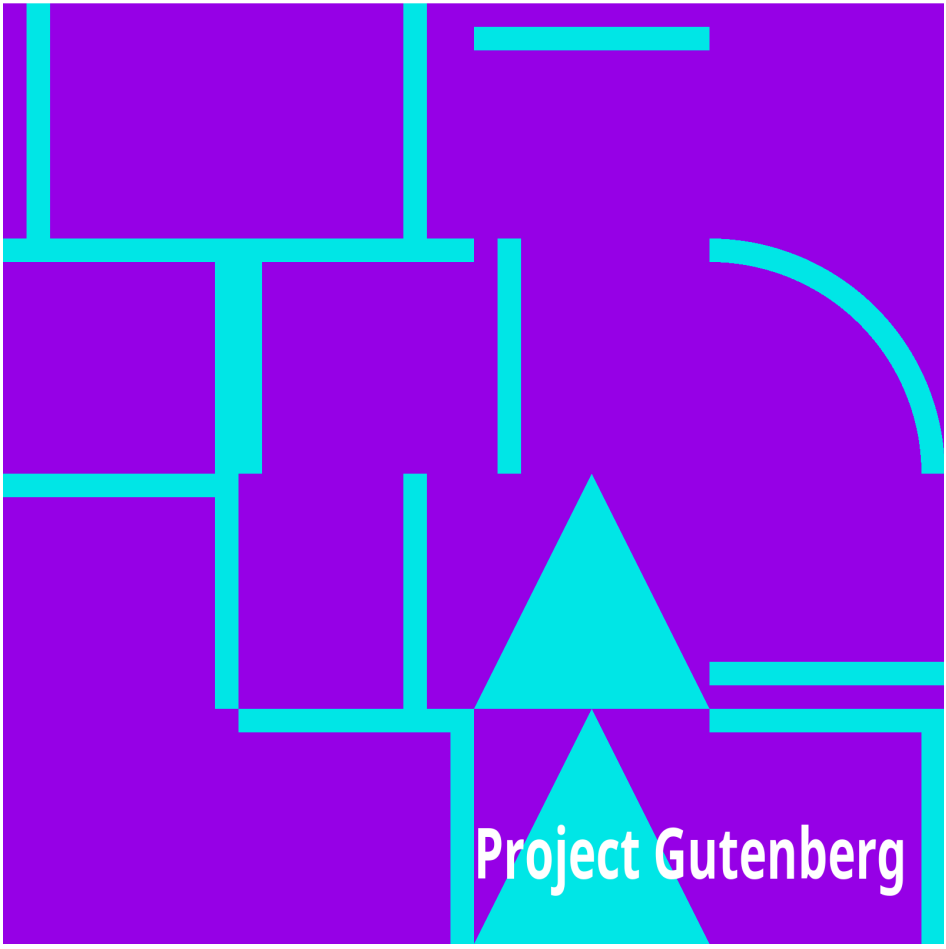
The Potiphar Papers

George William Curtis



The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Potiphar Papers

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The Potiphar Papers

Author: George William Curtis

Release date: September 1, 2004 [eBook #6453]
Most recently updated: February 26, 2021

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6453

Credits: Text file produced by Arno Peters, Charles Franks and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team

HTML file produced by David Widger

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE POTIPHAR PAPERS ***

THE POTIPHAR PAPERS

By George William Curtis

"Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place."

Goldsmith's Deserted Village.

"Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarise or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in."

Burke's First Letter on a Regicide Peace.

"And I do seriously approve of that saying of yours, 'that you would rather be a civil, well-governed, well-grounded, temperate, poor angler, than a drunken lord.' But I hope there is none such."

Walton's Angler.

"'Mon petit faquin de philosophé,' dit le Chevalier de Grammont, 'tu fais ici le Caton de Normandie.'"

"'Est-ce que je mens?' poursuivit Saint-Evremond."

Memoires de Grammont.

CONTENTS

PREFATORY LETTER TO REV. CREAM CHEESE.

