

# VARIOUS

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NO. 3, MAY 1906

**Various**  
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*Mother Earth, Vol. 1 No. 3, May 1906 / Monthly Magazine Devoted to Social  
Science and Literature:*

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**TIDINGS OF MAY**

The month of May is a grinning satire on the mode of living of human beings of the present day.

The May sun, with its magic warmth, gives life to so much beauty, so much value.

The dead, grayish brown of the forest and woods is transformed into a rich, intoxicating, delicate, fragrant green.

Golden sun-rays lure flowers and grass from the soil, and kiss branch and tree into blossom and bloom.

Tillers of the soil are beginning their activity with plough, shovel, rake, breaking the firm grip of grim winter upon the Earth, so that the mild spring warmth may penetrate her breast and coax into growth and maturity the seeds lying in her womb.

A great festival seems at hand for which Mother Earth has

adorned herself with garments of the richest and most beautiful hues.

What does civilized humanity do with all this splendor? It speculates with it. Usurers, who gamble with the necessities of life, will take possession of Nature's gifts, of wheat and corn, fruit and flowers, and will carry on a shameless trade with them, while millions of toilers, both in country and city, will be permitted to partake of the earth's riches only in medicinal doses and at exorbitant prices.

May's generous promise to mankind, that they were to receive in abundance, is being broken and undone by the existing arrangements of society.

The Spring sends its glad tidings to man through the jubilant songs that stream from the throats of her feathered messengers. "Behold," they sing, "I have such wealth to give away, but you know not how to take. You count and bargain and weigh and measure, rather than feast at my heavily laden tables. You crawl about on the ground, bent by worry and dread, rather than drink in the free balmy air!"

The irony of May is neither cold nor hard. It contains a mild yet convincing appeal to mankind to finally break the power of the Winter not only in Nature, but in our social life,—to free itself from the hard and fixed traditions of a dead past.

# ENVY

**By Walt Whitman**

*When I peruse the conquered fame of heroes, and the victories  
of mighty generals, I do not envy the generals,  
Nor the President in his Presidency, nor the rich in his great  
house;*

*But when I hear of the brotherhood of lovers, how it was with  
them,*

*How through life, through dangers, odium, unchanging, long  
and long*

*Through youth, and through middle and old age, how  
unfaltering, how affectionate and faithful they were,*

*Then I am pensive—I hastily walk away, filled with the  
bitterest envy.*

# OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

A young man had an Ideal which he cherished as the most beautiful and greatest treasure he had on earth. He promised himself never to part with it, come what might.

His surroundings, however, repeated from morn till night that one can not feed on Ideals, and that one must become practical if he wishes to get on in life.

When he attempted the practical, he realized that his Ideal could never become reconciled to it. This, at first, caused him deep suffering, but he soon conceived a pleasant thought: "Why should I expose my precious jewel to the vulgarity, coarseness and filth of a practical life? I will put it into a jewel case and hide it in a secluded spot."

From time to time, especially when business was bad, he stole over to the case containing his Ideal, to delight in its splendor. Indeed, the world was shabby compared with that!

Meanwhile he married and his business began to improve. The members of his party had already begun to discuss the possibility of putting him up as a candidate for Alderman.

He visited his Ideal at longer intervals now. He had made a very unpleasant discovery,—his Ideal had lessened in size and weight in proportion to the practical opulence of his mind. It grew old and full of wrinkles, which aroused his suspicions. After all, the practical people were right in making light of Ideals. Did he

not observe with his own eyes how his Ideal had faded?

It had been overlooked for a long time. Once more he stole over to the safety vault containing his Ideal. It was at a time when he had suffered a severe business loss. With great yearning in his breast, he lifted the cover of the case. He was worn from practical life and his heart and head felt heavy. He found the case empty. His Ideal had vanished, evaporated!—It dawned upon him that he had proven false to the Ideal, and not the Ideal to him.



Pity and sympathy have been celebrating a great feast within the last few weeks. When they look into the mirror of public opinion they find their own reflex touchingly beautiful, big, very human. Want was about to commit self-destruction in abolishing poverty, tears and the despair of suffering humanity forever.

The "heart" of New York, the "heart" of the country, the "heart" of the entire world throbs for San Francisco. The press says so, at least.

