oh, nothing. Neither did I. But you have a right to, you know. I should like to ask you one question, Mr. Lyon," the girl, continued, rising. "Should be most obliged." "Why is it that so few English women marry Americans?" "I I never thought of that," he stammered, reddening. "Perhaps perhaps it's because of American women." "Thank you," said Margaret, with a little

courtesy. "It's very nice of you to say that. I can begin to see now why so many American women marry Englishmen." The Englishman blushed still more, and Margaret said good-night. It was quite evident the next day that Margaret had made an impression on our visitor, and that he was struggling with some new idea. "Did you say, Mrs. Fairchild," he asked my wife, "that Miss Debree is a teacher? It seems very odd." "No; I said she taught in one of our schools. I don't think she is exactly a teacher." "Not intending always to teach?" "I don't suppose she has any definite intentions, but I never think of her as a teacher." "She's so bright, and and interesting, don't you think? So American?" "Yes; Miss Debree is one of the exceptions." "Oh, I didn't mean that all American women were as clever as Miss Debree." "Thank you," said my wife. And Mr. Lyon looked as if he couldn't see why she should thank him. The cottage in which Margaret lived with her aunt, Miss Forsythe, was not far from our house. In summer it was very pretty, with its vine-shaded veranda across the front; and even in winter, with the inevitable raggedness of deciduous vines, it had an air of refinement, a promise which the cheerful interior more than fulfilled. Margaret's parting word to my wife the night before had been that she thought her aunt would like to see the "chrysalis earl," and as Mr. Lyon had expressed a desire to see something more of what he called the "gentry" of New England, my wife ended their afternoon walk at Miss Forsythe's. It was one of the winter

days which are rare in New England, but of which there had been a succession all through the Christmas holidays. Snow had not yet come, all the earth was brown and frozen, whichever way you looked the interlacing branches and twigs of the trees made a delicate lace-work, the sky was grayblue, and the low-sailing sun had just enough heat to evoke moisture from the frosty ground and suffuse the atmosphere into softness, in which all the landscape became poetic. The phenomenon known as "red sunsets" was faintly repeated in the greenish crimson glow along the violet hills, in which Venus burned like a jewel. There was a fire smoldering on the hearth in the room they entered, which seemed to be sitting-room, library, parlor, all in one; the old table of oak, too substantial for ornament, was strewn with late periodicals and pamphlets English, American, and French and with books which lay unarranged as they were thrown down from recent reading. In the centre was a bunch of red roses in a pale-blue Granada jug. Miss Forsythe rose from a seat in the western window, with a book in her hand, to greet her callers. She was slender, like Margaret, but taller, with soft brown eyes and hair streaked with gray, which, sweeping plainly aside from her forehead in a fashion then antiquated, contrasted finely with the flush of pink in her cheeks. This flush did not suggest youth, but rather ripeness, the tone that comes with the lines made in the face by gentle acceptance of the inevitable in life. In her quiet and self possessed manner there was a little note of graceful

timidity, not perhaps noticeable in itself, but in contrast with that unmistakable air of confidence which a woman married always has, and which in the unrefined becomes assertive, an exaggerated notion of her importance, of the value added to her opinions by the act of marriage. You can see it in her air the moment she walks away from the altar, keeping step to Mendelssohn's tune. Jack Sharpley says that she always seems to be saying, "Well, I've done it once for all." This assumption of the married must be one of the hardest things for single women to bear in their self-congratulating sisters. I have no doubt that Georgiana Forsythe was a charming girl, spirited and handsome; for the beauty of her years, almost pathetic in its dignity and self renunciation, could not have followed mere prettiness or a commonplace experience. What that had been I never inquired, but it had not soured her. She was not communicative nor confidential, I fancy, with any one, but she was always friendly and sympathetic to the trouble of others, and helpful in an undemonstrative way. If she herself had a secret feeling that her life was a failure, it never impressed her friends so, it was so even, and full of good offices and quiet enjoyment. Heaven only knows, however, the pathos of this apparently undisturbed life.

For did a woman ever live who would not give all the years of tasteless serenity, for one year, for one month, for one hour, of the uncalculating delirium of love poured out upon a man who returned it? It may be better for the world that there are these

women to whom life has still some mysteries, who are capable of illusions and the sweet sentimentality that grows out of a romance unrealized. Although the recent books were on Miss Forsythe's table, her tastes and culture were of the past age. She admired Emerson and Tennyson. One may keep current with the news of the world without changing his principles. I imagine that Miss Forsythe read without injury to herself the passionate and the pantheistic novels of the young women who have come forward in these days of emancipation to teach their grandmothers a new basis of morality, and to render meaningless all the consoling epitaphs on the mossy New England gravestones. She read Emerson for his sweet spirit, for his belief in love and friendship, her simple Congregationalist faith remaining undisturbed by his philosophy, from which she took only a habit of toleration. "Miss Debree has gone to church," she said, in answer to Mr. Lyon's glance around the room. "To vespers?" "I believe they call it that. Our evening meetings, you know, only begin at early candlelight." "And you do not belong to the Church?" "Oh, yes, to the ancient aristocratic church of colonial times," she replied, with a little smile of amusement. "My niece has stepped off Plymouth Rock." "And was your religion founded on Plymouth Rock?" "My niece says so when I rally her deserting the faith of her fathers," replied Miss Forsythe, laughing at the working of the Episcopalian mind. "I should like to understand about that; I mean about the position of