I. — “OUR BEST SOCIETY.”

II. — OUR NEW LIVERY, AND OTHER THINGS.

III. — A MEDITATION BY PAUL POTIPHAR, ESQ.

IV. — FROM THE SUMMER DIARY OF MINERVA

V. — THE POTIPHARS IN PARIS.

VI. — KURZ PACHA TO THE KING OF SENNAAR,

VII. — FROM THE REV. HENRY DOVE TO MRS. POTIPHAR.

PREFATORY LETTER TO REV. CREAM CHEESE.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

It is surely unnecessary to call the attention of so astute an observer, and so austere a critic, as yourself, to the fact that the title of the leading essay in this little volume (of which, permit me to say, you are so essential an ornament) is marked as a quotation; and a quotation, as you will very well remember, from the lips of our friend, Mrs, Potiphar, herself.

Therefore, Rev. Sir, your judgment, which, you must allow me to say, is no less impartial than your experience is profound, will suggest to you that the subject of that essay (of the points of which the succeeding sketches are but elaborations) is the aspect of what is currently termed "our best society"—whether with reason or not, is beside the purpose.

Your pastoral charity, I am convinced, will persuade you to direct the attention of your parishioners to this fact, and to assure them, that, when you prepared your timely treatise upon the progress of purple chasubles among the Feejee islanders, you were not justly amenable to the charge of omitting all notice of the cultivation of artificial flowers by the Grim Tartars. The latter are, I believe, a very estimable people, but they were not the subjects of your consideration.

To those in your parish, and elsewhere, who have thought fit to suppose that Mrs. Potiphar is Mrs. Somebody-else,—what can we say? conscious as we are, that they who have once known that lady could never confound her with another.

But for those who have actually supposed you, yourself, Reverend Sir, to be, not somebody else, but nobody, (!) we can only smile compassionately, and express the hope that a broader experience may give them greater wisdom.

In taking leave of you, Sir, I know that I express the warmest wish of a large, a very large parish (might almost say, diocese) that you may long survive. For your parish is fully, and, as I think, most correctly persuaded, that while there is a Cream Cheese, there will always be a Mrs. Potiphar.

With all proper regard,

I am,

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your very obedient,

humble servant,

THE EDITOR.

NEW YORK, *December*, 1853.

I. — "OUR BEST SOCIETY."

If gilt were only gold, or sugar-candy common sense, what a fine thing our society would be! If to lavish money upon *objets de vertu*, to wear the most costly dresses, and always to have them cut in the height of the fashion; to build houses thirty feet broad, as if they were palaces; to furnish them with all the luxurious devices of Parisian genius; to give superb banquets; at which your guests laugh, and which make you miserable; to drive a fine carriage and ape the European liveries, and crests, and coats-of-arms; to resent the friendly advances of your baker's wife, and the lady of your butcher, (you being yourself a cobbler's daughter); to talk much of the "old families" and of your aristocratic foreign friends; to despise labour; to prate of "good society;" to travesty and parody, in every conceivable way, a society which we know only in books and by the superficial observation of foreign travel, which arises out of a social organization entirely unknown to us, and which is opposed to our fundamental and essential principles; if all this were fine, what a prodigiously fine society would ours be!

This occurred to us upon lately receiving a card of invitation to a brilliant ball. We were quietly ruminating over our evening fire, with Disraeli's Wellington speech, "all tears," in our hands, with the account of a great man's burial, and a little man's triumph across the channel. So many great men gone, we mused, and such great crises impending! This democratic movement in Europe; Kossuth—and Mazzini waiting for the moment to give the word; the Russian bear watchfully sucking his paws; the Napoleonic empire redivivus; Cuba, and annexation, and slavery; California and Australia, and the consequent considerations of political economy; dear me! exclaimed we, putting on a fresh hodful of coal, we must look a little into the state of parties.

As we put down the coal-scuttle there was a knock at the door. We said, “come in,” and in came a neat Alhambra-watered envelope, containing the announcement that the queen of fashion was “at home” that evening week. Later in the evening came a friend to smoke a cigar. The card was lying upon the table, and he read it with eagerness. “You’ll go, of course,” said he, “for you will meet all the ‘best society.’”

