VARIOUS

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Содержание

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THE NEW HYPERION

FROM PARIS TO MARLY BY WAY OF THE RHINE. VI.—SHALL AULD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT?

My first dinner in the avenue of Ettlingen followed upon the twelve-barreled bath, but was far from being so glacial a refreshment. As I descended, quite pink and glowing, I found eight or ten individuals in the dining-room. They were French and Belgians, and exchanged a lively conversation in half a dozen provincial accents. The servants too talked French in levying on the cook for provisions: for this, as I have since learned, the domestics of my snug little boarding-house were deemed somewhat pretentious by the serving-people of the vicinity, who considered the tongue of Paris a sort of court language, for circulation among aristocrats only, and supposed that even in France the hired folk all talked German. My reception at the cheerful board was as cordial as possible.

Placed opposite me, our young hostess was looking in my direction with an intentness that struck me as singular. My passport was uppermost in my mind. I was not, however, very uneasy, for the reply of Sylvester Berkley would soon arrive and put an official seal upon my standing. It occurred to me, however, that I was a traveler accompanied by no other baggage than a tin box and an umbrella, and introduced by a coachman who had no reason whatever for forming lofty notions of my respectability. The landlady, whom I had scarcely seen on my arrival, was pretty, neat and quick, and an argument suggested itself that seemed adapted to her station and habits. I was base enough to take out my watch, a very fine Poitevin, and make an advertisement of that pledge under pretence of comparing time with the mantel-clock. This precious manoeuvre appeared quite successful.

Very soon my ideas of apprehension and defiance were followed by other thoughts of a very different kind. The expression of the youthful housekeeper was not only softened in continuing to watch me, but it took on a look of great kindness and good-humor—a look that the finest watch in the world would never have inspired. On my own side I furtively examined this gentle yet scrutinizing physiognomy. Surely those gentle glances and my own faded old eyes were not entire strangers.

When Winckelmann was filling the villa Albani with antiques, it often happened to him to clasp a fair Greek head in his arms and go pottering along from torso to torso till he could find a shoulder fit to support his lovely burden. Such was my exercise with this pleasant head in its neat cambric cap; but in place of consulting my memory with the proper coolness, I am afraid I questioned my heart.

Immediately after the coffee my pretty hostess, passing my chair, with a quick motion in going out made me a slight gesture. I followed her into a small office or ante-chamber adjoining. The furniture was very simple; the indicator, with a figure for every bell, decorated the wall in its cherry-wood frame; the keys, hanging aslant in rows, like points of interrogation in a letter of Sévigné's, formed a corresponding ornament; and a row of registers on the desk completed the furniture. One of these books she drew forward, opened and presented for my signature, still flashing over my face that intent but benevolent glance.

"Monsieur, have the goodness to inscribe your name, the place you came from, and that of your destination."

I took the pen, and, with the air of complying exactly and courteously with her demand, folded the quill into three or four lengths, and placed it weltering in ink within my waistcoat pocket. I was looking intently into my hostess's face.

I think no American can observe without peculiar complacency the neat artisanne's cap on the brows of a respectable young Frenchwoman. This cap is made of some opaque white substance, tender yet solid, and the theory of its existence is that it should be stainless and incapable of disturbance. It is the badge of an order, the sign of unpretending industry. The personage who wears it does not propose to look like a "dame:" she contentedly crowns herself with the tiara of her rank. Long generations of unaspiring humility have bequeathed her this soft and candid sign of distinction: as her turn comes in the line of inheritance she spends her life in keeping unsullied its difficult purity, and she will leave to her daughters the critical task of its equipoise. If she soils or rumples or tears it, she descends in her little scale of dignities and becomes an ouvrière. If she loses it, she is unclassed entirely, and enters the half-world. The porter's wife with her dubious mob-cap, and the hard, flaunting grisette with her melancholy feathers and determined chapeau, are equally removed from the white cap of the "young person." To maintain it in its vestal candor and proud sincerity is not always an easy task in a land where every careless student and idle nobleman is eager to tumble it with his fingers or to pin among its frills the blossom named love-in-idleness: Mimi Pinson has to wear her cap very close to her wise little head. To herself and to those among whom she moves nothing perhaps seems more natural than the successful carriage of this white emblem, triumphantly borne from age to age above the dust of labor and in the face of all kinds of temptation; but to the republican from beyond the seas it is a kind of sacred relic. The Yankee who knows only the forlorn aureoles of wire and greased gauze surrounding the sainted heads of Lowell factory-girls, and the frowsy ones of New York bookbinders, is struck by the artisanne cap as by something exquisitely fresh, proud and truthful.

My landlady's cap was as far removed from pretence as from vulgarity. Her hair was brown, smooth, old-fashioned and nun-like. I looked at her hand, which, having replaced the pen, was inviting me with a gesture of its handsome squared fingers to contribute my autograph, I made my note, pausing often to look up at my beautiful writing-mistress: "PAUL FLEMMING, American: from Paris to Marly—by way of the Rhine."

I had not finished, when, lowering her pretty head to scrutinize my crabbed handwriting, she cried, "It is certainly he, the américain-flamand! I was certain I could not be mistaken."

"Do you know me then, madame?'

"Do I know you? And you, do you not recognize me?"

"I protest, madame, my memory for faces is shocking; and, though there are few in the world comparable with yours—"

She interrupted me with a gesture too familiar to be mistaken. A tumbler was on the desk filled with goose-quills. Taking this up like a bouquet, and stretching it out at arm's length to an imaginary passer-by, she sang, with a mischievous professional *brio*, "Fresh roses to-day, all fresh! White lilacs for the bride, and lilies for the holy altar! pinks for the button of the young man who thinks himself handsome. Who buys my bluets, my paquerettes, my marguerites, my penseés?"

It was strangely like something I well knew, yet my mind, confused with the baggage of unexpected travel, refused to throw a clear light over this fascinating rencounter.

The little landlady threw her head back to laugh, and I saw a small rose-colored tongue surrounded with two strings of pearls: "Very well, Monsieur Flemming! Have you forgotten the two chickens?"

It was the exclamation by which, in his neat tavern, I had recognized my brave old friend Joliet: it was impossible, by the same shibboleth, to refuse longer an acquaintance with his daughter.

My entertainer, in fact, was no other than Francine Joliet, grown from a little female stripling into a distracting pattern of a woman. Twelve years had never thrown more fortunate changes over a growing human flower.

The acquaintance being thus renewed, I could not but remember my last conversation with Joliet—his way of acquainting me with her absence from home, his mention of her godmother in Brussels, and his strange reticence as I pressed the subject. A slight chill, owing perhaps to the undue warmth of my admiration for this delicate creature, fell over my first cordiality. I asked a question or two, assuming a kind, elderly type of interest: "How do you find yourself here in Carlsruhe? Are you satisfactorily placed?"

"As well as possible, dear M. Flemming. I am a bird in its nest."

"Mated, no doubt, my dear?"

"No."

"You are not a widow, I hope, my poor little Francine?"

"No." She blushed, as if she had not been pretty enough before.

"They call you madame, you see."

"A mistress of a hotel, that is the usual title. Is it not the custom among the Indians of America?"

"The godmother who took care of you—you perceive how well I know your biography, my child—is she dead, then?"

"No, thank Heaven! She is quite well."

"She is doubtless now living in Carlsruhe?"

"No, at Brussels."

"Then why are you here? why have you quitted so kind a friend?"

My catechism, growing thus more and more brutal, might have been prolonged until bedtime, but on the arrival of a new traveler she left me there, with a pen in my hand and a quantity of delicious cobwebs in my head, saying gently, "I will see you this evening, kind friend."

The same evening, after a botanizing stroll in the adjoining wood—a treat that my tin box and I had promised each other—I found myself again with Francine. Full of curiosity as I was concerning her adventures, I determined that she should direct the conversation herself, and take her own pretty time to tell the more personal parts of the story.

The stage grisette is perpetually exploring the pockets of her apron. Francine, who wore a roundabout apron of a white and crackling nature, adorned her conversation by attending to the hem of hers. When she asked about my last interview with her father, she ironed that hem with the nail of her rosy little thumb; when she fell into reminiscences of her mother, she smoothed the apron respectfully and sadly; when she proposed a question or a doubt, she extracted little threads from the seam: at last, perfectly satisfied with the apron, she laid her two small hands in each other on its dainty snow-bank, and resigned herself to a perfect torrent of remarks about the horse, the van, the little cabin among the roses, the small one-eyed dog and the two chickens. Conversation, a thing which is manufactured by an American girl, is a thing which takes possession of a French girl.

All the while I remained uninstructed as to why my had left her protectress, why she was keeping house at Carlsruhe, and on what understanding her customers called her madame.

I was obliged to take next day a long alterative excursion among the trees of the Haardtwald: in fact, her gentle warmth, her freshness, her nattiness, the very protection she shed over me, were working sad mischief to my peace of mind. I came upon an old shepherd, who, with his music-book thrown into a bush in front of him, was leaning back against a tree and drawing sweet sounds out of a cornet-à-piston.

"Even so," I said, "did Stark the Viking hear the notes of the enchanted horn teaching every tree he came to the echo of his true-love's name."

But the churlish shepherd, the moment he caught sight of me, put up his pipe, whistled to his dogs and rejoined the flock. I was dissatisfied with his unsocial retreat. I felt, with renewed force, that a note was lacking to the full harmony of my life, and I threw myself upon a bank. I tried not to see the artificial roads of the forest, alive with city carriages. I believed myself lost in a primeval wood, and I examined the state of my heart. I perceived with concern that that organ was still lacerated.

The languid, musical pageant of my youth streamed toward me again through the leafy aisles, and I remembered my high aspirings, my poems, my ideals: the floating vision of a Dark Ladye passed or looked up at me through the broken waves of Oblivion; she listened to my rhapsodies with the old puzzling silence; she confided to me certain Sibylline leaves out of her diary; then she receded, cold and unresponsive, a statue cut out of a shadow. I was obliged to untie my cravat. Finally, I fell asleep and dreamed of Mary Ashburton crowned with the neat workwoman's cap of Francine Joliet. I returned to dinner considerably exalted, and just touched with rheumatism.

The soup was glacial, the roast was steaming, the conversation was geographical. "Pray, M. Flemming," said my neighbor (he had been stealing a look at the register of visitors' names), "can cattle be wintered out of doors as far north as Pennsylvania, or only up to Virginia?"

"Pray," said another, "is not New York situated between the North River and the Hudson?"

The prayer of a third made itself audible: "Ought we to say 'Delightful *Wy*oming,' after Campbell, or Wy*o*ming?"

"We ought to eat with thankfulness the good things set before us," I replied, with some presence of mind. "Excuse me, gentlemen," I added, to carry off my vivacity, "but I think informing conversation is a bore until after the nuts and raisins. A Danish proverb says that he who knows what he is saying at a feast has but poor comprehension of what he is eating. On my way hither, breakfasting at Strasburg, I enjoyed a lesson in geography, and I aver that though the lesson was elementary, I breakfasted very badly."

"Who was the teacher?" asked the explorer of Wyoming, a German, in the tone of a man to whom no professor of Geography could properly be a stranger.