Dissenters in America." "I'm afraid I could not help you, Mr. Lyon. I fancy an Englishman would have to be born again, as the phrase used to be, to comprehend that." While Mr. Lyon was still unsatisfied on this point, he found the conversation shifted to the other side. Perhaps it was a new experience to him that women should lead and not follow in conversation. At any rate, it was an experience that put him at his ease. Miss Forsythe was a great admirer of Gladstone and of General Gordon, and she expressed her admiration with a knowledge that showed she had read the English newspapers. "Yet I confess I don't comprehend Gladstone's conduct with regard to Egypt and Gordon's relief," she said. "Perhaps," interposed my wife, "it would have been better for Gordon if he had trusted Providence more and Gladstone less." "I suppose it was Gladstone's humanity that made him hesitate." "To bombard Alexandria?" asked Mr. Lyon, with a look of asperity. "That was a mistake to be expected of a Tory, but not of Mr. Gladstone, who seems always seeking the broadest principles of justice in his statesmanship." "Yes, we regard Mr. Gladstone as a very great man, Miss Forsythe. He is broad enough. You know we consider him a rhetorical phenomenon. Unfortunately he always 'muffs' anything he touches." "I suspected," Miss
Forsythe replied, after a moment, "that party spirit ran as high in England as it does with us, and is as personal." Mr. Lyon disclaimed any personal feeling, and the talk drifted into a

comparison of English and American politics, mainly with reference to the social factor in English politics, which is so little an element here. In the midst of the talk Margaret came in. The brisk walk in the rosy twilight had heightened her color, and given her a glowing expression which her face had not the night before, and a tenderness and softness, an unworldliness, brought from the quiet hour in the church. "My lady comes at last, Timid and stepping fast, And hastening hither, Her modest eyes downcast." She greeted the stranger with a Puritan undemonstrativeness, and as if not exactly aware of his presence. "I should like to have gone to vespers if I had known," said Mr. Lyon, after an embarrassing pause. "Yes?" asked the girl, still abstractedly. "The world seems in a vesper mood," she added, looking out the west windows at the red sky and the evening star. In truth Nature herself at the moment suggested that talk was an impertinence. The callers rose to go, with an exchange of neighborhood friendliness and invitations. "I had no idea," said Mr. Lyon, as they walked homeward, "what the New World was like." III Mr. Lyon's invitation was for a week. Before the end of the week I was called to New York to consult Mr.
Henderson in regard to a railway investment in the West, which was turning out more permanent than profitable. Rodney Henderson the name later became very familiar to the public in connection with a certain Congressional investigation was a graduate of my own college, a New Hampshire boy, a lawyer by

profession, who practiced, as so many American lawyers do, in Wall Street, in political combinations, in Washington, in railways. He was already known as a rising man. When I returned Mr. Lyon was still at our house. I understood that my wife had persuaded him to extend his visit a proposal he was little reluctant to fall in with, so interested had he become in studying social life in America. I could well comprehend this, for we are all making a "study" of something in this age, simple enjoyment being considered an unworthy motive. I was glad to see that the young Englishman was improving himself, broadening his knowledge of life, and not wasting the golden hours of youth. Experience is what we all need, and though love or love-making cannot be called a novelty, there is something quite fresh about the study of it in the modern spirit. Mr. Lyon had made himself very agreeable to the little circle, not less by his inquiring spirit than by his unaffected manners, by a kind of simplicity which women recognize as unconscious, the result of an inherited habit of not thinking about one's position. In excess it may be very disagreeable, but when it is combined with genuine good-nature and no self-assertion, it is attractive. And although American women like a man who is aggressive towards the world and combative, there is the delight of novelty in one who has leisure to be agreeable, leisure for them, and who seems to their imagination to have a larger range in life than those who are driven by business one able to offer the peace and security of

something attained. There had been several little neighborhood entertainments, dinners at the Morgans' and at Mrs. Fletcher's, and an evening cup of tea at Miss Forsythe's. In fact Margaret and Mr. Lyon had been thrown much together. He had accompanied her to vespers, and they had taken a wintry walk or two together before the snow came. My wife had not managed it she assured me of that; but she had not felt authorized to interfere; and she had visited the public library and looked into the British Peerage. Men were so suspicious. Margaret was quite able to take care of herself. I admitted that, but I suggested that the Englishman was a stranger in a strange land, that he was far from home, and had perhaps a weakened sense of those powerful social influences which must, after all, control him in the end. The only response to this was, "I think, dear, you'd better wrap him up in cotton and send him back to his family." Among her other activities Margaret was interested in a mission school in the city, to which she devoted an occasional evening and Sunday afternoons. This was a new surprise for Mr. Lyon. Was this also a part of the restlessness of American life? At Mrs. Howe's german the other evening the girl had seemed wholly absorbed in dress, and the gayety of the serious formality of the occasion, feeling the responsibility of it scarcely less than the "leader." Yet her mind was evidently much occupied with the "condition of women," and she taught in a public school. He could not at all make it out. Was she any more serious about the