Shall we, truly? Shall we really see the “best society of the city,” the picked flower of its genius, character, and beauty? What makes the “best society” of men and women? The noblest specimens of each, of course. The men who mould the time, who refresh our faith in heroism and virtue, who make Plato and Zeno, and Shakespeare, and all Shakespeare’s gentlemen, possible, again. The women, whose beauty, and sweetness, and dignity, and high accomplishment, and grace, make us understand the Greek Mythology, and weaken our desire to have some glimpse of the most famous women of history. The “best society” is that in which the virtues are most shining, which is the most charitable, forgiving, long-suffering, modest, and innocent. The “best society” is, in its very name, that in which there is the least hypocrisy and insincerity of all kinds, which recoils from, and blasts, artificiality, which is anxious to be all that it is possible to be, and which sternly reprobates all shallow pretence, all coxcombry and foppery, and insists upon simplicity as the infallible characteristic of true worth. That is the “best society,” which comprises the best men and women.

Had we recently arrived from the moon, we might, upon hearing that we were to meet the “best society,” have fancied that we were about to enjoy an opportunity not to be overvalued. But unfortunately we were not so freshly arrived. We had received other cards, and had perfected our toilette many times, to meet this same society, so magnificently described, and had found it the least “best” of all. Who compose it? Whom shall we meet if we go to this ball? We shall meet three classes of persons: first, those who are rich, and who have all that money can buy; second, those who belong to what are technically called “the good old families,” because some ancestor was a man of mark in the state or

country, or was very rich, and has kept the fortune in the family; and thirdly, a swarm of youths who can dance dexterously, and who are invited for that purpose. Now these are all arbitrary and factitious distinctions upon which to found so profound a social difference as that which exists in American, or, at least, in New York society. First, as a general rule, the rich men of every community who make their own money are not the most generally intelligent and cultivated. They have a shrewd talent which secures a fortune, and which keeps them closely at the work of amassing from their youngest years until they are old. They are sturdy men of simple tastes often. Sometimes, though rarely, very generous, but necessarily with an altogether false and exaggerated idea of the importance of money. They are rather rough, unsympathetic, and, perhaps, selfish class, who, themselves, despise purple and fine linen, and still prefer a cot-bed and a bare room, although they may be worth millions. But they are married to scheming, or ambitious, or disappointed women, whose life is a prolonged pageant, and they are dragged hither and thither in it, are bled of their golden blood, and forced into a position they do not covet and which they despise. Then there are the inheritors of wealth. How many of them inherit the valiant genius and hard frugality which built up their fortunes; how many acknowledge the stern and heavy responsibility of their opportunities; how many refuse to dream their lives away in a Sybarite luxury; how many are smitten with the lofty ambition of achieving an enduring name by works of a permanent value; how many do not dwindle into dainty dilettanti, and dilute their manhood with factitious sentimentality instead of a hearty human sympathy; how many are not satisfied with having the fastest horses and the “crackest” carriages, and an unlimited wardrobe, and a weak affectation and puerile imitation of foreign life?

{Illustration}

And who are these of our secondly, these “old families”? The spirit of our time and of our country knows no such thing, but the habitué of society hears constantly of “a good family.” It means simply, the collective mass of children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, and

descendants of some man who deserved well of his country, and whom his country honors. But sad is the heritage of a great name! The son of Burke will inevitably be measured by Burke. The niece of Pope must show some superiority to other women (so to speak), or her equality is inferiority. The feeling of men attributes some magical charm to blood, and we look to see the daughter of Helen as fair as her mother, and the son of Shakespeare musical as his sire. If they are not so, if they are merely names, and common persons—if there is no Burke, nor Shakespeare, nor Washington, nor Bacon, in their words, or actions, or lives, then we must pity them, and pass gently on, not upbraiding them, but regretting that it is one of the laws of greatness that it dwindles all things in its vicinity, which would otherwise show large enough. Nay, in our regard for the great man, we may even admit to a compassionate honor, as pensioners upon our charity, those who bear and transmit his name. But if these heirs should presume upon that fame, and claim any precedence of living men and women because their dead grandfather was a hero,—they must be shown the door directly. We should dread to be born a Percy, or a Colonna, or a Bonaparte. We should not like to be the second Duke of Wellington, nor Charles Dickens, jr. It is a terrible thing one would say, to a mind of honorable feeling, to be pointed out as somebody's son, or uncle, or granddaughter, as if the excellence were all derived. It must be a little humiliating to reflect that if your great uncle had not been somebody, you would be nobody,—that in fact, you are only a name, and that, if you should consent to change it for the sake of a fortune, as is sometimes done, you would cease to be any thing but a rich man. "My father was President, or Governor of the State," some pompous man may say. But, by Jupiter! king of gods and men, what are *you?* is the instinctive response. Do you not see, our pompous friend, that you are only pointing your own unimportance? If your father was Governor of the State, what right have you to use that fact only to fatten your self-conceit? Take care, good care; for whether you say it by your lips or by your life that withering response awaits you,—"then what are *you?*" If your ancestor was great, you are under bonds to greatness. If