"The teacher," I answered with a smile, "was one Fortnoye—"

I did not finish my sentence. At that name, Fortnoye, a kind of electric movement was communicated around the board. Every eye sought the face of Francine, who, troubled and confused, fell upon the cutlet placed before her and cut it feverishly into flinders. Evidently there was a secret thereabouts. When coffee was on, I applied myself to satisfying the topographic doubts of my neighbors, but the name of the geographical professor was approached no more.

When dinner was over, and only two stranded Belgians remained at table, discussing whether the Falls of Niagara plunge from the United States into Canada, or from Canada into the United States, I stole into the narrow office, believing I should see Francine.

She was not there, but the register was lying on the desk. I fell to turning the leaves over furiously: I felt that I was on the trail of Fortnoye. I was not long in amassing a quantity of discoveries. Going back to the previous year, I found the signature of Fortnoye in March and April; in July and September, Fortnoye bound up and down the Rhine; in the depth of the winter, Monsieur Tonson-Fortnoye come again! Evidently one of the most frequent guests of my delicate Francine was the interpreter of *Cosmos* in Strasburg, the white-bearded mystifier of the champagne-cellar, the finest singing-voice in Épernay.

Toward ten o'clock, as I paced the little grove called the Oak Wood, I saw at the miniature lake four persons, who were regaining the bank after trying to detach the little boat moored by the shore. They were just the four from our social table with whom I best agreed. I joined the party, and, hooking now a friendly arm to the elbow of one, now to that of another, I soon obtained all they had to communicate on the subject which occupied my mind. Each knew Fortnoye intimately: the result of my quadratic amounted to the following:

First. Fortnoye, educated at the Polytechnic School in Paris, is a man of grave character and profound learning.

Second. Fortnoye is a roysterer, latterly occupied in extending the connection of a champagne-house at Épernay. He is a Bohemian, even a poet: he can rhyme, but strictly in the interests of commerce—he composes only drinking-songs.

Third. Fortnoye is an exploded speculator, dismissed from the French Board: obliged to beat a retreat to Belgium, he soon found himself in Baden, where he had good luck at the green table shortly before the war.

Fourth, and last. (This was from the man of Wyoming.) Fortnoye only retreated to Belgium as a refuge for his demagogic opinions. He belongs to the innermost circle of the Commune and to all the French and Italian secret associations. He is represented in the background of several of Courbet's pictures. He has been everywhere: in Italy he joined the society of the Mary Anne, where he met the celebrated Lothair. This order has a branch called the Society of Pure Illumination. If he has liberty to return into France, it is because he is connected with the detective police.

The information, extensive as it was, did not altogether satisfy me. I made little of the inconsistencies betrayed by the various counsels of the Areopagus, but I closed the whole solemnity with one crucial interrogatory: "What the dickens does Fortnoye come prowling around Francine Joliet's house for?"

The answer was not calculated to please me: "She is young and attractive: Fortnoye advanced the funds to set her up in the house."

But my morose thoughts were distracted by the scene around us. The moon burst up above the trees of the Oak Wood—a fine ample German moon, like a Diana of Rubens. Close to our sides passed numerous young couples, holding hands, clasping waists, chattering gayly, or walking in silence with a blonde head laid on a burly shoulder. One of my companions pointed out a specially stalwart and graceful young apprentice, whose elbow, supported on a rustic bench, was bent around a mass of beautiful golden hair.

"An eligible *verlobter*," said he.

I thought of Perrette and the tall young man who had helped pull her milk-cart. My friend continued: "Betrothal hereabouts is a serious institution. The girl who loses her *verlobter* becomes a widow. Woe betide her if she dreams of replacing him too early! She will find herself followed by ill looks and contemptuous tongues: she even runs the risk of having nobody to marry better than a dead man, if we may believe the history of Bettina of Ettlingen."

"The history of Bettina of Ettlingen? That sounds like the title to a ballad."

"It is a recent history, which you would take for a legend of the twelfth century."

I cannot help it. In face of that word *legend* my mind stops and stares rigidly like a pointer dog. The moment was favorable for a good story: the sky was covered with flocked clouds, behind which the ample German moon, shorn of half its brightness, took suddenly the pale gilded tint of sauerkraut. The wandering lovers, half effaced in the gloom, looked like straying shades in an Elysium.

"Ettlingen is between Carlsruhe and Rastadt, an hour's walking as you go to Kehl. The flowers grow there without thinking about it, and sow their own seed. It is therefore a simple thing to be a gardener, and Bettina's father, the florist, attended entirely to his pipe, leaving the cares of business to his apprentice, whose name was Nature. Bettina, as became the daughter of a gardener, was a kind of rose: Wilhelm, the baker's young man, would have thrown himself into the furnace for her. But there came along Fritz, the dyer, who had been in France and who wore gloves. She continued a while to promenade with Wilhelm under the chestnut trees which surround the fortifications of Ettlingen, but one night she suddenly withdrew her hand: 'You had better find a nicer girl than I am: I do not feel that I could make you happy.' Wilhelm disappeared from the country. His departure, which was the talk of Ettlingen, caused Bettina more remorse than regret. For six months she shut herself up: then, hearing nothing of her lover, she reappeared shyly on the promenade, divested of rings, ear-drops and ornaments. The beautiful Fritz, in his loveliest gloves, intercepted her beneath the chestnuts, and, armed with her father's consent, proposed himself for her *verlobter*.

"'Not yet,' she answered: 'wait till I wear my flowers again.'

"In Germany, as in Switzerland and Italy, natural flowers are indispensable to a young girl's toilet. To appear at an assembly without a blooming tuft at the corsage or in the hair is to indicate that the family is in mourning, the mother sick or the lover conscripted.

"With an exquisite natural sense, Bettina, daughter of a gardener, would never wear any flowers but wild ones. About this time there was a grand fair at Durlach: almost all Ettlingen went there, and Bettina too, but as spectatress only, and without her flowers.

"The dances which animated the others made her sad. She left the ball and wandered on the hillside. There, beneath the hedge of a sunken road, she recognized her beauteous Fritz. Poor Fritz! he was refusing himself the pleasure of the dance which he might not partake with her. Ah, the time for temporizing is over! Bettina determines that to-day, in the eyes of every one, they shall dance together, and he shall be recognized as her *verlobter*. She looks hastily around for flowers. The hill is bare, the road is stony: an enclosure at the left offers some promise, and Bettina enters.

"It was a cemetery. Animated with her new resolve, she thought little of the profanation, and crowned herself with flowers from the nearest grave. In an hour the villagers from Ettlingen saw her leaning on Fritz's shoulder in the waltz. That night the shade of Wilhelm stood at her bed-head: 'You have accepted the flowers growing on my grave and nourished from my heart. I am once more your *verlobter*.'

"Next day Fritz came, radiant, with a silver engagement-ring, which he was to exchange for that on Bettina's finger, returned by Wilhelm at his departure. But the ring was gone. At night Wilhelm reappeared, and showed the ring on his finger. Some time passed, and Bettina lost a good part of her beauty, distracted as she was between the laughing Fritz in the daytime and the pale Wilhelm at night. She was a sensible girl, however, and persuaded herself, with Fritz's assistance, that the vision was created by a disordered fancy. But she caused inquiry to be made about the grave in the cemetery at Durlach: the answer came: 'Under the first stone in the line at the right of the gate lies the body of Wilhelm Haussbach of Ettlingen, where he followed the trade of baker.'

"Then she knew that she had robbed her lover's grave to adorn herself for a new *verlobter*. After this the ghost of Wilhelm began to invade her promenades with Fritz, and she walked evening after evening beneath the chestnuts between her two lovers.

"The gardener's daughter never looked fairer than on her wedding-day. Armed with all her resolution, and filled with love for Fritz, she presented herself at the altar. The priest began to recite the sacramental words, when he came to a pause at the sight of Bettina, pale and wild-eyed, shivering convulsively in her bridal draperies.

"Wilhelm was again at her side, kneeling on the right, as Fritz on the left. He was in bridegroom's habit, and he offered a bouquet of graveyard-flowers—the white immortelle and the forget-me-not. When Fritz rose and put the ring on her finger she felt an icy hand draw the token off and replace it by another. At this, overcome with terror, and making a wild gesture of rejection both to right and left, she ran shrieking out of the church.

"Such is the true and authentic story of Bettina," concluded my narrator. "You may see Bettina any day at Ettlingen, a yellow old maid forty years of age. Every Sunday she goes to mass at Durlach, where she employs the rest of the day in tending flowers on a grave, the first grave in the line to the right of the gateway."

I returned to the house with this grim and tender little idyll crooning through my brains. I took my key and bed-candle, and asked the porter if a letter had arrived for me from Sylvester Berkley. Not a line! This silence became inconvenient. Not only did I rely upon Berkley for my passport, the certificate of my character, but likewise for the revictualing of my purse. As I passed the small throne-room of Francine, where she sat vis-à-vis with all her keys and bells, a light, a presence, an amicable little nod informed me that a friend was there for me, and sent a bath of warm and comfortable emotion all over my poor old heart.

It was late. Francine, at a little velvet account-book, was executing some fairy-like and poetical arithmetic in purple ink. I had the pleasure, before a half hour had passed, of making her commit more than one error in her columns, do violet violence to the neatness of her book, and adorn her thumb-nail with a comical tiny silhouette. My gossip, which had this encouraging and proud effect, was commenced easily upon familiar subjects, such as the old rose-garden and the chickens, but branched imperceptibly into more personal confidences. I found myself growing strangely confidential. Soon I had sketched for Francine my life of opulent loneliness, my cook and my old valet, my philosopher's den at Marly, my negligent existence at Paris, without family, country or obligations.

Her good gray eyes were swimming with tears, I thought. With a look of perfect natural sweetness she said, "To live alone and far from kin and fatherland, that is not amusing. It is like one of the small straight sticks of rose my father would take and plant in the sand in a far-away little red pot."

A delicious vignette, I confess, began to be outlined in my fancy. I cannot describe it, but I know Francine was in the middle repairing a stocking, while my own books and geographical notes, in a state of dustlessness they had never known actually, formed a brown bower around her. Somewhere near, in an old secretary or in a grave, was buried the ideal of an earlier, haughtier love; wrapped up in a stolen ribbon or pressed in a book.

She continued simply, "I am very much alone myself. Without the visits of Monsieur Fortnoye I should be dead of ennui. I am so glad to find you know him, monsieur!"

This jarred upon me more than I can say. I assumed, as one can at my age, an air of parental benevolence, in which I administered my dissatisfaction: "Fortnoye is a roysterer, a squanderer, a wanderer and a *pètroleur*. At your age, my child, you are really imprudent."

"He is a little wild, but he is young himself. And so good, so generous, so kind! I owe him everything."

"On what conditions?" said I, more severely perhaps than I meant. "Your relations, my daughter, are not very clear. Is he then your *verlobter*?"

She looked at me with an expression of stupefaction, then buried her face in her hands: "He my intended! Has he ever dreamed of such a thing? Am I not a poor flower-girl?"

And she was sobbing through her fingers.

My nights were sweet at Carlsruhe. My slumber was ushered in with those delicious dream-sketches that lend their grace to folly. Each morning I wondered what surprise the day would arrange for me.