german than about the mission school? It seemed odd at her age to take life so seriously. And was she serious in all her various occupations, or only experimenting? There was a certain mocking humor in the girl that puzzled the Englishman still more. "I have not seen much of your life," he said one night to Mr. Morgan; "but aren't most American women a little restless, seeking an occupation?" "Perhaps they have that appearance; but about the same number find it, as formerly, in marriage." "But I mean, you know, do they look to marriage as an end so much?" "I don't know that they ever did look to marriage as anything but a means." "I can tell you, Mr. Lyon," my wife interrupted, "you will get no information out of Mr. Morgan; he is a scoffer." "Not at all, I do assure you," Morgan replied. "I am just a humble observer. I see that there is a change going on, but I cannot comprehend it. When I was young, girls used to go in for society; they danced their feet off from seventeen to twenty-one. I never heard anything about any occupation; they had their swing and their fling, and their flirtations; they appeared to be skimming off of those impressionable, joyous years the cream of life." "And you think that fitted them for the seriousness of life?" asked his wife. "Well, I am under the impression that very good women came out of that society. I got one out of that dancing crowd who has been serious enough for me." "And little enough you have profited by it," said Mrs. Morgan. "I'm content. But probably I'm old-fashioned. There is quite another spirit now.

Girls out of pinafores must begin seriously to consider some calling. All their flirtation from seventeen to twenty-one is with some occupation. All their dancing days they must go to college, or in some way lay the foundation for a useful life. I suppose it's all right. No doubt we shall have a much higher style of women in the future than we ever had in the past." "You allow nothing," said Mrs. Fletcher, "for the necessity of earning a living in these days of competition. Women never will come to their proper position in the world, even as companions of men, which you regard as their highest office, until they have the ability to be self-supporting." "Oh, I admitted the fact of the independence of women a long time ago. Every one does that before he comes to middle life. About the shifting all round of this burden of earning a living, I am not so sure. It does not appear yet to make competition any less; perhaps competition would disappear if everybody did earn his own living and no more. I wonder, by-theway, if the girls, the young women, of the class we seem to be discussing ever do earn as much as would pay the wages of the servants who are hired to do the housework in their places?" "That is a most ignoble suggestion," I could not help saying, "when you know that the object in modern life is the cultivation of the mind, the elevation of women, and men also, in intellectual life." "I suppose so. I should like to have asked Abigail Adams's opinion on the way to do it." "One would think," I said, "that you didn't know that the spinning-jenny and the

stockingknitter had been invented. Given these, the women's college was a matter of course." "Oh, I'm a believer in all kinds of machinery anything to save labor. Only, I have faith that neither the jenny nor the college will change human nature, nor take the romance out of life." "So have I," said my wife. "I've heard two things affirmed: that women who receive a scientific or professional education lose their faith, become usually agnostics, having lost sensitiveness to the mysteries of life." "And you think, therefore, that they should not have a scientific education?" "No, unless all scientific prying into things is a mistake. Women may be more likely at first to be upset than men, but they will recover their balance when the novelty is worn off. No amount of science will entirely change their emotional nature; and besides, with all our science, I don't see that the supernatural has any less hold on this generation than on the former." "Yes, and you might say the world was never before so credulous as it is now. But what was the other thing?" "Why, that co-education is likely to diminish marriages among the co educated. Daily familiarity in the classroom at the most impressionable age, revelation of all the intellectual weaknesses and petulances, absorption of mental routine on an equality, tend to destroy the sense of romance and mystery that are the most powerful attractions between the sexes. It is a sort of disenchanting familiarity that rubs off the bloom." "Have you any statistics on the subject?" "No. I fancy it is only a notion of some old fogy who thinks

education in any form is dangerous for women." "Yes, and I fancy that coeducation will have about as much effect on life generally as that solemn meeting of a society of intelligent and fashionable women recently in one of our great cities, who met to discuss the advisability of limiting population." "Great Scott!" I exclaimed, "this is an interesting age." I was less anxious about the vagaries of it when I saw the very oldfashioned way in which the international drama was going on in our neighborhood. Mr. Lyon was increasingly interested in Margaret's mission work. Nor was there much affectation in this. Philanthropy, anxiety about the working-classes, is nowhere more serious or in the fashion than it is in London. Mr. Lyon, wherever he had been, had made a special study of the various aid and relief societies, especially of the work for young waifs and strays. One Sunday afternoon they were returning from the Bloom Street Mission. Snow covered the ground, the sky was leaden, and the air had a penetrating chill in it far more disagreeable than extreme cold. "We also," Mr. Lyon was saying, in continuation of a conversation, "are making a great effort for the common people." "But we haven't any common people here," replied Margaret, quickly. "That bright boy you noticed in my class, who was a terror six months ago, will no doubt be in the City Council in a few years, and likely enough mayor." "Oh, I know your theory. It practically comes to the same thing, whatever you call it. I couldn't see that the work in New York differed much from that in London. We who have