you are small, make haste to learn it betimes, and, thanking Heaven that your name has been made illustrious, retire into a corner and keep it, at least, untarnished.

Our thirdly, is a class made by sundry French tailors, bootmakers, dancing-masters, and Mr. Brown. They are a corps-de-ballet, for the use of private entertainments. They are fostered by society for the use of young debutantes, and hardier damsels, who have dared two or three years of the "tight" polka. They are cultivated for their heels, not their heads. Their life begins at ten o'clock in the evening, and lasts until four in the morning. They go home and sleep until nine; then they reel, sleepy, to counting-houses and offices, and doze on desks until dinner-time. Or, unable to do that, they are actively at work all day, and their cheeks grow pale, and their lips thin, and their eyes bloodshot and hollow, and they drag themselves home at evening to catch a nap until the ball begins, or to dine and smoke at their club, and be very manly with punches and coarse stories; and then to rush into hot and glittering rooms and seize very decolleté girls closely around the waist, and dash with them around an area of stretched linen, saying in the panting pauses, "How very hot it is!" "How very pretty Miss Podge looks!" "What a good redowa!" "Are you going to Mrs. Potiphar's?"

Is this the assembled flower of manhood and womanhood, called "best society," and to see which is so envied a privilege? If such are the elements, can we be long in arriving at the present state, and necessary future condition of parties?

"Vanity Fair," is peculiarly a picture of modern society. It aims at English follies, but its mark is universal, as the madness is. It is called a satire, but after much diligent reading, we cannot discover the satire. A state of society not at all superior to that of "Vanity Fair" is not unknown to our experience; and, unless truth-telling be satire; unless the most tragically real portraiture be satire; unless scalding tears of sorrow, and the bitter regret of a manly mind over the miserable spectacle of artificiality, wasted powers, misdirected energies, and lost opportunities, be satirical; we do not find satire in that sad story. The reader closes it

with a grief beyond tears. It leaves a vague apprehension in the mind, as if we should suspect the air to be poisoned. It suggests the terrible thought of the enfeebling of moral power, and the deterioration of noble character, as a necessary consequence of contact with "society." Every man looks suddenly and sharply around him, and accosts himself and his neighbors, to ascertain if they are all parties to this corruption. Sentimental youths and maidens, upon velvet sofas, or in calf-bound libraries, resolve that it is an insult to human nature—are sure that their velvet and calf-bound friends are not like the dramatis personae of "Vanity Fair," and that the drama is therefore hideous and unreal. They should remember, what they uniformly and universally forget, that we are not invited, upon the rising of the curtain to behold a cosmorama, or picture of the world, but a representation of that part of it called Vanity Fair. What its just limits are-how far its poisonous purlieus reach—how much of the world's air is tainted by it, is a question which every thoughtful man will ask himself, with a shudder, and look sadly around, to answer. If the sentimental objectors rally again to the charge, and declare that, if we wish to improve the world, its virtuous ambition must be piqued and stimulated by making the shining heights of "the ideal" more radiant; we reply, that none shall surpass us in honoring the men whose creations of beauty inspire and instruct mankind. But if they benefit the world, it is no less true that a vivid apprehension of the depths into which we are sunken or may sink, nerves the soul's courage quite as much as the alluring mirage of the happy heights we may attain. "To hold the mirror up to Nature," is still the most potent method of shaming sin and strengthening virtue.