No doubt a large amount in checks and banknotes was sent to the city of the Golden Gate. Money, in these days, is the criterion of emotions and sentiments; so that the pity of one who gives \$10,000 must appear incomparably greater than the pity of one who contributes a small sum which was perhaps intended to buy shoes for the children, or to pay the grocery bill. A large sum is always loud and boastful in the way it appears in the newspapers.

The delicate tact and fine taste of the various editors see to it that the names of the donors of large sums be printed in heavy type.

After all, can not one every day and in every large city observe the same phenomenon that has followed the disaster in San Francisco? Surely there were homeless, starved, despaired, wretched beings in San Francisco before the earthquake and the fire, yet the public's pity and sympathy haughtily passed them by; and official sympathy and compassion had nothing but the police station and the workhouse to give them.

And now,—what is really being done now? Humanitarianism is exhibiting itself in a low and vulgar manner, and superficiality and bad taste are stalking about in peacock fashion.

The newspapers are full of praise for the bravery of the militia in their defense of property. A man was instantly shot as he walked out of a saloon with his arms full of champagne bottles, and another was shot for carrying off a sack of coffee, etc. How strange that the "brave boys" of the militia,—who, by the way, had to be severely disciplined because of their beastly drunkenness,—showed so much noble indignation against a few clumsy thieves! During the strikes and labor conflicts it is usually their mission to protect the property of skillful thieves,—legal thieves, of course.

Finally what is going to be the end of the great display of superficial sentimentality for the stricken city? An all-around good deal: Moneyed people, contractors, real estate speculators will make large sums of money. Indeed it is not at all unlikely

that within a few months good Christian capitalists will secretly thank their Lord that he sent the earthquake.



As an employer, the United States Government is certainly tolerant and liberal, especially so far as the highly remunerative offices are concerned.

The President, for instance, loves to deliver himself of moral sermons. Recently he spoke of the people who criticise government and society and breed discontent. He considers them dangerous and entertains little regard for them. He ought not be blamed for that, since, as the first clerk of the State, it is his duty to represent its interests and dignity.

The most ordinary business agent, though he may be convinced of the corruption of his firm, will take good care to keep this fact from the public. Business morals demand it.

Besides, no one will expect or desire that the President should become a Revolutionist. This would certainly be no gain of ours, nor would the State suffer harm. Surely there are enough professional politicians who do not lack talent for the calling of doorkeepers on a large scale.

As to the moral sermons against the undesirable and obnoxious element, all that can be said, from a practical standpoint, is, that their originality and wisdom are in no proportion to the salary the sermonizer receives. Competition

among preachers of penitence and servility is almost as great as among patent medicine quacks. Four or five thousand a year can easily buy the services of a corpulent, reverend gentleman of some prominence.



The dangers of the first of May, when France was to be ruined by the "mob" of socialists and anarchists, was very fantastically described by the Paris correspondents of the American newspapers. These gentlemen seem to have known everything. They discovered that the cause of the threatened revolution was to be found in the irresponsible good nature and kindness of the French government.

Just show "Satan" Anarchy a finger, and straightway he will seize the entire arm. Especially M. Clemenceau was severely censured as being altogether too good a fellow to make a reliable minister. There he is with France near the abyss of a social revolution! That is the manner in which history is being manufactured for boarding-school young ladies.

The social revolution may come, but surely not because of the kindness or good nature of the government. France needed a newspaper boom for her elections: "The republic is in danger; for goodness' sake give us your vote on election day!"

In order that the citizens might feel the proper horror, trade-union leaders, anarchists and even a few royalistic scare-crows

were arrested; at the same time the sympathy and devotion of the government for its people manifested itself in the reign of the military terror in the strike regions.

The real seriousness of the situation, the correspondents failed to grasp. How could they? since they got their wisdom in the ante-chamber of the ministry.

The revolutionary labor organizations care little for the good will or the Jesuit kindness of the authorities. They continue with their work, propagate the idea of direct action, and strengthen the anti-military movement, the result of which is already being felt among the soldiers and officers.

The officer who jumped upon the platform at the Bourse du Travail, expressing his solidarity with the workers and declaring that he would not fire on them, was immediately arrested; but this will only influence others to follow the good example.