leisure ought to do something for the working-classes." "I sometimes doubt if it is not all a mistake most of our charitable work. The thing is to get people to do something for themselves." "But you cannot do away with distinctions?" "I suppose not, so long as so many people are born vicious, or incompetent, or lazy. But, Mr. Lyon, how much good do you suppose condescending charity does?" asked Margaret, firing up in a way the girl had at times. "I mean the sort that makes the distinctions more evident. The very fact that you have leisure to meddle in their affairs may be an annoyance to the folks you try to help by the little palliatives of charity. What effect upon a wretched city neighborhood do you suppose is produced by the advent in it of a stylish carriage and a lady in silk, or even the coming of a welldressed, prosperous woman in a horse-car, however gentle and unassuming she may be in this distribution of sympathy and bounty? Isn't the feeling of inequality intensified? And the degrading part of it may be that so many are willing to accept this sort of bounty. And your men of leisure, your club men, sitting in the windows and seeing the world go by as a spectaclemen who never did an hour's necessary work in their lives what effect do you suppose the sight of them has upon men out of work, perhaps by their own fault, owing to the same disposition to be idle that the men in the club windows have?" "And do you think it would be any better if all were poor alike?" "I think it would be better if there were no idle people. I'm half ashamed that I have

leisure to go every time I go to that mission. And I'm almost sorry, Mr. Lyon, that I took you there. The boys knew you were English. One of them asked me if you were a 'lord' or a 'juke' or something. I cannot tell how they will take it. They may resent the spying into their world of an 'English juke,' and they may take it in the light of a show." Mr. Lyon laughed.

And then, perhaps after a little reflection upon the possibility that the nobility was becoming a show in this world, he said: "I begin to think I'm very unfortunate, Miss Debree. You seem to remind me that I am in a position in which I can do very little to help the world along." "Not at all. You can do very much." "But how, when whatever I attempt is considered a condescension? What can I do?" "Pardon me," and Margaret turned her eyes frankly upon him. "You can be a good earl when your time comes." Their way lay through the little city park. It is a pretty place in summer a varied surface, well planted with forest and ornamental trees, intersected by a winding stream. The little river was full now, and ice had formed on it, with small openings here and there, where the dark water, hurrying along as if in fear of arrest, had a more chilling aspect than the icy cover. The

ground was white with snow, and all the trees were bare except for a few frozen oak-leaves here and there, which shivered in the wind and somehow added to the desolation. Leaden clouds covered the sky, and only in the west was there a gleam of the departing winter day. Upon the elevated bank of the stream, opposite to the road by which they approached, they saw a group of people perhaps twenty-drawn closely together, either in the sympathy of segregation from an unfeeling world, or for protection from the keen wind. On the hither bank, and leaning on the rails of the drive, had collected a motley crowd of spectators, men, women, and boys, who exhibited some impatience and much curiosity, decorous for the most part, but emphasized by occasional jocose remarks in an undertone. A serious ceremony was evidently in progress. The separate group had not a prosperous air. The women were thinly clad for such a day. Conspicuous in the little assembly was a tall, elderly man in a shabby long coat and a broad felt hat, from under which his white hair fell upon his shoulders. He might be a prophet in Israel come out to testify to an unbelieving world, and the little group

around him, shaken like reeds in the wind, had the appearance of martyrs to a cause. The light of another world shone in their thin, patient faces. Come, they seemed to say to the worldlings on the opposite bank come and see what happiness it is to serve the Lord. As they waited, a faint tune was started, a quavering hymn, whose feeble notes the wind blew away of first, but which grew stronger. Before the first stanza was finished a carriage appeared in the rear of the group. From it descended a middleaged man and a stout woman, and they together helped a young girl to alight. She was clad all in white. For a moment her thin, delicate figure shrank from the cutting wind. Timid, nervous, she glanced an instant at the crowd and the dark icy stream; but it was only a protest of the poor body; the face had the rapt, exultant look of joyous sacrifice. The tall man advanced to meet her, and led her into the midst of the group. For a few moments there was prayer, inaudible at a distance. Then the tall man, taking the girl by the hand, advanced down the slope to the stream. His hat was laid aside, his venerable locks streamed in the breeze, his eyes were turned to heaven; the girl walked as in

a vision, without a tremor, her wide opened eyes fixed upon invisible things. As they moved on, the group behind set up a joyful hymn in a kind of mournful chant, in which the tall man joined with a strident voice. Fitfully the words came on the wind, in an almost heart breaking wail: "Beyond the smiling and the weeping I shall be soon; Beyond the waking and the sleeping, Beyond the sowing and the reaping, I shall be soon." They were near the water now, and the tall man's voice sounded out loud and clear: "Lord, tarry not, but come!" They were entering the stream where there was an opening clear of ice; the footing was not very secure, and the tall man ceased singing, but the little band sang on: "Beyond the blooming and the fading I shall be soon." The girl grew paler and shuddered. The tall man sustained her with an attitude of infinite sympathy, and seemed to speak words of encouragement. They were in the mid-stream; the cold flood surged about their waists. The group sang on: "Beyond the shining and the shading, Beyond the hoping and the dreading, I shall be soon." The strong, tender arms of the tall man gently lowered the white form under the cruel water; he staggered a