If "Vanity Fair" is a satire, what novel of society is not? Are "Vivian Grey," and "Pelham," and the long catalogue of books illustrating English, or the host of Balzacs, Sands, Sues, and Dumas, that paint French society, any less satires? Nay, if you should catch any dandy in Broadway, or in Pall-Mall, or upon the Boulevards, this very morning, and write a coldly true history of his life and actions, his doings and undoings, would it not be the most scathing and tremendous satire?—if

by satire you mean the consuming melancholy of the conviction, that the life of that pendant to a moustache, is an insult to the possible life of a man?

We have read of a hypocrisy so thorough, that it was surprised you should think it hypocritical; and we have bitterly thought of the saying, when hearing one mother say of another mother's child, that she had "made a good match," because the girl was betrothed to a stupid boy whose father was rich. The remark was the key of our social feeling.

Let us look at it a little, and, first of all, let the reader consider the criticism, and not the critic. We may like very well, in our individual capacity, to partake of the delicacies prepared by our hostess's *chef*, we may not be adverse to *paté*, and myriad *objets de goût*, and if you caught us in a corner at the next ball, putting away a fair share of *dinde aux truffes*, we know you would have at us, in a tone of great moral indignation, and wish to know why we sneaked into great houses, eating good suppers, and drinking choice wines, and then went away with an indigestion, to write dyspeptic disgusts at society.

We might reply that it is necessary to know something of a subject before writing about it, and that if a man wished to describe the habits of South Sea Islanders, it is useless to go to Greenland; we might also confess a partiality for *paté*, and a tenderness for *truffes*, and acknowledge that, considering our single absence would not put down extravagant, pompous parties, we were not strong enough to let the morsels drop into unappreciating mouths; or we might say, that if a man invited us to see his new house, it would not be ungracious nor insulting to his hospitality, to point out whatever weak parts we might detect in it, nor to declare our candid conviction, that it was built upon wrong principles and could not stand. He might believe us if we had been in the house, but he certainly would not, if we had never seen it. Nor would it be a very wise reply upon his part, that we might build a better if we didn't like that. We are not fond of David's pictures, but we certainly could never paint half so well; nor of Pope's poetry, but posterity will never hear of our verses. Criticism is not construction, it is observation.

If we could surpass in its own way every thing which displeased us, we should make short work of it, and instead of showing what fatal blemishes deform our present society, we should present a specimen of perfection, directly.

{Illustration}

We went to the brilliant ball. There was too much of everything. Too much light, and eating, and drinking, and dancing, and flirting, and dressing, and feigning, and smirking, and much too many people. Good taste insists first upon fitness. But why had Mrs. Potiphar given this ball? We inquired industriously, and learned it was because she did not give one last year. Is it then essential to do this thing biennially? inquired we with some trepidation. “Certainly,” was the bland reply, “or society will forget you.” Everybody was unhappy at Mrs. Potiphar’s, save a few girls and boys, who danced violently all the evening. Those who did not dance walked up and down the rooms as well as they could, squeezing by non-dancing ladies, causing them to swear in their hearts as the brusque broadcloth carried away the light outworks of gauze and gossamer. The dowagers, ranged in solid phalanx, occupied all the chairs and sofas against the wall, and fanned themselves until supper-time, looking at each other’s diamonds, and criticising the toilettes of the younger ladies, each narrowly watching her peculiar Polly Jane, that she did not betray too much interest in any man who was not of a certain fortune. It is the cold, vulgar truth, madam, nor are we in the slightest degree exaggerating. Elderly gentlemen, twisting single gloves in a very wretched manner, came up and bowed to the dowagers, and smirked, and said it was a pleasant party, and a handsome house, and then clutched their hands behind them, and walked miserably away, looking as affable as possible. And the dowagers made a little fun of the elderly gentlemen, among themselves, as they walked away.