In the old fables the lion is described as supreme judge and not the mule or the wether.

In Cleveland things are different. Several weeks ago Olga Nethersole gave a performance of Sappho there. Whereupon the police felt moved to perform an operation on the play, for moral reasons, of course. The staircase scene was ordered to be left out altogether.

Ye poor, depraved artists, how low ye might sink, were the

police and Comstock not here to watch over the moral qualities of your productions!

If one observes one of these prosaic fellows on the corner, terribly bored, and with his entire intellect concentrated on his club, and how out of pure ennui he is constantly recapitulating the number of his brass buttons, one can hardly realize that such an individual has been entrusted with the power to decide the fate of an artistic production.



1792 the French people marched through the streets singing:

O, what is it the people cry?  
They ask for all equality.  
The poor no more shall be  
In slavish misery;  
The idle rich shall flee.

O, what is it the people need?  
They ask for bread and iron and lead.  
The iron to win our pay,  
The lead our foes to slay,  
The bread our friends to feed.

The soldiers at Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania, who were ordered by their superiors to fire into a crowd of strikers and

wounded and killed innocent men and women, do not sing the Carmagnole; they sing:

"My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of Liberty!"

If the ruling powers continue to maintain peace and order with iron and blood it may happen that the meaningless national hymn may be drowned by the Carmagnole, pealing forth like thunder from the throats of the masses.

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To the credit of human nature be it said, it is not altogether hopeless. Since tyranny has existed, human nature has ever rebelled against it.

Real slavery exists only when the oppressed consider their fate as something normal, something self-evident.

There is greater security for tyranny in slavish thoughts, indifference and pettiness than in cannons and swords.

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# "THIS MAN GORKY."

**By Margaret Grant**

THE women of America are aroused as never before. They always are aroused to the defense of their firesides. Even those women who live in flats are awake to the need for defending their radiators or their gas stoves; it is inherent in the nature of woman, it seems.

Most of the women's societies and clubs have spoken in no uncertain terms concerning the outrage that has been put upon the civilization of this great country by the conduct of this man Gorky. And, in fact, it is a thing not to be borne.

As for me, I belong to the Woman's Association for the Regulation of the Morals of Others, a society which is second to none in its activity and usefulness, but which has seen fit to defer its own discussion of this man Gorky's conduct until most of the other women's societies have spoken.

We have just had our meeting, and I think that if this man Gorky should read an account of our proceedings, he would certainly get out of this outraged country with all the celerity of which he is capable. But, of course, he is only a foreigner after all and probably will not comprehend the exquisite purity of our

morals.

I want to say that in our meetings we do not slavishly follow those parliamentary rules which men have made for their guidance, but allow ourselves some latitude in discussion. And we do not invite some man to come and do all the talking, as is the case in some women's clubs.

Mrs. Blanderocks was in the chair. We began with an informal discussion of the best way of preventing the common people from dressing so as not to be distinguished from the upper classes, but there was no heart in the talk, for we all felt that it was only preliminary. It was my friend Sarah Warner who changed the subject.

"The Woman's State Republican Association held its annual meeting at Delmonico's yesterday," she said, quietly drawing a newspaper clipping from her pocket-book.

"And had some men there to amuse them and to tell them what to do," said Mrs. Blanderocks with cutting irony.

We all laughed heartily. We meet at Mrs. Blanderocks' house, and she always provides a beautiful luncheon.

"But Mrs. Flint said some things that I would like to read to you," said Sarah. "It won't take long. I cut this out of the 'Times' this morning."

"What is it about?" some one asked.

"Gorky," Sarah answered, closing her eyes in a way to express volumes.

You could hear all the members catch their breath. This was

what they had come for. I broke the oppressive silence.

"I foresee," I said, "that in the discussion of this subject there will be said things likely to bring a blush to the cheek of innocence, and I move that all unmarried women under the age of twenty-five be excluded from the meeting for as long as this man is under discussion."

A fierce cry of rage rose from all parts of the crowded room. I did not understand. I could see no one who would be affected by the rule. Mrs. Blanderocks raised her hand to command silence and said coldly:

"The motion is out of order. By a special provision of our constitution it is the inalienable right of all unmarried women to be under twenty-five. We will be as careful in our language as the subject will permit. Mrs. Warner will please read the words of Mrs. Flint."