The little wood was hidden from my window by an early fog: the birds were silent. I was meditating on my singular position, in pawn as it were under the care of Joliet's good daughter, when I heard my name pronounced at the bottom of the stairs. It was Sylvester Berkley.

The briskness of our friendships depends on the time when—the place where. To men in prison a familiar face is the next thing to liberty.

Some years ago I had an absurd dispute with a neighbor about a party-wall at Passy, and was obliged to go to the Palace of Justice at ten every morning for a week. My forced intercourse with those solemn birds in black plumage had a singular effect on me. While among them I felt as if cut off from my species, and visiting with Gulliver some dreadful island peopled with mere allegories. As the time passed I grew worse: I dragged myself to the Cité with horror, and before returning home was always obliged to wash out my brains by a short stroll in Notre Dame or amongst the fine glass of the Sainte Chapelle. One day, pacing the pale and shuffling corridors of the palace, waiting for an unpunctual lawyer, and regarding the gowns and caps around me with insupportable hate, at the turning of a passage—oh happiness!—a face was revealed in the distance, the face of a friend, the face of an old neighbor. At the bright apparition I made an involuntary sign of joy: the owner of the face seemed no less pleased. We walked toward each other, our hands expanded. All of a sudden a doubt seemed to strike us both at the same moment: he slackened his pace, I slackened mine. We met: we had never done so before. It was a little mistake. We saluted each other slightly and gravely,

and separated once more, as wise in our looks as that irreproachable hero who, after marching up the hill with his men, pocketed his thoughts and marched down again.

My meeting with Berkley Junior was not precisely similar, but connected with the same feelings and associations. I dashed down four steps at a time, precipitated myself on him like a bird of prey, and wrung his hands again and again with fondest violence.

Now, up to that date my relations with Sylvester Berkley had been of a frigid and formal description. I had met him two or three times with his hearty old relation, and had borne away the distinct impression that he was a prig. While the uncle would breakfast in his tub, like Diogenes, off simple bones and cutlets, Sylvester ate some sort of a mash made of bruised oats: while the nephew made an untenable pretension to family honors, the elder talked familiarly of the porcelain trade, freely alluding to the youth as a piece of precious Sèvres that had cracked.

He met my advances with a calmness, imprinted with astonishment, that recalled me to myself. Against such a refrigerator my heart and fancy recovered their proper level: I had been caressing an iceberg in a white cravat. I examined my emotions, and found, to my shame, that my warmth had a selfish origin in the fact that I was alone in Carlsruhe, greatly in need of a passport and a purse.

"Do you intend shortly to quit the archducal seat?" asked Sylvester, by way of an agreeable remark.

"I have the strongest obligations to be at home," I returned. "I only await your kind assistance about my passport."

"It is expected at the office, but I fear it will not be received in time for you to take the next train. I fear we shall be obliged to keep you with us until thirty minutes past one."

He conferred on me, with his neck and his hand, a salute which had the effect of being made from a distant window. Then he departed.

To ask such a man for money was not easy. I dressed myself and marched in great haste to the gay quarter of the town, having made up my mind to depend on the mercies of the chief jeweler and the merits of my Poitevin watch. It had cost a thousand francs, and would surely, after many a service rendered, help me now to regain my home.

Another disappointment—not a pawn-broker to be found in Carlsruhe! I was ready to look upon myself as a fixture in the town, when a brilliant idea flashed upon me. One of my neighbors at table was transportation-agent at the railway dépôt. What so opportune for me as a credit on the railway company? With his recommendation my watch would surely be security enough.

Delighted with the thought, and with my own cleverness in originating it, I made briskly for the Ettlingen Gate, before which the road passes. Glancing at the clock on the dépôt, I regulated first my watch by the time of the place, in order that no doubt might be cast on its perfect regularity. I was holding it in my hand, my eyes still riveted on the great clock, as I stepped over the nearest rails. A shout, mixed with imprecations, was audible. My coat was seized by a vigorous fist, I was rudely pushed, my watch escaped, and the train from Frankfort, which was just entering the dépôt, only rendered it to my hands crushed, peeled and pounded. Instead of a thousand francs, my old friend would hardly bring five dollars.

After such a catastrophe what remained for me to do? Evidently to humble my pride and beg an obolus of young Berkley. I represented to myself that the victory over my own false shame was worth many watches, and I began to compose a little speech intended for his ear, in which I compared myself to Dante at the convent door.

I found him in his office clasping a hand-valise. "I am about to go away by your train," he said, without waiting for me to speak or remarking my shabby-genteel expression of heroism. He added, as he handed me a great sealed envelope, "There is your passport. Nothing imperative requires my stay here: I shall accompany you, then, as far as the station of Oos, and while you are continuing your route toward your beloved metropolis, I will go and finish my leave of absence at Baden-Baden, where I am claimed by certain conditions of my liver."

I was so nervous and uncertain of myself that this little change in the horizon upset me completely. For the life of me I could not, at that moment, and at the risk of seeing him drop his bag and rain its contents over the official courtyard, rehearse my awkward accident and disreputable beggary. On the other hand, it was much to gain a friendly companion and pass arm-in-arm with him to the ticket-office. Leaving every other plan uncertain, I determined to start from Carlsruhe in his diplomatic shadow.

I dashed with surprising agility into the house to ask for my account with Francine. I was about to explain that I would quickly settle with her from Paris, when the thoughtful little woman anticipated me. "Monsieur Flemming," she said, with her sweet supplicating air, "you left the city without meaning it. If you would like a little advance, monsieur, I am quite well supplied just now. Dispose of me: I shall be so thankful!"

The money of Fortnoye! the thought was impossible. It was impossible to resist taking her bright brown head between my hands and secreting a kiss somewhere in the laminations of the artisanne cap.

"Dear infant! I shall be an unhappy old fellow if I do not see you again very soon."

–And I was off, dragged by those obligations of the time-table which have no tenderness toward human sentiment. At one o'clock I was at the railway with Sylvester. I was uncertain of my plans, and the confusion of the dépôt added nothing to the clearness inside my head. Berkley advanced first to the ticket-seller's window. "A first-class place for Baden-Baden," said he.

"How many?" briskly asked the clerk, seeing us together.

At that moment Sylvester heard a ghostly voice at his ear: "You may get a couple." The voice was mine.

Berkley got them and paid. I had reflected that my letter of credit from Munroe & Co. would undoubtedly be drawn on Baden-Baden, and had suddenly taken a resolution to try the effect of the springs on my unfortunate stoutness.

We got down at the Gasthaus zum Hirsch, but I had already sold the ruins of my chronometer, and was twenty-five francs the richer for the transaction.

I cannot call Baden-Baden a city: it is a stage. It is a perpetually set-scene for light opera. Everything seems dressed up and artificial, and meant to be viewed, as it were, in the glare of the foot-lights. But instead of the shepherds in white satin who ought to be the performers in this ingenious theatre, it is the unaccustomed stranger who is forced into the position of actor. As he toils up the steep and slovenly streets, faced with shabby buildings that crack and blacken behind their ill-adjusted fronts of stucco and distemper, he cheapens rapidly in his own view: he feels painfully like the hapless supernumerary whom he has seen mounting an obvious step-ladder behind a screen of rock-work on his way to a wedding in the chapel or a coronation in the Capitol. The difference is, that here the permission to play his rôle is paid for by the performer.

But I, as I sat hugging my knee in the hotel bed-room, was possessed by loftier feelings. If there is one faculty which I can fairly extol in myself, it is that of displaying true sentiment in false situations. My thoughts, with incredible agility, went back to Francine. A knock came at the door, and my emotions received a chill: my visitor could be none but Berkley, in whose face I should see a reminder that I owed him for my car-fare.

In place of frigid politeness, however, the diplomatist wore all that he knew of good-fellowship and Bohemianism. He was now clad in tourists' plaid, and stood upon soles half an inch thick—a true Englishman on his travels.

"Come, old boy!"—old boy, indeed!—"you must taste the pleasures of Baden-Baden: it is but four o'clock, and we can see the Trinkhalle, the Conversations-Haus, and plenty besides before dinner. Is there any place in particular where you would like to go?"

I looked solemnly at him. "I would fain visit the Alt-Schloss," I said.

"With all my heart!" replied Sylvester, tapping his legs and admiring his boots. This unpromising comrade was wearing better than I expected.

"Shall we have a carriage?" he pursued. At this question my face contracted as by the effect of a nervous attack. I thought of the few pence I possessed. I assumed the determined pedestrian.

"For shame!" I cried: "it is but three miles. Where are your tourist muscles? I should like to walk."

"Nothing simpler," said the man of facile views: "we shall do it within the hour."

I breathed again. We set off. We had before us cliffs and hills, with small Gothic towers printed on the blue of the sky; but the mountain-path beneath our steps was sanded, graveled, packed, rolled, weeded, and provided with coquettish sofas at every hundred steps. I, who happened that afternoon to feel the emotions of Manfred, would gladly have exchanged these detestable conveniences for precipices, storms and eagles.

"How ridiculous," I said with a little temper, "to go to a ruin by way of the boulevards!"

"Ah," said my companion of complaisant manners, "you like Nature? It is but the choosing."

And Berkley, perfectly acquainted with the locality, directed our steps into a narrow path hardly traced through the woods. Here at least were flowers and grass and sylvan shadows. No sooner did I smell the balm of the pine trees than my heart resigned itself, with exquisite indecision, to the thoughts of Francine Joliet and the memories of Mary Ashburton. I glanced at Berkley: he seemed, in Scotch clothes, a little less impenetrable than he had appeared in white cravat and dress-gloves. I cannot restrain my confidences when a man is near me: I buttonholed Sylvester, and I made the plunge. "I used to talk of the Alt-Schloss," I murmured, "with one whom I have lost."

"Ah, I comprehend: with my late uncle, perhaps."

"No, sir, not with any cynic in a tub, but with a maiden in her flower. It was one of the best points I made with Miss Ashburton."

"The Alt-Schloss is indeed a picturesque construction," said the diplomate, by way of generally inviting my confidence.

"We were conversing about the poems of Salis and Matthisson," I pursued. "I had in my pocket a little translation of Salis's song entitled 'The Silent Land,' and endeavored to bend the dialogue in a suitable direction, but these allusions are incredibly hard to introduce in conversation, and we happened to stray upon Baden-Baden. I asked Miss Ashburton if she had been here, and she answered, 'Yes, the last summer.' 'And you have not forgotten?' I suggested—'The old castle,' she rejoined. 'Of course not. What a magnificent ruin it is!'"

"What tact your friend displayed," said Berkley, "to feign utter unconsciousness of the green tables, and see nothing but ruins in Baden-Baden!"

"Permit me to say," I replied quickly, "that it is not agreeable to me to have that lady alluded to, however distantly, in connection with gambling-tables. The Ashburtons had been probably drinking the waters, for her mother was noticeably stout and florid. But to continue with the poets. I explained to her that the ruins of the Alt-Schloss had suggested to Matthisson a poem in imitation of an English masterpiece. Matthisson made a study of Gray's 'Elegy,' and from it produced his 'Elegy on the Ruins of an Ancient Castle.' Miss Ashburton became nationally enthusiastic, and said she should like very much to see the poem. Her wish was usually my law, but the translation of the other song being in my pocket, I was obliged to palm it off upon her; and after conceding that Matthisson had written his 'Elegy' with unwonted inspiration, I sailed in upon that tide of feeling—with a slight inconsequence, to be sure—and declaimed my version from Salis. Miss Ashburton, sir, was obliged to turn away to hide her tears."