Then came the younger non-dancing men—a class of the community who wear black cravats and waistcoats, and thrust their thumbs and forefingers in their waistcoat pockets, and are called “talking men.” Some of them are literary, and affect the philosopher; have, perhaps,

written a book or two, and are a small species of lion to very young ladies. Some are of the *blasé* kind; men who affect the extremest elegance, and are reputed “so aristocratic,” and who care for nothing in particular, but wish they had not been born gentlemen, in which case they might have escaped ennui. These gentlemen stand with hat in hand, and coats and trowsers most unexceptionable. They are the “so gentlemanly” persons of whom one hears a great deal, but which seems to mean nothing but cleanliness. Vivian Grey and Pelham are the models of their ambition, and they succeed in being Pendennis. They enjoy the reputation of being “very clever,” and “very talented fellows,” “smart chaps,” etc., but they refrain from proving what is so generously conceded. They are often men of a certain cultivation. They have travelled, many of them,—spending a year or two in Paris, and a month or two in the rest of Europe. Consequently they endure society at home, with a smile, and a shrug, and a graceful superciliousness, which is very engaging. They are perfectly at home, and they rather despise Young America, which, in the next room, is diligently earning its invitation. They prefer to hover about the ladies who did not come out this season, but are a little used to the world, with whom they are upon most friendly terms, and who criticise together very freely all the great events in the great world of fashion.

These elegant Pendennises we saw at Mrs. Potiphar’s, but not without a sadness which can hardly be explained. They had been boys once, all of them, fresh and frank-hearted, and full of a noble ambition. They had read and pondered the histories of great men; how they resolved, and struggled, and achieved. In the pure portraiture of genius, they had loved and honored noble women, and each young heart was sworn to truth and the service of beauty. Those feelings were chivalric and fair. Those boyish instincts clung to whatever was lovely, and rejected the specious snare, however graceful and elegant. They sailed, new knights, upon that old and endless crusade against hypocrisy and the devil, and they were lost in the luxury of Corinth, nor longer seek the difficult shores beyond. A present smile was worth a future laurel. The ease of the moment was worth immortal tranquillity. They renounced the stern

worship of the unknown God, and acknowledged the deities of Athens. But the seal of their shame is their own smile at their early dreams, and the high hopes of their boyhood, their sneering infidelity of simplicity, their skepticism of motives and of men. Youths, whose younger years were fervid with the resolution to strike and win, to deserve, at least, a gentle remembrance, if not a dazzling fame, are content to eat, and drink, and sleep well; to go to the opera and all the balls; to be known as "gentlemanly," and "aristocratic," and "dangerous," and "elegant;" to cherish a luxurious and enervating indolence, and to "succeed," upon the cheap reputation of having been "fast" in Paris. The end of such men is evident enough from the beginning. They are snuffed out by a "great match," and become an appendage to a rich woman; or they dwindle off into old roués, men of the world in sad earnest, and not with elegant affectation, *blasé*; and as they began Arthur Pendennises, so they end the Major. But, believe it, that old fossil heart is wrung sometimes by a mortal pang, as it remembers those squandered opportunities and that lost life.

From these groups we passed into the dancing-room. We have seen dancing in other countries, and dressing. We have certainly never seen gentlemen dance so easily, gracefully and well as the American. But the *style* of dancing, in its whirl, its rush, its fury, is only equalled by that of the masked balls at the French Opera, and the balls at the *Salle Valentino*, the *Jardin Mabille*, the *Chateau Rouge*, and other favorite resorts of Parisian Grisettes and Lorettes. We saw a few young men looking upon the dance very soberly, and, upon inquiry, learned that they were engaged to certain ladies of the corps-de-ballet. Nor did we wonder that the spectacle of a young woman whirling in a *décolleté* state, and in the embrace of a warm youth, around a heated room, induced a little sobriety upon her lover's face, if not a sadness in his heart. Amusement, recreation, enjoyment! There are no more beautiful things. But this proceeding falls under another head. We watch the various toilettes of these bounding belles. They were rich and tasteful. But a man at our elbow, of experience and shrewd observation, said, with a sneer, for which we called him to account, "I observe that American ladies are

so rich in charms that they are not at all chary of them. It is certainly generous to us miserable blackcoats. But, do you know, it strikes me as a generosity of display that must necessarily leave the donor poorer in maidenly feeling." We thought ourselves cynical, but this was intolerable; and in a very crisp manner we demanded an apology.