I was shocked to think I had made such a mistake. Sarah rose and read in a clear, sharp voice from the clipping:

"Should not we as women take some action against this man? People of such character should not be allowed in this country. Of course when he arrived it was not known how he was living, but he came here and expected to be received; and I think he should be deported. Gorky is the embodiment of Socialism."

Everybody applauded violently. I was puzzled and asked a question as soon as I could make myself heard.

"Suppose Gorky is a Socialist," I said; "what has that to do with his morals?"

"Everything," replied Mrs. Blanderocks, haughtily.

"Socialists don't believe in marriage," said Sarah Warner, taking another clipping from her pocket-book and reading: "Mrs. Cornelia Robinson said: When the question of uniform divorce law is taken up, we shall find that the Socialists are against it as a body. It is not that they are opposed to divorce, but they do not believe in marriage."

"And does she know?" I asked.

"Would she say it publicly if it were not true?" demanded Mrs. Blanderocks, glaring disapprovingly at me.

I rose to my feet. I will say for myself that my desire for knowledge is greater even than my shyness, and usually overcomes it.

"I want to make a motion," I said, "that this man Gorky be deported—" (loud applause)—"but before doing so I would like some one to explain in as plain words as the nature of the subject will permit, just what he has been guilty of." Dead silence broken by a voice saying: "He's a foreigner."

"I'll tell you what he has done," cried Sarah Warner; "he came into this country pretending that the woman who was with him was his wife; he allowed her to be registered at the hotel as his wife; he permitted her to sleep under the same roof with pure men and women—"

"I would like to ask Mrs. Warner," said a lady in a remote corner of the room, "if she will vouch for the purity of the men?"

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Blanderocks, gravely, "it will be better if

the word men be stricken from the record. Do you object, Mrs. Warner?"

"It was a slip of the tongue," Sarah answered, "and I am grateful to the member who called attention to it; though I will say that I think there are some pure men."

"We are discussing Gorky now," said Mrs. Blanderocks with an indulgent smile.

"True," answered Sarah, beaming back at the chairwoman; "and I was saying that he had subjected the pure women of the hotel to the unspeakable indignity of having to sleep under the same roof with the woman he called his wife."

"I would like to ask," I interposed timidly, "if it is right for a woman to sleep under the same roof with an impure man, or is it only an impure woman who is injurious?"

"A woman has to sleep under some roof," came in the voice of the woman in the corner.

"I think Mrs. Grant would show better taste if she did not press such a question," said another voice. "Will Mrs. Warner be good enough to describe the exact status—I think status is right—of the woman he tried to pass as his wife?"

"She was his—" Sarah had a fit of coughing, "she was not his wife. I do not care to be more explicit."

"Perhaps," I said, groping for light, "it would be better if I made my motion read that she should be deported from the country, since it is her immorality that counts."

"And let those Republican Association women stand for more

morality than we do?" cried Mrs. Blanderocks. "No, you cannot make your motion too strong."

"Oh, then," I said, with a sigh of relief, "I will move that Gorky and all other men, immoral in the same way, shall be deported from the country."

"Then who is to take care of us women?" demanded the voice in the corner.

"Do be reasonable, Margaret," said Sarah Warner, "we can't drive all the men out of the country, and don't want to, but we can fix a standard of morals to astonish the world, and there could be no better way than by making an example of this man Gorky. Don't you see that he is a foreigner and can't very well know that our men are just as bad as he is? Besides, isn't he a Socialist? We would have been willing to condone his relations with that woman if only he'd hid them respectably as our men do, but to come here with his free ideas— Well, I'm willing to let the Russians have all the freedom they want, and I would have given my mite toward stirring up trouble over there, but we have all the freedom we want over here, and a little more, too, if I know anything about it."

"Very well," I replied, "I will withdraw the motion and make one to have a committee appointed to investigate the matter and find out the whole truth about it."

"What is there to find out?" demanded Sarah, aghast.

"Well, you know he insists that she is his wife. Maybe she is by Russian law or custom."

"Perfectly absurd! His own wife and he separated because they couldn't be happy together. Was ever anything more ridiculous?"

"As if happiness had anything to do with marriage!" said the voice from the corner.