"I used to hear from my uncle of your attachment," said Sylvester, with his politest air of condolence, "and I assure you my opinion ever has been that your feelings did you honor. Nothing, in my view, is so becoming to gray hairs and the evening of life as fidelity to a first passion."

"Lord forgive you, Berkley!" I exclaimed, startled out of all self-possession by his impertinence. "What on earth do you mean? You are completely ignorant of what you are talking about. I have hardly any gray hairs, and some excellent constitutions are gray at thirty. You are partly bald yourself:

I know it from the way you turn up your love-locks. And it was not Miss Ashburton I was talking about. That is, if I did derive my reminiscences from her, it was with an object of a very different character at the end of the perspective. I have adopted other views; that is, I have lately had presented to my mind—"

With these rhetorical somersaults, like the flappings of a carp upon the straw, did I express the mental distractions I was suffering from, and the tugs at my heart respectively administered by Francine's cap-strings and Mary Ashburton's shadowy tresses. Berkley, diplomatically approving the landscape before us, would not get angry, would not be insulted, and offered no prise to my difficult temper.

"Tell me now, Sylvester," said I after a few minutes' silence. "You are young, yet you have seen the world. What is the best refuge, in your view, for a man of delicate sentiments and of ripe age? Would you recommend such a person to shut himself up for ever in a hermitage of musty books, and to flirt there eternally with the memories of his young loves, who are become corpulent matrons or angular maids? Or, don't you think, now, that an autumnal attachment—provided some sweet and healthy intelligence comes in contact with his own—is a capital thing in its way? The crackling fireside instead of the lovers' walk? The perfection of rational comfort subservient to, rather than dominating, his early dreams? Respectful affection, fidelity and fondest care as the conditions surrounding one's character, and upholding it in its best symmetry? Cannot the poet think better if his body is kept snug? Cannot the man of feeling remember better if his slippers are toasted and his buttons sewed? In fact, is not one's faith to a beloved ideal best shown by acquiring a fresh standing-point to see it from?"

"No doubt Hamlet's mother thought so," said Sylvester rather brutally, "and married King Claudius solely to brighten her ideal of her first husband." A more appropriate remark, it seemed to me, might have been found to chime in with my speculations. "But here," pursued the statesman, compromisingly, "are old memories protected by modern conveniences. Here is the 'Repose of Sophie.'"

We had mounted a terrace from whose eminence the whole spread of the valley was visible. Profanation! No sooner had we attained the plateau than a covered gallery appeared, and a Teutonic voice was heard with the familiar inquiry, "Will the gentlemen take wine or beer?"

Was ever a man of delicacy and feeling so ruthlessly treated as I? To be tempted by circumstances into pouring out one's most intimate confessions to an icy person to whom one owes money, and then to have even this imperfect confidence interrupted by a tavern-waiter in an apron! Miserable hireling! give us solitude and meditation, not beer!

Flying the "Repose of Sophie" without the concession of a glance, we mounted toward the ancient castle, whose ruins seemed ready to roll on us down the hillside. It was indeed romantic. The wind, in plaintive, melodious tones, searched our ears as it came perfumed from the tufted walls. We penetrated through a scene of high and mossy rocks, bound in the lean embrace of knotted ivy, and finally by a dismantled postern we intruded into the castle. Sacrilege again! The stone-masons were tranquilly working here and there, solidifying old ruins and very probably fabricating new ones. The wind, whose sighing we had admired, was the cat-like harmony of the æolian harps: these harps were artlessly stretched across each of the old vaulted windows. We arrived at the high portal of the ancient manor, a genuine Roman construction of Aurelius Aquensis—a gateway with a round arch: it was obstructed by hired cabs, by whole herds of venal donkeys saddled and bridled, and by holiday-makers of Baden in Sunday clothes preserved for ten or fifteen years. The old pile itself is transformed into a hostelry. Gray was wrong: the paths of glory lead not to the grave, but to the *gasthaus*; and Matthisson could have imitated the "Elegy" about as well in the gaming-hall as among these rejuvenated ruins.

The modern idea of a wood is a graveled chess-board on a large scale, flooded at night with gas: the modern idea of a ruin is a dancing-floor, with a few patched arches and walls lifted between the wind and our nobility. We shave the weeds away and produce a fine English turf: we root up the

brambles and eglantines which might tear the skirts of the ladies. Our lovers, our poets and romancers must fly to distant glades if they would not walk in the shade of trees that have been transplanted.

I was considering the sorry triumph of the stage-machinists of Baden-Baden, when Berkley, who had disappeared, came in sight again. Our dinner, he said, was ready—ready in the guards' hall. I retreated with a sudden cry of alarm. I had rather dine at the hotel; I had rather not dine at all; I was not in the least hungry. It was the emptiness of my pocket that caused this sudden fullness, of the stomach. Berkley made light of my objections.

"Listen! You can hear from this mountain the dinner-bells of the city. We should arrive too late. Although you hate restored castles, you need not refuse to dine with me in one."

The noble hall was a scene of vulgar festivity, where the ubiquitous kellner, racing to and fro with beer and plates of sausage, solved the problem of perpetual motion. It was not easy, in such circumstances, to maintain the flow of poetic association, but I accomplished the feat in a measure. As the shades of evening closed around the hill, and the bells of twenty dining-tables ascended to us through the still air, I thought of Gray's curfew—of that glimmering Stoke-Pogis landscape that faded into immortality on his sight. I thought of Matthisson's "Elegy" on this forlorn old dandy of a castle. I thought of the sympathetic chest-notes with which I read to Mary Ashburton the "Song of the Silent Land."

I thought of Francine, and of the condition of base terror I was in when I ran away from her with the man who momentarily represented my solvency, my credit and my respectability. May the foul fiend catch me, sweet vision, if I do not find thee soon again! A Tyrolean, who entered by stealth, persuaded a heart-rending lamentation to issue from his wooden trumpet: although the acid sounds proceeding from this terrible whistle set my teeth on edge and caused me at first to start off my seat, yet I rewarded him with such a competency in copper as made his eyes emerge from his face. A singing-girl and some blonde bouquet-sellers had equal cause to rejoice in my generosity. It is when a gentleman is landed finally on his coppers that he becomes penny-liberal. I glanced defiance at Berkley, my creditor, as I showered largess on these humble poets.

We descended under the stars, and I began to think that illuminated gravel-roads were, at night, susceptible of some apology. We returned to the city by easy stages, with a halt at the "Repose of Sophie." At the hotel there was given me, re-directed in the pretty hand of Francine, an unlimited credit from Munroe & Co. on the house of Meyer in Baden-Baden. I was a freeman once more.

EDWARD STRAHAN.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

AUTUMN LEAVES

My life is like the autumn leaves
Now falling fast,
Which grew of late so fresh and fair—
Too fair to last.

The mar of earth and canker-worm
The foliage bears;
So my poor life of sin and care
The impress wears.

As shine the leaves before they fall
With brighter hue,
And each defect of worm and time
Is lost to view,

So may my life, when fading, shine
With brighter ray,
And brighter still as nearer to
The perfect day.

And as new life still springs again
From fallen leaves,
And richer life a thousand-fold
From gathered sheaves;

So, God, if aught in me was good,
The good repeat,
And let me from my ashes breathe
An influence sweet.

W.

SKETCHES OF EASTERN TRAVEL

III.—BANGKOK

We left Singapore—which, though an English colony, is a very Babel of languages and nations—in a Bombay merchantman, whose captain was an Arab, the cook Chinese, and the fourteen men who composed the crew belonged to at least half that many different nations, whilst our party in the cabin were English, Scotch, French and American. After eight days of rather stormy weather we disembarked at the mouth of the Meinam River, thirty miles below the city of Bangkok. Owing to the sandbar at the mouth, large vessels must either partially unload outside, or wait for the flood-tide when the moon is full to pass the bar; and to avoid the delay consequent upon either course, we took passage for the city in a native sampan pulled by eight men with long slender oars. The trip was a delightful one, giving us enchanting glimpses of the grand old city long before we reached it. Amid the mass of tropical foliage, gleaming out from among clustering palms and graceful banians, we could discern the gilded spires of gorgeous temples and palaces, of which Bangkok boasts probably not less than two hundred. The temples, with their glittering tiles of green and gold, and graceful turrets and pinnacles from which hang tiny tinkling bells that ring out sweet music with every passing breeze, their tall, slender pagodas and picturesque monasteries, stand all along the banks of the river, its most conspicuous adornments. But pre-eminent, both for height and splendor, is Wat Chang, visible, all but its base, from the very mouth of the river. Its central spire, full three hundred feet in height, towers grandly above the surrounding turrets and pagodas, the white walls gleaming out from the dark foliage of the banian, and the feathery fringes of the palm reflected on its shining roof.

The two main entrances to the royal palace are of white masonry very elaborately adorned. Groups of elegant columns support a capital composed of nine crowns rising one above the other, and terminating in a slender spire of some forty feet. The whole is inlaid in exquisite mosaics of porcelain, the various colors arranged in quaint devices, so as to produce the happiest effect, while the reflection of the sun's rays upon the glazed tiles, the numberless turrets and pinnacles of the lofty pile, and the porticoes and balconies of pure white marble opening from every window, and leading to delectable conservatories, luxurious baths or fairy groves and arbors, present, as grouped together, a sight worth a trip across the waters to enjoy. The engraving represents one of these entrances, and His Majesty Somdetch Phra Paramendr Maha Mongkut, the late supreme king of Siam, on his return from his usual afternoon promenade. This "promenade," however, was not a walk, a ride or a drive, but an airing in one of the royal state barges. For the late king, true to the usages of his forefathers, continued to the very close of his life to make all his tours, public and private, with very rare exceptions, by water. This has heretofore been the custom of all classes, the gently-flowing Meinam being the Broadway of Bangkok, and canals, intersecting the city in every direction, its cross streets. Every family keeps one or more boats and a full complement of rowers; palaces and temples have their gates on the river; and upon its placid waters move in ever-varying panorama life's shifting scenes of weddings and funerals, business and pleasure, from early morn till long past midnight. Only since the accession of the present kings have streets been constructed along the river-banks; and these young princes, as a sort of concession to European customs, now take occasional drives in open carriages, attended by liveried servants, though for state processions boats are still in vogue. His Majesty the late king was ordinarily conveyed to the jetty in a state palanquin, and handed from it into his boat, without the sole of his boot ever touching the ground. This has been the custom of Siamese monarchs from time immemorial, but I have sometimes seen both the late kings wave aside their bearers and jump with agile dexterity into their boats, as if it were a relief to them to lay aside courtly etiquette and act like ordinary mortals. The royal palanquins are completely covered with plates of pure gold inlaid

with pearls, and the cushions are of velvet embroidered, and edged with heavy gold lace. They are borne by sixteen men robed in azure silk sarangs and shirts of embroidered muslin. The umbrella is of blue, crimson or purple silk, and for state occasions is richly embroidered, and studded with precious stones. So also are those placed over the throne, the sofa, or whatever seat the king happens to occupy.