moment in the swift stream, recovered himself, raised her, white as death, and the voices of the wailing tune came: "Love, rest, and home Sweet hope! Lord, tarry not, but come!" And the tall man, as he struggled to the shore with his almost insensible burden, could be heard above the other voices and the wind and the rush of the waters: "Lord, tarry not, but come!" The girl was hurried into the carriage, and the group quickly dispersed. "Well, I'll be " The tender-hearted little wife of the rough man in the crowd who began that sentence did not permit him to finish it. "That'll be a case for a doctor right away," remarked a wellknown practitioner who had been looking on. Margaret and Mr. Lyon walked home in silence. "I can't talk about it," she said. "It's such a pitiful world." IV In the evening, at our house, Margaret described the scene in the park. "It's dreadful," was the comment of Miss Forsythe. "The authorities ought not to permit such a thing." "It seemed to me as heroic as pitiful, aunt. I fear I should be incapable of making such a testimony." "But it was so unnecessary." "How do we know what is necessary to any poor soul? What impressed me most strongly was that there is in the

world still this longing to suffer physically and endure public scorn for a belief." "It may have been a disappointment to the little band," said Mr. Morgan, "that there was no demonstration from the spectators, that there was no loud jeering, that no snowballs were thrown by the boys." "They could hardly expect that," said I; "the world has become so tolerant that it doesn't care." "I rather think," Margaret replied, "that the spectators for a moment came under the spell of the hour, and were awed by something supernatural in the endurance of that frail girl." "No doubt," said my wife, after a little pause. "I believe that there is as much sense of mystery in the world as ever, and as much of what we call faith, only it shows itself eccentrically. Breaking away from traditions and not going to church have not destroyed the need in the minds of the mass of people for something outside themselves." "Did I tell you," interposed Morgan "it is almost in the line of your thought of a girl I met the other day on the train? I happened to be her seat-mate in the car-thin face, slight little figure a commonplace girl, whom I took at first to be not more than twenty, but from the lines about her large eyes

she was probably nearer forty. She had in her lap a book, which she conned from time to time, and seemed to be committing verses to memory as she looked out the window. At last I ventured to ask what literature it was that interested her so much, when she turned and frankly entered into conversation. It was a little Advent song-book. She liked to read it on the train, and hum over the tunes. Yes, she was a good deal on the cars; early every morning she rode thirty miles to her work, and thirty miles back every evening. Her work was that of clerk and copyist in a freight office, and she earned nine dollars a week, on which she supported herself and her mother. It was hard work, but she did not mind it much. Her mother was quite feeble. She was an Adventist. 'And you?' I asked. 'Oh, yes; I am. I've been an Adventist twenty years, and I've been perfectly happy ever since I joined perfectly,' she added, turning her plain face, now radiant, towards me. 'Are you one?' she asked, presently. 'Not an immediate Adventist,' I was obliged to confess. 'I thought you might be, there are so many now, more and more.' I learned that in our little city there were two Advent societies; there had been

a split on account of some difference in the meaning of original sin. 'And you are not discouraged by the repeated failure of the predictions of the end of the world?' I asked. 'No. Why should we be? We don't fix any certain day now, but all the signs show that it is very near. We are all free to think as we like. Most of our members now think it will be next year.' 'I hope not!' I exclaimed. 'Why?' she asked, turning to me with a look of surprise. 'Are you afraid?' I evaded by saying that I supposed the good had nothing to fear. 'Then you must be an Adventist, you have so much sympathy.' 'I shouldn't like to have the world come to an end next year, because there are so many interesting problems, and I want to see how they will be worked out.' 'How can you want to put it off' and there was for the first time a little note of fanaticism in her voice 'when there is so much poverty and hard work? It is such a hard world, and so much suffering and sin. And it could all be ended in a moment. How can you want it to go on?' The train approached the station, and she rose to say good-by. 'You will see the truth some day,' she said, and went away as cheerful as if the world was actually destroyed. She was the

happiest woman I have seen in a long time." "Yes," I said, "it is an age of both faith and credulity." "And nothing marks it more," Morgan added, "than the popular expectation among the scientific and the ignorant of something to come out of the dimly understood relation of body and mind. It is like the expectation of the possibilities of electricity." "I was going on to say," I continued, "that wherever I walk in the city of a Sunday afternoon, I am struck with the number of little meetings going on, of the faithful and the unfaithful, Adventists, socialists, spiritualists, culturists, Sons and Daughters of Edom; from all the open windows of the tall buildings come notes of praying, of exhortation, the melancholy wail of the inspiring Sankey tunes, total abstinence melodies, over-the-river melodies, songs of entreaty, and songs of praise. There is so much going on outside of the regular churches!" "But the churches are well attended," suggested my wife. "Yes, fairly, at least once a day, and if there is sensational preaching, twice. But there is nothing that will so pack the biggest hall in the city as the announcement of inspirational preaching by some young woman who speaks at

random on a text given her when she steps upon the platform. There is something in her rhapsody, even when it is incoherent, that appeals to a prevailing spirit."' "How much of it is curiosity?" Morgan asked. "Isn't the hall just as jammed when the clever attorney of Nothingism, Ham Saversoul, jokes about the mysteries of this life and the next?" "Very likely. People like the emotional and the amusing. All the same, they are credulous, and entertain doubt and belief on the slightest evidence." "Isn't it natural," spoke up Mr. Lyon, who had hitherto been silent, "that you should drift into this condition without an established church?" "Perhaps it's natural," Morgan retorted, "that people dissatisfied with an established religion should drift over here. Great Britain, you know, is a famous recruiting-ground for our socialistic experiments." "Ah, well," said my wife, "men will have something. If what is established repels to the extent of getting itself disestablished, and all churches should be broken up, society would somehow precipitate itself again spiritually. I heard the other day that Boston, getting a little weary of the Vedas, was beginning to take up the New Testament." "Yes," said