Everybody laughed and applauded as if something very funny had been said.

"Well, anyhow," I insisted, for I can be obstinate when a thing isn't clear to me, "if they both thought they were justified in calling themselves man and wife, and if the people in Russia thought so, too, why should we make any fuss about it?"

"Pardon me, Mrs. Grant," said Mrs. Blanderocks, suavely, "if I say that your words are very silly. In the first place, the Russians are barbarians, as we all know; and, in the next place, the law is the law, and the law says that a man may not have two wives. A man who does is a bigamist. A man who has a wife and yet lives with another woman is an adulterer. Pardon me for using such a word, but it was forced from me. Now, this man Gorky, who may be a very great genius for all I know—I never read any of his stuff—but he isn't above the law: not above the moral law anyhow, and the moral law is the same all over the world. He says he and his wife parted because they were unhappy together, which is a very flimsy excuse for immorality. Then he says that his wife is living now with a man she loves and is happy with."

"Which makes a bad matter worse," interposed Sarah Warner. "No one has any business to be happy in immorality."

"What is morality for," demanded the voice from the corner, "if it isn't to make people unhappy?"

Everybody screamed with laughter over that, and Mrs. Blanderocks went so far as to raise her eyebrows at Sarah Warner, who bit her lip to keep from smiling.

"But," said I, for I had been reading the papers, too, "he says the reason they were not divorced was because the Church would not permit it."

"If the laws of his country were opposed to this divorce," said Mrs. Blanderocks, triumphantly, "all the more reason why he should be ashamed of living with this actress in such an open, defiant way."

"The Church has nothing to do with divorces in this country," I said, "yet many of our best people are divorced."

"The law permits it," said Mrs. Blanderocks curtly.

"Who makes the law?" I asked, determined to get at the bottom of the thing if I could.

"The people through the Legislature," was the prompt answer.

"Well," I said, very timidly, not knowing but I was quite in the wrong, "it seems that the people of Russia not being able to make laws nevertheless recognize the separation of a man and his wife as proper, and permit them to take other husbands and wives without loss of standing."

"A law's a law," said Sarah, sternly; "and a law should be sacred. The very idea of anybody pretending to be above the law like this man Gorky! I would like to know what would become

of the holy institution of matrimony if it could be trifled with in such a fashion?"

"You want Russia to be free from the rule of the Tsar, don't you?" I asked.

"Certainly, he is a tyrant and an irresponsible weakling, unfit to govern a great people. Of course, we want Russia to be free. The people of Russia are entitled to be free, to govern themselves."

"Do you think they ought to be allowed to make their own laws?" I asked.

"Of course."

"Then, why do you say that Gorky is not properly divorced from his first wife and married to his second? The people of Russia approve."

"Margaret Grant!" cried Sarah, outraged and voicing the horror of the other members, "I sometimes wonder if you have any respect at all for the law. How can you speak as you do? If men and women could dispense with the law in that way what would become of society?"

"But this state used to permit men and women to live together without any ceremony and so become man and wife," I said.

"Well, we don't permit it now," retorted Sarah, grimly.

"If they want to live together now," cried the voice from the corner, "they must pretend they don't, even if everybody knows they do."

Some of the members laughed at that, but Mrs. Blanderocks

thought that was going too far and said so in her coldest manner.

"I see nothing funny in that. We cannot change the natures of men, but we can insist upon their hiding their baser conduct and the degraded portions of their lives from our view."

"But," said I, "Gorky evidently considers this woman his wife, and had no idea that anybody would think otherwise."

"The point is," said Sarah Warner, in exasperation, "and I think I voice the sentiments of this organization, that he was not legally divorced from his first wife and that, therefore, he cannot be legally married to this woman. A law is a law, no matter who makes it. The law is sacred and must not be tampered with."

"How about the Supreme Court on divorces in Dakota?" demanded the voice from the corner.

A dead silence fell on the meeting. Some of the members looked at each other and showed signs of hysterics. Mrs. Blanderocks flashed a withering glance at the corner, but rose to the occasion.