The late supreme king, who died in 1868 at the age of sixty-five, was tall and slender in person, of intellectual countenance and noble, commanding presence. His ordinary dress was of heavy, dark silk, richly embroidered, with the occasional addition of a military coat. He wore also the decorations of several orders, and a crown—not the large one, which is worn but once in a lifetime, and that on the coronation-day—but the one for regular use, which is of fine gold, conical in shape and the rim completely surrounded by a circlet of magnificent diamonds. This prince, the most illustrious of all the kings of Siam, spent many of the best years of his life in the priesthood as high priest of the kingdom. He was a profound scholar, not only in Oriental lore, but in many European tongues and in the sciences. In public he was rather reticent, but in the retirement of the social circle and among his European friends the real symmetry of his noble character was fully displayed, winning not only the reverence but the warm affection of all who knew him. He died universally regretted, and the young prince now reigning as supreme king is his eldest surviving son: the second king is his nephew.

Among the choice treasures of Siam are her elephants, but they belong exclusively to the Crown, and may be employed only at the royal command. They are used in state processions and in traveling by the king and members of the royal family, and in war at the king's mandate only. It is death for a Siamese subject, unbidden by his sovereign, to mount one of His Majesty's elephants. In war they are considered very effective, their immense size and weight alone rendering them exceedingly destructive in trampling down and crushing foot-soldiers. The howdah is placed well up on the animal's back, and in it sits a military officer of high rank, with an iron helmet on his head, and above him a seven-layered umbrella, as the insignia of his royal commission. On the croup sits the groom, guiding the royal beast with an iron hook, while all about the officer are disposed lances, javelins, pikes, helmets and other munitions of war, which he dispenses as they are needed during the progress of a battle. I have been told that as many as six or seven hundred of these colossal creatures are often marched and marshaled in battle together; and so perfectly are they trained as to be guided and controlled without difficulty, even amid the din of firearms and the conflict of contending armies. Sometimes on the king's journeys into the interior a train of fifty or sixty will be marched in perfect order, their stately stepping beautiful to behold, but their huge feet coming down with a jolt that threatens to dislocate every joint of the unfortunate rider.

I have spoken of the gorgeousness of the Bangkok temples, but I must not forget to mention the colossal statue of Booddh that reposes in one of them. It is one hundred and seventy feet in length, of solid masonry, perfectly covered with a plating of pure gold, and rests quite naturally upon the right side, the recumbent position indicating the dreamless repose the god now enjoys in *nirwâna*. This is supposed to be the largest image of Gautama, the fourth Booddh, in existence, and it is an object of the profoundest veneration to every devout Booddhist.

Incremation of the dead is the custom in Siam, and while there I was present at several royal funerals, each marked by more lavish display of costly magnificence than we Americans ever see on this side the water. Shortly after I left the country occurred the death of the patriotic second king, so well and favorably known among us as Prince T. Momfanoi, the introducer of square-rigged vessels and many other improvements, and afterward as King Somdet Phra Pawarendr Kamesr Maha Waresr. The body was embalmed, and lay in state for nearly a year before the burning took place. The count de Beauvoir reached Bangkok just in time to see the royal catafalque, of which he gives a somewhat amusing account. He says: "The body, having been thoroughly dried by mercury, was so doubled that the head and feet came together, and after being tied up like a sausage was deposited in a golden urn on the top of the mausoleum." He speaks of the state officers in attendance by day and by night, and the dead king, from the golden urn on the very summit of the altar, holding his court with the same

pomp and parade as during his life. A more affecting ceremony is the coming at noon and eve of the crowds of beautiful women, not yet absolved from their wifely vows, to converse with their loved and lamented lord, and the depositing of letters and petitions in the great golden basket at the foot of the mausoleum, with the confident expectation that these loving missives will reach the deceased and be answered by him. These royal catafalques are costly and magnificent, being covered with plates of gold, while the silks and perfumes consumed with a single body cost thousands of dollars.

M. de Beauvoir describes an interview with the king, surrounded by ten of his offspring, including the seventy-second child. I well remember the eldest son, the present supreme king, now in his twentieth year, looking when five years old the exact counterpart of this one—his graceful little figure, dimpled cheeks, eyes lustrous as diamonds, and the glossy, raven hair, close shaven at the back, while the foretop was coiled in a smooth knot, fastened with jeweled pins and twined with fragrant flowers. The dress was very simple—only two garments of silk or embroidered muslin—but the deficiency was more than made up by jewelry, of which, in the form of chains, rings, anklets and bracelets, he wore almost incredible quantities, while his golden girdle was studded with costly diamonds.

Polygamy prevails in its fullest extent in Siam, especially among those of noble or royal lineage; and the higher the rank the larger the number of wives, those of the supreme king amounting ordinarily to five or six hundred. Of these, the "superior wife" holds the rank of queen: she resides within the harem proper, where are the private apartments of the king, and her children are always the legal heirs. For the other wives or concubines, their children and attendants, there is a whole circle of buildings, connected by balconies with the palace royal. All these are handsomely fitted up, but what is called "the harem" pre-eminently is more gorgeous than our dreams of fairy palaces or enchanted castles of genii. Long suites of apartments with frescoed walls, ceilings of gold and pearl, floors inlaid with exquisite mosaics of silver and ebony, and with hangings of costly lace, velvet and satin, huge waxen candles, and lamps fed with perfumed oil that are never suffered to expire, mirrors, pictures, and statuettes innumerable, with cups, basins, and even spittoons, of pure gold,—all these are but a tithe of the lavish adornments of this Oriental paradise, where birds sing, flowers bloom, and the sounds of low sweet music ever greet the ear of the favored visitor. The accompanying engraving will give some idea of the general appearance of the entrance to the harem, with its burnished roof of green and gold, its graceful turrets and mosque-like pinnacles, and its base of pure white marble, chaste and elegant. But neither language nor pictorial illustration can convey to the mind any adequate realization of its bewildering beauty; and Count de Beauvoir but echoes the language of every traveler who has visited Bangkok when he declares, in his recent work, that "its temples and palaces are the most splendid of even the gorgeous East."

FANNIE R. FEUDGE.

LIFE AT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

There are few cities where life is so well put upon the stage as in Washington, so far as opportunity for satisfaction and enjoyment is considered. A certain grandeur characterizes all the approaches to the city. From the west you descend upon it by a way that leads out of cloudy mountain-chains and over chasms spanned by an awful trestle-work; from the south, passing our national Mecca, the Tomb of Washington, your highway is the picturesque Potomac, which here, nearly three hundred miles from the sea, broadly embays itself as if to mirror the magnificence of the place; from the north the track winds along the banks of the Delaware, white with its coastwise commerce, in and out among the beautiful bridges that arch the Schuylkill, across the broad Susquehanna, past blazing forges and foundries, and over the long and lonely expanses of the two Gunpowder Rivers—desert wastes of water, stretching for miles away without a sail, without a light, in the melancholy grandeur of a very dream of desolation. If it is at night that you step from the station, halfway down the distance you presently see the ray of a street-lamp throw up the façade of the Patent Office in broken light and shadow; you see before you and under the hill the twinkle of scattered groups of light; you see, far off, the long row of the Treasury columns half lost in darkness, and you will remember pictured scenes of bivouacs among the ruins of Baalbec. And if it is in the morning that you arrive, fresh from the turbulence of Broadway, from the quaint and tortuous hillside lanes of Boston, from the elegant monotony of Philadelphia, the impression made upon you is still not very different. Though you are in the heart of the place, it seems to lie before you like a city in the distance. Now the mist is stripped away from some massive marble pile; now a prospect opens of river and wood and the pillared heights of Arlington; now a lofty heaven reveals a waning moon, it may be—for every square has its horizon—the morning-star flames out, a red and yellow sunrise burns behind the silver cloud of the Capitol dome, and the whole city, in its splendor and its squalor, bared to view, gives you a suffocating sense of the pettiness of all other places before the opulence of sky, the width and height, the light and space and air, that Washington affords.

The concentric labyrinth of the city's plan is indeed something altogether unique; but whether it owes its origin to the fear of the old French barricade or to a desire for grandeur and scope, the effect attained is the same one of airy magnificence—monstrous avenues crossing the right angles of the streets in diagonals radiating from the White House and the Capitol, and all tiresomeness prevented by the accommodating way which these avenues have of turning out for any edifice that fancies their situation; while to keep upon them you are so perpetually crossing one street or losing your way down another that you may almost imagine yourself a spider walking across a web.

The designer of all this must have had a city in his mind's eye that rivaled Napoleon's Paris—buildings, monuments, marbles, fountains, trees, and everywhere great spaces and shining skies. For years, though, this visionary city has existed only among the castles of the air, and it is within a little while that the District government has begun to put in a substantial underpinning to the cloudy fabric. But although wretched thoroughfares and dilapidated dwellings, until the last decade, have characterized the place, the fine public buildings have for a long while awaited their fit surroundings—buildings mostly of the Grecian types, which, however unfit they might be for a land where damp dark heavens make all the spires that can spring up to catch the sunshine a necessity, are perfectly appropriate to a climate where the long hot summers demand the shelter of flat roofs and cool protecting porticoes. There are, then, already, the Patent Office, with its massive Doric simplicity; the Treasury, with the superb extent of its columned sides; the Post Office, with its dazzling Corinthian splendor; the Institution, with its romantic towers and turrets of dark red stone, ivy-grown and in the midst of gardens; and the Capitol, whose dome rises over the city, so pale, so perfect and so buoyant that it seems only a cloud among the clouds—a pile that by daylight looks like a white altar of liberty set on its hilltop among velvet lawns and embowering trees, and which by starlight—when you see the

sentinel lamps throw out the great shadows of the arches at its foundation, see the lofty flights of steps with their exquisite gradation, see the long flying lines of the rows of columns, monoliths of marble, taking a sparkle of light and retreating into distance and darkness, and follow up the heights till your eye rests on the shadowy dome hanging in the mid-heavens with the stars themselves—seems in its vast white sublimity the shrine of nothing less than the Genius of the nation. And by and by, when the building shall be quite complete, and shrubbery shall have grown in the new grounds, when the almond and the tulip tree and that burning bush the scarlet Japan quince, shall have come to blossom there, and the giant magnolia shall lift its snowy urns of incense about the spot, imagination will be able to conjure up no image of majesty and beauty eclipsing the reality. For all this and much more is now under way: streets have been leveled and paved and parked, embankments have been terraced, boulevards have been planted with mile-long rows of lindens, blossoming gardens have been laid out, fountains have been opened, and such dwellings erected with their grass-plots and their water-jets before them, in place of the bare old barracks and shanties, that it is now a city of parks and palaces. Your carriage can roll for leagues over streets whose roadway is smooth as a floor, past squares rich in the foliage and flower of their season, enchanting pictures of river and height unveiled at every turn, and the squalor once so prominent is seen striking its tents, while only the splendor remains. There is hardly a street but down its vista some allurement is displayed: this one reaches far away, through the green of willows and the blue of distance, across the Long Bridge and into the hills of Virginia; that one ends in the Agricultural Department and its delightful grounds; down these the Institution is seen at various angles in various guises; while the great Pennsylvania Avenue gives you at one end the Capitol dome, always a thin and pale blue mist about its whiteness, with the shining colonnades that bear it lifted high over the tossing treetops below, and at the other end the southern façade of the Treasury, rising before you like an antique temple, while noble views open at every intersection of the cross-streets there; and toward nightfall the distant mists of the river-country beyond build up sunsets unrivaled in their gorgeousness.