Morgan, "since Tolstoi mentioned it." After a little the talk drifted into psychic research, and got lost in stories of "appearances" and "long-distance" communications. It appeared to me that intelligent people accepted this sort of story as true on evidence on which they wouldn't risk five dollars if it were a question of money. Even scientists swallow tales of prehistoric bones on testimony they would reject if it involved the title to a piece of real estate. Mr. Lyon still lingered in the lap of a New England winter as if it had been Capua. He was anxious to visit Washington and study the politics of the country, and see the sort of society produced in the freedom of a republic, where there was no court to give the tone and there were no class lines to determine position. He was restless under this sense of duty. The future legislator for the British Empire must understand the Constitution of its great rival, and thus be able to appreciate the social currents that have so much to do with political action. In fact he had another reason for uneasiness. His mother had written him, asking why he stayed so long in an unimportant city, he who had been so active a traveler hitherto. Knowledge of the

capitals was what he needed. Agreeable people he could find at home, if his only object was to pass the time. What could he reply? Could he say that he had become very much interested in studying a schoolteacher a very charming school-teacher? He could see the vision raised in the minds of his mother and of the earl and of his elder sister as they should read this precious confession a vision of a schoolma'am, of an American girl, and an American girl without any money at that, moving in the little orbit of Chisholm House. The thing was absurd. And yet why was it absurd? What was English politics, what was Chisholm House, what was everybody in England compared to this noble girl? Nay, what would the world be without her? He grew hot in thinking of it, indignant at his relations and the whole artificial framework of things. The situation was almost humiliating. He began, to doubt the stability of his own position. Hitherto he had met no obstacle: whatever he had desired he had obtained. He was a sensible fellow, and knew the world was not made for him; but it certainly had yielded to him in everything. Why did he doubt now? That he did doubt showed him the intensity of his interest in

Margaret. For love is humble, and undervalues self in contrast with that which it desires. At this touchstone rank, fortune, all that go with them, seemed poor. What were all these to a woman's soul? But there were women enough, women enough in England, women more beautiful than Margaret, doubtless as amiable and intellectual. Yet now there was for him only one woman in the world. And Margaret showed no sign. Was he about to make a fool of himself? If she should reject him he would seem a fool to himself. If she accepted him he would seem a fool to the whole circle that made his world at home. The situation was intolerable. He would end it by going. But he did not go. If he went today he could not see her tomorrow. To a lover anything can be borne if he knows that he shall see her tomorrow. In short, he could not go so long as there was any doubt about her disposition towards him. And a man is still reduced to this in the latter part of the nineteenth century, notwithstanding all our science, all our analysis of the passion, all our wise jabber about the failure of marriage, all our commonsense about the relation of the sexes. Love is still a

personal question, not to be reasoned about or in any way disposed of except in the old way. Maidens dream about it; diplomats yield to it; stolid men are upset by it; the aged become young, the young grave, under its influence; the student loses his appetite God bless him! I like to hear the young fellows at the club rattle on bravely, indifferent to the whole thing skeptical, in fact, about it. And then to see them, one after another, stricken down, and looking a little sheepish and not saying much, and byand by radiant. You would think they owned the world. Heaven, I think, shows us no finer sarcasm than one of these young skeptics as a meek family man. Margaret and Mr. Lyon were much together. And their talk, as always happens when two persons find themselves much together, became more and more personal. It is only in books that dialogues are abstract and impersonal. The Englishman told her about his family, about the set in which he moved and he had the English frankness in setting it out unreservedly about the life he led at Oxford, about his travels, and so on to what he meant to do in the world. Margaret in return had little to tell, her own life had been so simple not

much except the maidenly reserves, the discontents with herself, which interested him more than anything else; and of the future she would not speak at all. How can a woman, without being misunderstood? All this talk had a certain danger in it, for sympathy is unavoidable between two persons who look ever so little into each other's hearts and compare tastes and desires. "I cannot quite understand your social life over here," Mr. Lyon was saying one day. "You seem to make distinctions, but I cannot see exactly for what." "Perhaps they make themselves. Your social orders seem able to resist Darwin's theory, but in a republic natural selection has a better chance." "I was told by a Bohemian on the steamer coming over that money in America takes the place of rank in England." "That isn't quite true." "And I was told in Boston by an acquaintance of very old family and little fortune that 'blood' is considered here as much as anywhere." "You see, Mr. Lyon, how difficult it is to get correct information about us. I think we worship wealth a good deal, and we worship family a good deal, but if any one presumes too much upon either, he is likely to come to grief. I don't understand it very well myself."