"Ladies," she said in a solemn tone, "I deeply regret that this subject has been touched upon in a spirit of levity. It was my intention, at the proper time, to introduce a resolution of sympathy for those ladies who have been so summarily and I may say brutally unmarried by the unfeeling wretches who sit upon the bench of the Supreme Court. It is awful to think that our highly respected sisters, whose wealth alone should have protected them, have been told by the highest court in the land that they have been living in shame all this time, and that their

children are not legitimate. Ladies, I call your attention to the fact that many of our own members are thus branded by those judges. It is infamous. It is more than infamous—it is a reason why women should sit on the judicial bench."

"Yes," I said, "it seems impossible for men to comprehend the mental or emotional processes of women."

"True, too true," murmured our President, giving me a look of gratitude. "I remember how the men of this country cried out against us a few years ago because they could not understand why we send flowers and tender letters to a poor, handsome negro who had first outraged and then murdered a woman."

"Yes," I said, "and no doubt they will pretend not to understand our indignation against this man Gorky, who thinks the customs of his own country justify him his terrible conduct. But we must be careful how we word our condemnation of this man lest he should somehow learn of what our Supreme Court has so wickedly done and retort on us that these, our wealthiest and most respected citizens, not being legally divorced and hence not being legally married again, are no better than he and his so-called wife."

The ladies looked at each other in consternation. Evidently the thought had not suggested itself to them. Mrs. X. Y. Z. Asterbilt (née Clewbel) rose and in a voice choked with emotion said:

"Speaking for myself as well as for some of the other ladies, members of this organization, who are temporarily *déclassée*, so to speak, by this decree of the Supreme Court, I beg that you will

do nothing to call undue attention to us, until we have arranged matters so that our wealth will enable us to have that legislation which is necessary to make us respectable women again."

"Is it true," I asked, "that you have sent an invitation to Madame Andreieva to meet you to discuss the steps to be taken to reinstate yourselves?"

"It is true, but the extraordinary creature returned word that as a lady of good standing in her own country she did not feel that she could afford to associate with women whom the courts of this country held to be living in shame."

"Did you ever!" cried Mrs. Blanderocks. "But it shows us that we must be careful. Mrs. Grant, you have had experience in such matters, suppose you retire and draw up a set of resolutions that will not expose us to the ribald and unseemly comments of the light-minded."

Of course I accepted the task, fully realizing its gravity, and following is the resolution I brought back with me:

"*Whereas*, Maxim Gorky, recognized in the world of letters as a man of genius, and in the world at large as a man of great soul, high purpose and pure nature, having come to this country accompanied by a lady whom he considers and treats as his wife; and

"*Whereas*, The wealthy, and therefore the better classes, tumbled all over themselves in order to exploit him as a lion; and

"*Whereas*, He had not the wisdom and craft and sense of puritanical respectability to pretend that he did not know the lady

he believed his wife, and to whom he believes himself united by a law higher than that of man; and

" *Whereas*, He was guileless enough to believe he had come to a free country where purity of motive and of conduct would take precedence of hollow and rotten forms; and

" *Whereas*, He did not know that the American people practise polygamy secretly, while condemning it in words, and that the United States Senate has been nearly two years in pretending to try to find a polygamist in their midst; and

" *Whereas*, He was so injudicious as to come here with a defective divorce just at a time when our Supreme Court was making the divorce of some of us, the gilded favorites of fortune, defective; and

" *Whereas*, He had the audacity to proclaim himself a Socialist, which is the same thing as saying that he is opposed to special privilege, and is in favor of the abolition of property in land and in the tools of labor—in other and plainer words, is against Us; and

" *Whereas*, He is only a foreigner, anyhow, and no longer available as a toy and plaything for us; therefore be it

" *Resolved*, That this man, Gorky, be used as a means of proclaiming our extraordinary virtue to the world at large, as a robber cries stop thief in order to direct attention from himself; that accordingly he be treated with the utmost outrageous discourtesy and hounded from hotel to hotel on the ground that such places by no chance harbor men and women unless they

have passed through the matrimonial mill; that we withdraw our patronage from the revolution in Russia—not being seriously interested in it anyhow—and that we will show our contempt for revolutionary patriots by entertaining the rottenest grand duke in Russia if only he will come over to us, bringing his whole harem if he wish; that he is a reproach to us while he remains in this country, and that it is the sense of this great organization that he and the lady who is his wife in the highest sense shall be deported."

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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