There are few more interesting thoroughfares in the world than this avenue. Here ruler and ruled jostle each other; here thunder the liveried equipages of foreign nobles; here saunters the President, and nobody turns to look. Sooner or later all the famous of the world are tolerably sure to be met upon it: as we walk there History walks beside us and mighty shadows move before us. Washington has dashed down that avenue in his yellow chariot that was painted with cupids and drawn by six white horses; Hamilton, Jefferson, La Fayette, Burr, and all the gods of the republic have trodden it before us; dishonoring British squadrons have marched upon it; it has shaken to the tread of our own legions; and great forms begin to loom in the national memory that have just passed from its daily crowds. Nor does all its interest belong to the past: those daily crowds themselves are full of perpetual dramas in which the actors are unknown perhaps to fame or fiction, but none the less real and in sad earnest with their play. Here goes a little withered man in his threadbare coat: he has a proud and scowling face, but he pauses with a singularly sweet and gentle manner at every group of children, black or white. He is an old numismatician, a foreigner, and his youth in Europe was given to the gathering of coins and medals till he had a nearly unrivaled collection, and he came over the sea, hoping to dispose of them to the government of this country. Failing in his purpose, his means dwindling day by day, he was obliged to pledge a portion of his treasure that he might be able to live. It cut him to the heart to divide the collection: he had the history of the world in those incontrovertible records of brass and silver and gold, currency of the old Hindoo, of the Assyrian—medals where Alexander's superb profile shone crowned as Apollo—coins of the Ptolemies, of the Cæsars, of almost every people and generation from the beginning of civilization till to-day. But divide them he did, and left a part of them in other hands, and went to the North. There, driven by necessity, he pledged another portion; and after a while, wishing to redeem the latter pledge, and not being allowed to do so, he began a lawsuit to obtain it. The court decided the case against him; and the little man, half crazed, unable to obtain the portion he had pledged in Washington, and now seeing this also leave him, cried out in

the open court, "O unjust judge! God shall demand your soul of you!" And the judge, with a sudden exclamation, fell backward, and before the sun set he was dead. The little numismatician returned to Washington, and having failed in all the hopes of his life, took translating and any other writing he could find to do. But there a certain high official having treated him unworthily, he adjured him much as he had adjured the unjust judge; and a fortnight afterward the official had gone to join the judge. It is hardly surprising if there were a vague feeling toward this really excellent man and scholar as toward one having the evil eye, whom people dread to meet and fear to offend.

But here is another individual with another experience. Gems are his passion, and for years he has sacrificed to it. He is only an old clerk on a moderate salary, but no misadventure has ever disturbed his plans, and year by year he has added some treasure to his hoard till it is unique as it is precious. There are rings of bishops and kings; jeweled baubles from Egyptian tombs and gold-wrought ornaments of the Montezumas; a cameo where a single face with its shadows makes six laughing and six weeping outlines; a cat's-eye quartz to which the one the king of Siam has is perhaps the mate; diamonds and pearls, amethysts and topazes, beryls and opals, single emeralds of rare beauty and doublets of great size, rubies of the real pigeon's blood, and sapphires whose heart is blue as the bluest midnight, but whose angles refract a radiance red as fire; chains of carved beads; seals, intaglios,—to almost all of them some legend attaching.

Here passes a person very different from either of these—a tall and martial figure, a filibustero in every clime, hunted with blood-hounds in the Spanish sierras when Don Carlos needed him, floating naked on bladders down the Danube, with despatches in his mouth, when the Hungarians were sore pressed. Here goes a jolly, happy man, who contentedly lets title and coronet go by across the sea while he practices law in the Patent Office. Here on the avenue go up and down all these people, and countless others with stories as pointed, whether it be such a story as that of Captain Suter, whose treacherous servant bartered all the gold of California for a single drink, or of this black man who to-day is free and yesterday was a slave.

But attractive as this picturesque grouping of avenues and edifices may be, the attraction does not belong to the outside alone: inside the great doors of the majestic halls you will find that time has wings while you pass in review the trophies of all the zones, and of the meteoric heavens too, preserved in the Smithsonian, or the archives of the country in the Patent Office. This latter is indeed a place of enchantment. The Pompeiian hall has something of the air of a hall dressed for legerdemain, and if you pause to think you will note a strange wizardry at work there. You linger before a little printing-press, and as if magical clouds rose and shut out the work-day world, the skies of Greece are overhead and the Ancient searching for his lever with which to move the world passes down the room and lingers with you; for surely he has found the lever, and surely the world has been moved with it, the boundaries of empires broken up, kings discrowned, republics ruined. Go farther: a case of toys: harmless trifles enough, arrests you—cannon a finger long, batteries the size of a lady's spool-stand, but the reduced models of death-dealing engines whose power of wholesale slaughter may one day revolutionize the codes of nations and abolish warfare. In another case you observe only a lump of coal, a phial of pitch, a flask of oil; and the necromancer of the place has dipped his rod down into the central darkness of the earth and drawn up light like the day's. Yet beyond: an iron stirrup and a slender spur, and the sewing-girl has but to set her foot there and escape the shapes that dog her. Not far away, again, we remember the Oriental magician, who as often as the king cut off his head grew another in its place, as we see the machinery for a feat almost as wonderful in the exact anatomy of steel springs and leather ligaments made to fit upon the very nerves of volition themselves, till the halt walk and the maimed are made whole. In this spot is the jar into which the fisherman shut the afrite; in that are the great genii who gather in a harvest; and in still another there lies a tiny thing answering your touch with no louder noise than a buzz and a click, but its whisper can be heard from end to end of the land, and it runs beneath the roar of ocean to carry the voice of one world to another. In fact, within these crystal cells the intelligence of all our millions is concreted; and it is no wonder

that in the face of the marvels here inventors are sometimes seized with a temporary madness, and have to be cared for till the fit passes.

Inside the Capitol too there is much to detain you: the vast fireproof library of Congress; the legislative halls; the marble room, wainscoted in mirrors, where you can see the Senators slide between the pillars accompanied by the multiplying train of not one but a hundred shadows, and where you can wonder to your heart's content what a room lined with looking-glass has to do with legislation; the storied bronze doors, and the bronze staircases hidden away in the dark, in and out the intricacies of whose balustrades all manner of forest-life is cast—the deer bounding beneath the branches, and the birds fluttering over their nests, which the serpent slides along to rifle. In the older portion of the building is the national order of architecture designed by Jefferson, the columns of which are clustered cornstalks, and in whose capitals the acanthus leaf is pushed aside by the curling tobacco. The lower corridors, too, are pictured with representations of our natural history in bird and flower and fruit—far fitter decoration than the swarming cherubs and cupids and numberless unwarrantable little Loves that tumble about on the other walls, intrude themselves on battle-scenes, and hover round the appalling frescoes of Liberty, Law, Legislation and Religion in the President's room, after a fashion that would be too free and easy for the villa of Lucullus, but which is not altogether discordant with the splendid leprosy of gilding with which the whole interior is infected; which is to be seen oozing from the caissons overhead in huge stalactites, damasked in broad sheets on the paneling, glaring in lattice-work, bosses, scrolls and frets, and trickling everywhere over the efflorescence of the plaster decorations. There are two or three committee-rooms, likewise, very elaborately, though very questionably, decorated, and usually on exhibition to rural visitors, who gape at them with a happy sense of the proprietorship of such pomp. The least unworthy of these is the room set apart for the Committee on Military Affairs: vivid wreaths of laurel decorate the ceiling much more effectively than do the sprawling females of most of the other places; a couple of large battle-pieces illuminate the walls, and cornice, panel and pilaster are simply adorned with frescoed arms and muniments of war. Another is the room of the Agricultural Committee, where, with his group of Romans, Cincinnatus, called from the plough, fills the upper section of one end, and confronts his modern compeer, Israel Putnam; above two side doors little scenes of grain-harvesting illustrate the difference between the old and the new way of going afield; and circling overhead are the Seasons and their attendants—Spring, with armfuls of blossoms and cherubs letting loose the doves; Summer, whose sprites are shooting down arrows of fervid heat; Autumn, with his grapes and sheaves, and his followers festive with lute and tambourine; and old Winter, moving through angry clouds, while his children pour out the showers and blow blasts from their shells. In the room of the Committee on Naval Affairs on both sides as you enter rise grayly the vestibules of vast temples, typifying, perhaps, the sea as the gateway of all nations: above them, much foreshortened, Neptune and Amphitrite, Æolus, Oceanus, Nereus and Thetis, accompany a new sea-goddess, America, with scores of nymphs interspersed—all of them riding on sea-horses and simpering sadly; while in the great panels around the sides of the room other nymphs, painted at full length in lively colors, are bearing aloft various symbols of the sea—this one a sextant, that a chart, another a compass, a fourth a bannerol, sufficiently prosaic in idea, though not ungraceful in fact, as witness the floating damsel who carries a barometer lightly as a mermaid carries her glass, or the figure with the red-gold hair whose back alone we see as she unrolls her map. But it is not easy to say why we should recur to mythology for our national ornamentation, or why the ancient Greeks should be called in where our own history needs the canvas, or why these aërial young women should so comfortably usurp the place of the Guerriere and Constitution, the dauntless little boat between the fires on Lake Erie, or the unsurpassed sea-scenes of storm and calm along our own coast.

But there is far more than all this pride of the eyes to detain you within the Capitol: there is the great arena where our political athletes contend, and where, by daily observation of their faces, daily hearing of their voices, daily notice of their manners, one becomes familiar as if by personal

acquaintance with the heroes of the day. In past times the heroes were such as Webster, Calhoun and Clay. Now they are others—men whom this belittling age of the telegraph and the reporter brings so near us that there is at least little chance of their ever looming up in undue proportion through the mists of tradition. It is Henry Wilson, sitting in the Vice-President's chair, a notable example of the possibilities in a republic; or it is Sumner, with that gray head which all men honor as a type of political integrity, albeit not untinctured with arrogance; or it is another sort of man that engages your attention, one whom you recognize at once, for certainly there is no one but knows that face—a face so easy to caricature that there is no insult of the pencil that has not been offered it, but which is not the less expressive of an indomitable will, an untamable spirit, and a mind like a torch, throwing light on everything it approaches. From the instant that General Butler rises the discussion, however dull before, bristles into excitement, and one could hardly wish for an hour of racier enjoyment than is afforded by the debate when he desires to gain a point over able but envious opponents, who never attack him single-handed, and to meet whom, their shafts flying on every side, he brings up his subtlety of argument, his readiness, his audacity, his wit and repartee and forensic skill, till he winds them in their own toils. Perhaps while you have been observing these and other notabilities of the day, another personage has come upon the floor by prescriptive right of past membership, and has arrested your gaze. He is a gentleman of portly presence, who looks out of a pair of keen dark eyes, and still possesses some of the great personal beauty for which in his youth he was remarkable. He is the last of the old statesmen; he has had a part in many of the scenes that we call history; he was the compeer of Webster and Clay and Crittenden and Calhoun; and one would not marvel if he looked but contemptuously on the fevered measures and boyish ecstasies and advocacies of their successors. Familiar with modern languages and literatures, an encyclopædia of ancient and mediæval learning, a master of the science of government, as old as the century, and one of its conspicuous figures, perhaps but a single thing is wanting to make Mr. Cushing a chief: he does not believe in the people.