"Then it is not money that determines social position in America?" "Not altogether; but more now than formerly. I suppose the distinction is this: family will take a person everywhere, money will take him almost everywhere; but money is always at this disadvantage it takes more and more of it to gain position. And then you will find that it is a good deal a matter of locality. For instance, in Virginia and Kentucky family is still very powerful, stronger than any distinction in letters or politics or success in business; and there is a certain diminishing number of people in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, who cultivate a good deal of exclusiveness on account of descent." "But I am told that this sort of aristocracy is succumbing to the new plutocracy." "Well, it is more and more difficult to maintain a position without money. Mr. Morgan says that it is a disheartening thing to be an aristocrat without luxury; he declares that he cannot tell whether the Knickerbockers of New York or the plutocrats are more uneasy just now. The one is hungry for social position, and is morose if he cannot buy it; and when the other is seduced by luxury and yields, he finds that his distinction is gone. For in his

heart the newly rich only respects the rich. A story went about of one of the Bonanza princes who had built his palace in the city, and was sending out invitations to his first entertainment. Somebody suggested doubts to him about the response. 'Oh,' he said, 'the beggars will be glad enough to come!'" "I suppose, Mr. Lyon," said Margaret, demurely, "that this sort of thing is unknown in England?" "Oh, I couldn't say that money is not run after there to some extent." "I saw a picture in Punch of an auction, intended as an awful satire on American women. It struck me that it might have two interpretations." "Yes, Punch is as friendly to America as it is to the English aristocracy." "Well, I was only thinking that it is just an exchange of commodities. People will always give what they have for what they want. The Western man changes his pork in New York for pictures. I suppose that what do you call it? the balance of trade is against us, and we have to send over cash and beauty." "I didn't know that Miss Debree was so much of a political economist." "We got that out of books in school. Another thing we learned is that England wants raw material; I thought I might as well say it, for it

wouldn't be polite for you." "Oh, I'm capable of saying anything, if provoked. But we have got away from the point. As far as I can see, all sorts of people intermarry, and I don't see how you can discriminate socially where the lines are." Mr. Lyon saw the moment that he had made it that this was a suggestion little likely to help him. And Margaret's reply showed that he had lost ground. "Oh, we do not try to discriminate except as to foreigners. There is a popular notion that Americans had better marry at home." "Then the best way for a foreigner to break your exclusiveness is to be naturalized." Mr. Lyon tried to adopt her tone, and added, "Would you like to see me an American citizen?" "I don't believe you could be, except for a little while; you are too British." "But the two nations are practically the same; that is, individuals of the nations are. Don't you think so?" "Yes, if one of them gives up all the habits and prejudices of a lifetime and of a whole social condition to the other." "And which would have to yield?" "Oh, the man, of course. It has always been so. My great-greatgrandfather was a Frenchman, but he became, I have always heard, the most docile American republican." "Do

you think he would have been the one to give in if they had gone to France?" "Perhaps not. And then the marriage would have been unhappy. Did you never take notice that a woman's happiness, and consequently the happiness of marriage, depends upon a woman's having her own way in all social matters? Before our war all the men who married down South took the Southern view, and all the Southern women who married up North held their own, and sensibly controlled the sympathies of their husbands." "And how was it with the Northern women who married South, as you say?" "Well, it must be confessed that a good many of them adapted themselves, in appearance at least. Women can do that, and never let anyone see they are not happy and not doing it from choice." "And don't you think American women adapt themselves happily to English life?" "Doubtless some; I doubt if many do; but women do not confess mistakes of that kind. Woman's happiness depends so much upon the continuation of the surroundings and sympathies in which she is bred. There are always exceptions. Do you know, Mr. Lyon, it seems to me that some people do not belong in the

country where they were born. We have men who ought to have been born in England, and who only find themselves really they go there. There are who are ambitious, and court a career different from any that a republic can give them. They are not satisfied here. Whether they are happy there I do not know; so few trees, when at all grown, will bear transplanting." "Then you think international marriages are a mistake?" "Oh, I don't theorize on subjects I am ignorant of." "You give me very cold comfort." "I didn't know," said Margaret, with a laugh that was too genuine to be consoling, "that you were traveling for comfort; I thought it was for information." "And I am getting a great deal," said Mr. Lyon, rather ruefully. "I'm trying to find out where. I ought to have been born." "I'm not sure," Margaret said, half seriously, "but you would have been a very good American." This was not much of an admission, after all, but it was the most that Margaret had ever made, and Mr. Lyon tried to get some encouragement out of it. But he felt, as any man would feel, that this beating about the bush, this talk of nationality and all that, was nonsense; that if a woman loved a man she wouldn't care

where he was born; that all the world would be as nothing to him; that all conditions and obstacles society and family could raise would melt away in the glow of a real passion. And he wondered for a moment if American girls were not "calculating" a word to which he had learned over here to attach a new and comical meaning. V The afternoon after this conversation Miss Forsythe was sitting reading in her favorite window-seat when Mr. Lyon was announced. Margaret was at her school. There was nothing un usual in this afternoon call; Mr. Lyon's visits had become frequent and informal; but Miss Forsythe had a nervous presentiment that something important was to happen, that showed itself in her greeting, and which was perhaps caught from a certain new diffidence in his manner. Perhaps the maiden lady preserves more than any other this sensitiveness, inborn in women, to the approach of the critical moment in the affairs of the heart. The day may some time be past when she is sensitive for herself philosophers say otherwise but she is easily put in a flutter by the affair of another. Perhaps this is because the negative (as we say in these days) which takes impressions