"Why," responded our friend with more of sadness than of satire in his tone, "why are you so exasperated? Look at this scene! Consider that this is, really, the life of these girls. This is what they 'come out' for. This is the end of their ambition. They think of it, dream of it, long for it. Is it amusement? Yes, to a few, possibly. But listen, and gather, if you can, from their remarks (when they make any) that they have any thought beyond this, and going to church very rigidly on Sunday. The vigor of polking and church-going are proportioned; as is the one so is the other. My young friend, I am no ascetic, and do not suppose a man is damned because he dances. But Life is not a ball (more's the pity, truly, for these butterflies), nor is its sole duty and delight, dancing. When I consider this spectacle,—when I remember what a noble and beautiful woman is, what a manly man,—when I reel, dazzled by this glare, drunken with these perfumes, confused by this alluring music, and reflect upon the enormous sums wasted in a pompous profusion that delights no one,—when I look around upon all this rampant vulgarity in tinsel and Brussels lace, and think how fortunes go, how men struggle and lose the bloom of their honesty, how women hide in a smiling pretence, and eye with caustic glances their neighbor's newer house, diamonds, or porcelain, and observe their daughters, such as these,—why, I tremble and tremble, and this scene to-night, every 'crack' ball this winter will be, not the pleasant society of men and women, but—even in this young country—an orgie such as rotting Corinth saw, a frenzied festival of Rome in its decadence."

There was a sober truth in this bitterness, and we turned away to escape the sombre thought of the moment. Addressing one of the panting Houris who stood melting in a window, we spoke (and confess how absurdly) of the Düsseldorf Gallery. It was merely to avoid saying

how warm the room was, and how pleasant the party was; facts upon which we had already sufficiently enlarged. “Yes, they are pretty pictures; but la! how long it must have taken Mr. Düsseldorf to paint them all;” was the reply.

By the Farnesian Hercules! no Roman sylph in her city’s decline would ever have called the sun-god, Mr. Apollo. We hope that Houri melted entirely away in the window, but we certainly did not stay to see.

Passing out toward the supper-room we encountered two young men. “What, Hal,” said one, “*you* at Mrs. Potiphar’s?” It seems that Hal was a sprig of one of the old “families.” “Well, Joe,” said Hal, a little confused, “it *is* a little strange. The fact is I didn’t mean to be here, but I concluded to compromise by coming, *and not being introduced to the host*.” Hal could come, eat Potiphar’s supper, drink his wines, spoil his carpets, laugh at his fashionable struggles, and affect the puppyism of a foreign Lord, because he disgraced the name of a man who had done some service somewhere, while Potiphar was only an honest man who made a fortune.

The supper-room was a pleasant place. The table was covered with a chaos of supper. Everything sweet and rare, and hot and cold, solid and liquid, was there. It was the very apotheosis of gilt gingerbread. There was a universal rush and struggle. The charge of the guards at Waterloo was nothing to it. Jellies, custards, oyster-soup, ice-cream, wine and water, gushed in profuse cascades over transparent precipices of *tulle*, muslin, gauze, silk, and satin. Clumsy boys tumbled against costly dresses and smeared them with preserves,—when clean plates failed, the contents of plates already used were quietly “chucked” under the table—heeltaps of champagne were poured into the oyster tureens or overflowed upon plates to clear the glasses—wine of all kinds flowed in torrents, particularly down the throats of very young men, who evinced their manhood by becoming noisy, troublesome, and disgusting, and were finally either led, sick, into the hat room, or carried out of the way, drunk. The supper over, the young people attended by their matrons descended to the dancing-room for the “German.” This is a dance

commencing usually at midnight or a little after, and continuing indefinitely toward daybreak. The young people were attended by their matrons, who were there to supervise the morals and manners of their charges. To secure the performance of this duty, the young people took good care to sit where the matrons could not see them, nor did they, by any chance, look toward the quarter in which the matrons sat. In that quarter through all the varying mazes of the prolonged dance, to two o'clock, to three, to four, sat the bediamonded dowagers, the mothers, the matrons,—against nature, against common sense. They babbled with each other, they drowsed, they dozed. Their fans fell listless into their laps. In the adjoining room, out of the waking sight, even, of the then sleeping mammas, the daughters whirled in the close embrace of partners who had brought down bottles of champagne from the supper-room, and put them by the side of their chairs for occasional refreshment during the dance. The dizzy hours staggered by—"Azalia, you *must* come now," had been already said a dozen times, but only as by the scribes. Finally it was declared with authority. Azalia went,—Amelia—Arabella. The rest followed. There was a prolonged cloaking, there were lingering farewells. A few papas were in the supper-room, sitting among the *débris* of game. A few young non-dancing husbands sat beneath gas unnaturally bright, reading whatever chance book was at hand, and thinking of the young child at home waiting for mamma who was dancing the "German" below. A few exhausted matrons sat in the robing-room, tired, sad, wishing Jane would come up; assailed at intervals by a vague suspicion that it was not quite worth while; wondering how it was they used to have such good times at balls; yawning and looking at their watches; while the regular beat of the music below, with sardonic sadness, continued. At last Jane came up, had had the most glorious time, and went down with mamma to the carriage, and so drove home. Even the last Jane went—the last noisy youth was expelled, and Mr. and Mrs. Potiphar having duly performed their biennial social duty, dismissed the music, ordered the servants to count the spoons, and an hour or two after daylight went to bed. Enviable Mr. and Mrs. Potiphar!