Thus it is easily seen that your life at the Federal Capital, if you possess either an eye for beauty or an interest in affairs, may be full of enjoyment and variety. Your companions are people of mark; you learn, by returning, when summer does, to the small scandals and personalities of common towns, how large is the outlook in Washington; the theatre of the world opens before you there; you feel that you assist at the making of history, if you are not yourself a part of events.

But this is one side of life. There is another and a more purely social side which is a very different thing. Into this affairs of state do not enter; with the right or wrong of vital questions it does not concern itself at all; and in fact it is doubtful if politics are not thought there mere subsidiaries to the authority of Fashion, and if the fair wives and daughters of our lawgivers do not regard the great machinery of state as something ordained solely to sustain them in their brilliant round as the wind of the juggler's fan supports his paper butterflies upon their airy flight. In this life an etiquette reigns that has no law of its being save that of vague tradition—an etiquette at variance with that of other regions, and through which the female population is resolved into what might be termed, in the parlance of the place, a committee of the whole on "calling." This etiquette rules the wives of important functionaries with a rod of iron. By some occult method of reasoning they have reached the conclusion that their husbands' popularity, and consequent lease of power, depend upon their own faithful performance of what is considered to be social duty, and they devote themselves to it with a zeal worthy of a better cause. On certain days of the week their houses are open to all who choose to come; and both residents and passing travelers, all who wish to inspect the inside of such homes among the other sights of the town, throng the doors, leave cards and partake of refreshments. Of course many strange occurrences are incidental to such occasions; and so the lady whose beauty had been made famous must have thought when unknown crowds flocked to see her, destroying daily a vase or a statuette, a photograph or a book, but always staring with all their eyes, and one day crowning their enormities with a procession of deaf-mutes from an asylum, which filed in and gazed and filed out again, in total silence of course, save now and then a crack of nimble finger-joints.

All the other days in the week the great lady is occupied in returning these visits, hunting for obscure addresses, trailing her rich garments over third-story stairs; and it is no uncommon thing for her to have the names of one or two thousand people in her visiting-book, on whom she is to call, provided she can find them. Of course the call is brief, the faces are unknown, the conversation is void, and the only satisfaction attained is in checking off that particular name as done with. Certainly this great lady's lot is not altogether enviable. In the daytime she is claimed by calls, in the night-time by balls; at nine in the morning people on business begin to clamor for her husband, at ten, if he is a Congressman, he goes to his committee, at twelve Congress meets to adjourn at five; and if after that some political dinner, at which great things are to be adjusted, does not take him to itself till nearly midnight, constituents, schemers and lobbyists do. What sort of home-life there can be where the master of the house is out all day and the mistress is out all night, remains a matter of conjecture.

But there are wheels within wheels; and all the wheels are not so thoroughly oiled as to make things run with perfect smoothness; and thus in the progress of this very "calling" sad disturbances arise. Shall the Senators' wives make the first call on the Cabinet ministers' wives? By no means: the Cabinet ministers are but creatures of a day, ephemera, who draw their breath by and with the advice and consent of the Senate: they must respect their creator. Shall the Senators' wives call first upon the wives of the justices of the Supreme Court? There is a doubt: the Supreme Court is the last resort of the law of the land, a reverend and hoary institution, and its judges, having a life-lease, will be judges still when the Senators shall have passed away; but no, again—the Senators make the justices. The Representatives shall make the first call on the Senators' wives of course; but how about the Speaker's wife? She is the third in succession from the presidency, says the new-comer: she is nothing but a Representative still, says the compelling etiquette. Finally, through some incomprehensible regulation, whose framer forgot that though democracies may be rude they must not be inhospitable, the wives of the foreign ambassadors, representatives of sovereign states, have to go the whole round and knock first at every door before being fairly accredited to Society. But once established, be it said in passing, the foreigners have a full revenge accorded them; for in vain the native youth aspire, the freshest belles hover round the titled flames, not perhaps till their wings are singed, but till successive seasons have taught them that Cleopatra's beauty is useless without Cleopatra's pearls. Meantime, to give one last discomfort to the "calling" system, the ubiquitous reporter presents himself, deliberately overturns the card-basket in the hall and notes the names there; and the lady of the house sees herself, her dress, her deportment and her guests photographed in the morning paper with startling distinctness.

But the calling is the brightest part of this social side of life. The other part is the night-life —not the night-life of gambling saloons and their kind: of that dark underground existence Society has no knowledge, though he who left it at daybreak and will go back to it at midnight clasps the last débutante in his arms and whirls with her to the sweet waltz-music—but the night-life of the Season.

A Washington season is a generic thing: women come to the place for the sake of it, as they go nowhere else. Through the system of calling just described official society is accessible to all, and the introductions obtained there to people of the more select circles, when fortified by wealth and pertinacity, open the whole charmed round of pleasure. Society in other cities is totally unlike Society in Washington. There it is an interchange of kindliness between households of friends: it is the festivity of happy anniversaries, the union of families in new ties, the cherishing of long acquaintance. But in Washington—except so far as the small number of residents is concerned—its whole purpose and meaning are anomalous: each Administration brings a new following, each Congress has a new rabble at its heels; friendships are accidents of the day, diplomacy is carried on by dining; every party has a political purpose, every civility a double meaning. Nevertheless, the sparkle of wit, the kindling of enthusiasm, are not absent from it; on the contrary, there is more of that than elsewhere, for it is sustained by the chosen intellect and beauty of the continent. You may meet admirals there who have sailed round the world, generals who have fought mighty battles, priests who may yet be popes,

men and women who are figures of the century: they will tell you the romance of their travel, the heart-beat of their successes, and you will contrive to hear it for all the accompanying roar and sweep in which they are the lay figures for aspirants to measure, and the property of reporters. In such a Society of course all asperities are softened: this man's daughter dances with the son of his arch-enemy; deference is accorded to the opinion of a woman on public matters as if she already possessed her right of suffrage; there is an exhilaration in meeting and avoiding and overlooking, in the light and skillful skating over dangerous surfaces, while a rare freedom unites with a gentle even if politic courtesy, which it is delightful to meet to-night and which allures you to seek it to-morrow. Society without a conscience it is, possibly, but for all that sufficiently fascinating.

Let us look at one of its scenes: not a "state sociable" nor a hotel "hop," and not a President's "levee." There are fine ladies who have lived forty years in Washington without attending that pandemonium, the levee, where the crowd seizes one with a hundred hands till flounce and furbelow are crushed in its grasp, and where, while the court reigns in the Blue Room, the mob are disporting themselves in the magnificence of the East Room, the parlor of the people, where they have the reddest of red curtains, the broadest of gold cornices, the portraits of their public servants in the panels between square rods of looking-glass; where the huge chandeliers shine with a thousand pendants and a thousand jets, and where, because foreign crowds tread bare marble floors, they have on theirs a tufted velvet, and so revolve rejoicing on the biggest carpet in the world, like the medley of a vast kaleidoscope—old people with one foot in the grave, children in arms, a bride with veil and orange-blossoms, cripples, heroes, dwarfs and beauties, all together. Not on any such scene of the Season let us look, where the doors are locked behind us at eleven o'clock, but on one of its "balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to midday." It is like an Aztec revel for its flowers: the great stairways, leading up and down between the rooms that glow with light and resound with the tones of flute and violin, are wound with shrubs where art conceals everything but the branch and blossom; doors are arched with palms and long banana leaves; flowers swing from lintel and window and bracket, stream from the pictures, crown the statues; sprays of dropping vines wreathe the chandeliers that shed the soft brilliance of wax-lights around them; mantels are covered with moss; tables are bedded with violets; tall vases overflow with roses and heliotropes, with cold camellias and burning geraniums; the orchestra is hidden with latticed bloom and bud; and yellow acacias and scarlet passion-flowers and a great white orchid with a honeyed breath encircle the fern-filled basin where a fountain plays. The murmur of music, the wealth of perfume, make the atmosphere an enchantment. A crowd of gorgeous hues and tissues, bare bosoms and blazing jewels, ascend and descend the stairs: here are women the fame of whose beauty is world-wide, wearing lace whose intricate design, over the pale shimmer of some perfectly tinted silk beneath, represents the labor of a lifetime, wearing necklaces and tiaras of diamonds, where the great stones set in a frosty floral splendor seem to throb with a spirit of their own. There of course is the President; yonder is the Chief-Justice; here again the general of all our armies; here flash the glittering insignia of soldiers, here the fantastic array of diplomats; down one vista the dancers float through their mazes, down another shine the crystal and gold and silver of the tables red with burgundy and bordeaux, tempting with terrapin and truffle, with spiced meats and salads, pastries, confections and fruits; and close by is the punch-room. You have your choice of the frozen article, or of that claret concoction to hold whose glowing ruby a bowl has been hollowed in the ice itself, or of the champagne punch, where to every litre of the champagne a litre of brandy, a litre of red rum, a litre of green tea, are given, and where you see a flushed and fevered damsel dipping the ladle and tossing off her jorum as coolly as though she had not had her three wines at dinner that day, and had not, in half the houses of her dozen morning calls, sipped her sherry or set down her little punch-glass empty of its delicious mixture of old spirits and fermenting fruit-juices. Perhaps that sight sets you to thinking. You may have been attracted earlier in the night by her delicate toilette and her face pure as a pearl: you saw her later, warm from the dance, eating and drinking in the supper-room: then her partner's arm was round her waist, her head was on his shoulder, and she