retains all its delicacy from the fact that none of them have ever been developed, and perhaps it is a wise provision of nature that age in a heart unsatisfied should awaken lively apprehensive curiosity and sympathy about the manifestation of the tender passion in others. It certainly is a note of the kindliness and charity of the maiden mind that its sympathies are so apt to be most strongly excited in the success of the wooer. This interest may be quite separable from the common feminine desire to make a match whenever there is the least chance of it. Miss Forsythe was not a match-maker, but Margaret herself would not have been more embarrassed than she was at the beginning of this interview. When Mr. Lyon was seated she made the book she had in her hand the excuse for beginning a talk about the confidence young novelists seem to have in their ability to upset the Christian religion by a fictitious representation of life, but her visitor was too preoccupied to join in it. He rose and stood leaning his arm upon the mantel-piece, and looking into the fire, and said, abruptly, at last: "I called to see you, Miss Forsythe, to to consult you about your niece." "About her career?" asked Miss

Forsythe, with a nervous consciousness of falsehood. "Yes, about her career; that is, in a way," turning towards her with a little smile. "Yes?" "You must have seen my interest in her. You must have known why I stayed on and on. But it was, it is, all so uncertain. I wanted to ask your permission to speak my mind to her." "Are you quite sure you know your own mind?" asked Miss Forsythe, defensively. "Sure sure; I have never had the feeling for any other woman I have for her." "Margaret is a noble girl; she is very independent," suggested Miss Forsythe, still avoiding the point. "I know. I don't ask you her feeling." Mr. Lyon was standing quietly looking down into the coals. "She is the only woman in the world to me. I love her. Are you against me?" he asked, suddenly looking up, with a flush in his face. "Oh, no! no!" exclaimed Miss Forsythe, with another access of timidity. "I shouldn't take the responsibility of being against you, or or otherwise. It is very manly in you to come to me, and I am sure I we all wish nothing but your own happiness. And so far as I am concerned " "Then I have your permission?" he asked, eagerly. "My permission, Mr. Lyon? why, it is so new to me, I scarcely

realized that I had any permission," she said, with a little attempt at pleasantry. "But as her aunt and guardian, as one may say personally I should have the greatest satisfaction to know that Margaret's destiny was in the hands of one we all esteem and know as we do you." "Thank you, thank you," said Mr. Lyon, coming forward and seizing her hand. "But you must let me say, let me suggest, that there are a great many things to be thought of. There is such a difference in education, in all the habits of your lives, in all your relations. Margaret would never be happy in a position where less was accorded to her than she had all her life. Nor would her pride let her take such a position." "But as my wife " "Yes, I know that is sufficient in your mind. Have you consulted your mother, Mr. Lyon?" "Not yet." "And have you written to any one at home about my niece?" "Not yet." "And does it seem a little difficult to do so?" This was a probe that went even deeper than the questioner knew. Mr. Lyon hesitated, seeing again as in a vision the astonishment of his family. He was conscious of an attempt at self deception when he replied: "Not difficult, not at all difficult, but I thought I would wait till I had something definite

to say." "Margaret is, of course, perfectly free to act for herself. She has a very ardent nature, but at the same time a great deal of what we call common sense. Though her heart might be very much engaged, she would hesitate to put herself in any society which thought itself superior to her. You see I speak with great frankness." It was a new position for Mr. Lyon to find his prospective rank seemingly an obstacle to anything he desired. For a moment the whimsicality of it interrupted the current of his feeling. He thought of the probable comments of the men of his London club upon the drift his conversation was taking with a New England spinster about his fitness to marry a school-teacher. With a smile that was summoned to hide his annoyance, he said, "I don't see how I can defend myself, Miss Forsythe." "Oh," she replied, with an answering smile that recognized his view of the humor of the situation, "I was not thinking of you, Mr. Lyon, but of the family and the society that my niece might enter, to which rank is of the first importance." "I am simply John Lyon, Miss Forsythe. I may never be anything else. But if it were otherwise, I did not suppose that Americans objected to rank." It

was an unfortunate speech, felt to be so the instant it was uttered. Miss Forsythe's pride was touched, and the remark was not softened to her by the air of half banter with which the sentence concluded. She said, with a little stillness and formality: "I fear, Mr. Lyon, that your sarcasm is too well merited. But there are Americans who make a distinction between rank and blood. Perhaps it is very undemocratic, but there is nowhere else more pride of family, of honorable descent, than here. We think very much of what we call good blood. And you will pardon me for saying that we are accustomed to speak of some persons and families abroad which have the highest rank as being thoroughly bad blood. If I am not mistaken, you also recognize the historic fact of ignoble blood in the owners of noble titles. I only mean, Mr. Lyon," she added, with a softening of manner, "that all Americans do not think that rank covers a multitude of sins." "Yes, I think I get your American point of view. But to return to myself, if you will allow me; if I am so fortunate as to win Miss Debree's love, I have no fear that she would not win the hearts of all my family. Do you think that my my prospective position

would be an objection to her?" "Not your position, no; if her heart were engaged. But expatriation, involving a surrender of all the habits and traditions and associations of a lifetime and of one's kindred, is a serious affair.