was plunging into the German, whirling to maddening measures, presently caught in a new embrace, flying from that man's arms to another's, growing wild with the abandon of the figure, hair flying, dress disordered, powder caked, face burning, till, pausing an instant for the champagne in a servant's hands, your girl with the face as pure as a pearl seemed nothing but a bacchante. And you ask yourself, "What is to be the end, for her, of these midnights rich in every delight of vanity—the thin slipper, the bare flesh, the brain loaded with false tresses, the pores stopped with the dust of white and pink ball, the heated dance, the indigestible banquet, the scanty sleep to get which she doses herself nightly with some tremendous drug?" You wonder what emotions are stimulated by the whirling dances, the rich dainties, the breath of the exotics, the waltz-music, the common contact, the emulation of dress, the unseasonable hours, the twice-breathed air, the everlasting drams. "I saw Florimonde going the round of her half dozen parties the other night," wrote a "looker-on in Venice" toward the close of the last season. "What a resplendent creature she was, the hazel-eyed beauty, with the faintest tinge of sunset hues on her oval cheeks! Her dress was of that peculiar tarnished shade of pink—like yellow sunshine suffusing a pale rose—which made the white shoulders rising from it whiter and more polished yet; the panier and scarf were of yellowest point lace; and a necklace of filigree and of large pale topazes, each carved in cameo, illuminated the whole. Maudita went out with Florimonde, too, that night, as she had gone every night for two months before. Skirt over skirt of fluffy net flowed round Maudita, and let their misty clouds blow about the trailing ornaments of long green grasses and blue corn-flowers that she wore, while puffs and falls half veiled the stomacher of Mexican turquoise and diamond sparks, whose device imitated a spray of the same flowers; and in among the masses of her glittering, waving auburn hair rested a slender diadem of the turquoise again—that whose nameless tint, half blue, half green, makes it an inestimable treasure among the Navajoes, as it was once among the Aztecs, who called it the chalchivitl; each cluster of Maudita's turquoises set in a frost-work of finest diamonds—a splendid toilette indeed, as fresh and radiant as the morning dew upon the meadows. When they set out on the love-path, that is. When they came home from it, and from all the fatigues and fervors of the German, a metamorphosis. The gauzy dress was so fringed and trodden on and torn that it seemed to hold together, like many an ill-assorted marriage, by the cohesion of habit alone; the hair—Madge Wildfire's was of more respectable appearance; the powder had fallen on arms and shoulders; and to my critical eyes, if to no others, the sunset hues remained on only one of Florimonde's cheeks; and those enticing shadows round Maudita's eyes when she went out—for the best of eyes are dulled by too much wear and tear—does antimony 'run,' or had some pugilistic partner given her a 'black eye'? Not that the damsels came home in such trim on every night of the season: this was the accumulation of six parties in one night, the last of the Germans, when the fun grew fast and furious, the figures and the favors more fantastic; when daylight was breaking ere the champagne breakfast was eaten; and when the drunken coachman, out all night, had kept them shivering in the porch an endless while, and had jolted them about the carriage afterward. But they had had a glorious time: their eyes were dancing like marsh-lights, their laughter was ringing like a peal of bells, the jests and bon-mots and flattery they had heard were running off their lips like rain; they had made Goodness knows what conquests, they had made Goodness knows how many engagements; and oh, they were so tired! I ran into their room to see them next day: it was afternoon, and they were still in bed. There was nothing remarkable in that, they said: some girls were obliged to stay in bed two days out of every week through sheer fatigue, and some got so excited they couldn't sleep at all, except by means of morphia, and that made them sick a couple of days, any way; but as for themselves, they had never given out yet, and never meant to do so. While she was speaking, Florimonde's voice faltered, and the sentence was finished under the breath. Her voice had given out. At the moment the muscles round that handsome mouth of hers began to twitch ridiculously: she yawned and threw up her arms, as a baby stretches itself, and stiffened in that position, with her teeth set and her eyes rolled out of sight, and lay there like a corpse. Florimonde had given out. As I sprang to investigate this surprising condition of things, there came a sudden gurgle and a groan from

Maudita, who had risen in her own little bed at my motion. I turned to see her clutching her throat, as if her hands were the claws of a wild-cat: she was laughing and howling and crying all at once; her face was of a dark purple tint; her body—that lithe and supple waltzing body of hers—was bending itself rigidly into the shape of a bow, resting by the head and the heels on the bed—the dignified Maudita!—and the foam was standing half an inch high on her mouth. Maudita had given out too. Of course the doctor came presently and separated the patients, and gave them pills and powders and bromides without end; and there were watchers to keep the delicate creatures, whom it took three or four people to hold in their fits, from injuring themselves; and at last sleep came with the all-persuading chloral, and with the awaking from that powerful chloral-given sleep came an imbecile sort of state, whose scattered wits were full of small cunning and spites, that told secrets and told lies, and could not pronounce names; and lips were blistered and eyes were swollen and purblind; and Florimonde and Maudita must keep Lent in spite of themselves. But how long do you suppose they will keep it? and in what way? As the good formalist fasts on Friday, with dishes of oysters escalloped deliciously on the shell, with toasted crabs, and bass baked in port wine. Will Florimonde forego her low necks or Maudita her blonde powder? Will there be any less excitement or rivalry in their private theatricals and concerts for charity? Will the flirtations be any less extraordinary at the high teas? The mind will be perhaps a little flighty; the health will not be so firm; there will be a good deal of morbid sorrow over imaginary misdeeds, and none at all over real ones; there will be compensatory church-going, with delightful little monogram-covered prayer-books. But will the flesh be mortified by any real rough sackcloth and ashes? It is hardly to be hoped. Neither Lent, nor religion, nor judgment, nor anything but poverty and absolute impotence, will put a period to the wild pursuit of pleasure that a fashionable season begins. Ill for the next generation, the mothers of which are wrecks before its birth! Well for Florimonde and Maudita, with all the dew and freshness of their youth destroyed, if at length, thoroughly ennuyées, they do not put a piquancy and flavor of sin into their pleasure, as the old West Indian toper dashes his insipid brandy with cayenne!"

Doubtless on such phenomena of the Season as these the ashes with which the priest sprinkles the heads of the penitents while he murmurs *Memento, homo, quod pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris*, falls like the Vesuvian dust upon Pompeiian revels, and they are buried beyond sight and hearing, for a time at least. But we all know that ashes are a fertilizer, and by and by there blossoms above the ruins a later season which is to the earlier one what the spirit is to the body. Everywhere outdoors, then, it is spring: the damp and windy weather has blown away, the sky is as blue as the violets and hyacinths starting untended in the sod that the soft showers have clad in a vivid verdure, and sunbeams are pouring over dome and obelisk and pillared lines of marble till they shine with dazzling lustre through the light screens of greenery. Then come the "kettle-drums," with sunset looking in for company; then the receptions are held in rooms full of sunshine, with open windows letting in the outside fragrance and bird-song and glimpses of charming landscape, or they are turned into fêtes-champêtres in the surrounding gardens; then come the riding-parties to the Falls, where last night's sylph may be to-day's Amazon in the midst of exceedingly grand scenery. Then, too, is the time for the moonlit boating where the Potomac narrows between steep and romantic banks of a sylvan wildness, and where the long oars of the swift rowers bear you as if on wings; for picnics to Rock Creek, a region of rude beauty, where the woods abound in lupines and pink azaleas, and the great white dogwood boughs stretch away into the darkness of the forest like a press of moonbeams, and where at dark your horses ford the stream and climb the hill, and bring you over the Georgetown Heights, past villas half-guessed by starlight among their gardens and fountains, and in by a market picturesque with a hundred torches flaring over the heads of mules and negroes and venders and higglers—piles of game, crisp vegetables and scarlet berries. And with this comes the excursion down river, sheet after sheet of the shining stream opening on woody loveliness remote in azure hazes, to Mount Vernon among its blossoming magnolias and rosy Judas trees, where the great tomb stands open with its sarcophagi, and where Eleanor Custis's harpsichord keeps strange company with the

grim key of the Bastile that has never been moved since Washington hung it on the nail—where the quaint old rooms and verandahs and conservatories invite the guests, and the garden with its breast-high hedges of spicy box invites the lovers. Now the few ancestral mansions embower themselves in an aristocratic seclusion of trees and vines that shut them in with their birds and flowers and sunshine, and the Van Ness Place, where Washington came to lay out the city, adorns all its ancient and mossy magnificence with fresh drapery of leaves and flowers. The halls of Congress, too, are still open all day, the drama growing livelier as the adjournment draws nearer; and at evening the drives are thronged with fine equipages winding down the Fourteenth street way, out by the Soldiers' Home, through Harewood, or up by the Anacostia branch and the wild Maryland hill-roads, where wide-stretching pictures are revealed between the forest trees, while sometimes one sees, with its two rivers —one shining like silver, one red and turbid—the city lying far away, much of its outline veiled and the color of its baked brick and stone and marble mellowed in the distance, till through the quivering air and among all its towering trees it looks like a vision of antique temples in the midst of gardens of flowers. And now the numberless squares and triangles and grass-plots of the city are green as Dante's newly-broken emeralds, are a miracle of spotless deutzia and golden laburnum, honeysuckle and jasmine: half the houses are covered with ivies and grapevines; the Smithsonian grounds surround their dark and castellated group of buildings in a wilderness of bloom; and the rose has come—such roses as Sappho and Hafiz sung; deep-red roses that burn in the sun, roses that are almost black, so purple is their crimson, roses that are stainless white, long-stemmed, in generous clusters, making the air about them an intoxication in itself—roses fit to crown Anacreon. Twice a week during all this sweet season the Marine Band has been blowing out its music in the President's Grounds and in the Capitol Park late in the warm afternoon, and every one promenades in gala attire beneath the trees and over the shady slopes till the tunes die with the twilight, and many a long-delaying love-affair culminates as the stars come out and the perfumed wind casts down great shadows from the swinging branches overhead, while indulgent duennas gossip on, oblivious of dew; and at midnight the mocking-birds begin to bubble and warble a wild sweet melody everywhere throughout the dark and listening city. For one brief month, you see, it is politics and power set down in Paradise—let only the envious say as strangely out of place as the serpent there. And finally the festivities of this almost ideal spring season, where the world of Fashion and the world of Nature meet at their best, come to an end with Decoration Day—the last day ere the spring brightens into the blaze of summer —a day that robs death of its terrors, and seems to carry one back to that primeval period when the old death-defying Egyptians made their festivals with flowers, as we stand in that desolation of the dead on the heights of Arlington, and see the billows of graves stretching away to the horizon, wave after wave, crested with the line of white headstones, and every mound heaped with flowers that have been scattered to the tune of singing children's voices, while below the peaceful river floats out broadly; and far across its stream, over all the turfy terraces and above the plumy treetops that hide the arched and columned bases of its snowy splendor, the dome of the country's Capitol rises —a shining guardian of the slumbers of the dead.

A DAY'S SPORT IN EAST FLORIDA

Through these green tents, by eldest Nature dressed,
He roamed, content alike with man and beast.
Where darkness found him, he lay glad at night:
There the red morning touched him with its light.

R. W. EMERSON

On the 18th of February we arrived in the yacht off Mosquito Inlet about sunrise, and as the tide served our pilot took us in over the bar, which happened to be smooth at the time, and we anchored just above the junction of the Halifax and Hillsboro Rivers. Rivers they are called by the Floridians, but are long stretches of salt water lying parallel with the coast, and separated from the sea by a sandy beach of a mile in width, which is covered with a growth of pitch-pine and palmetto scrub. In New York and New Jersey such waters are called bays, and on the coast of Carolina they are sounds. They furnish a convenient boat-navigation for the people, who in consequence do most of their traveling by water.

Here we found lying at anchor a couple of large Eastern schooners: they were waiting for cargoes of live-oak, which was being cut by a large force of men in the employ of the Swifts, a firm that supplies all this timber for the American navy. A lighthouse is much needed here, the entrance being narrow, with only eight or ten feet of water at high tide. The Victoria followed us in, and we had not been long at anchor when a canoe came down the river under sail, and rounding to alongside, a tall young man in white duck jacket and trousers stepped on board, and accosted our pilot: "How are you, Pecetti? So you are taking up my trade?"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.