We are now prepared for the great moral indignation of the friend who saw us eating our *dinde aux truffes* in that remarkable supper-room. We are waiting to hear him say in the most moderate and "gentlemanly" manner, that it is all very well to select flaws and present them as specimens, and to learn from him, possibly with indignant publicity, that the present condition of parties is not what we have intimated. Or, in his quiet and pointed way, he may smile at our fiery assault upon edged flounces and nuga pyramids, and the kingdom of Lilliput in general.

Yet, after all, and despite the youths who are led out, and carried home, or who stumble through the "German," this is a sober matter. My friend told us we should see the "best society." But he is a prodigious wag. Who make this country? From whom is its character of unparalleled enterprise, heroism and success derived? Who have given it its place in the respect and the fear of the world? Who, annually, recruit its energies, confirm its progress, and secure its triumph? Who are its characteristic children, the pith, the sinew, the bone, of its prosperity? Who found, and direct, and continue its manifold institutions of mercy and education? Who are, essentially, Americans? Indignant friend, these classes, whoever they may be, are the "best society," because they alone are the representatives of its character and cultivation. They are the "best society" of New York, of Boston, of Baltimore, of St. Louis, of New Orleans, whether they live upon six hundred or sixty thousand dollars a year—whether they inhabit princely houses in fashionable streets (which they often do), or not—whether their sons have graduated at Celarius' and the *Jardin Mabille*, or have never been out of their fathers' shops—whether they have "air" and "style," and are "so gentlemanly" and "so aristocratic," or not. Your shoemaker, your lawyer, your butcher, your clergyman—if they are simple and steady, and, whether rich or poor, are unseduced by the sirens of extravagance and ruinous display, help make up the "best society." For that mystic communion is not composed of the rich, but of the worthy; and is "best" by its virtues, and not by its vices. When Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Garrick, Reynolds, and their friends,

met at supper in Goldsmith's rooms, where was the "best society" in England? When George the Fourth outraged humanity and decency in his treatment of Queen Caroline, who was the first scoundrel in Europe?

Pause yet a moment, indignant friend. Whose habits and principles would ruin this country as rapidly as it has been made? Who are enamored of a puerile imitation of foreign splendors? Who strenuously endeavor to graft the questionable points of Parisian society upon our own? Who pass a few years in Europe, and return skeptical of republicanism and human improvement, longing and sighing for more sharply emphasised social distinctions? Who squander with profuse recklessness the hard-earned fortunes of their sires? Who diligently devote their time to nothing, foolishly and wrongly supposing that a young English nobleman has nothing to do? Who, in fine, evince by their collective conduct, that they regard their Americanism as a misfortune, and are so the most deadly enemies of their country? None but what our wag facetiously termed "the best society."

If the reader doubts, let him consider its practical results in any great emporium of "best society." Marriage is there regarded as a luxury, too expensive for any but the sons of rich men, or fortunate young men. We once heard an eminent divine assert, and only half in sport, that the rate of living was advancing so incredibly, that weddings in his experience were perceptibly diminishing. The reasons might have been many and various. But we all acknowledge the fact. On the other hand, and about the same time, a lovely damsel (ah! Clorinda,) whose father was not wealthy, who had no prospective means of support, who could do nothing but polka to perfection, who literally knew almost nothing, and who constantly shocked every fairly intelligent person by the glaring ignorance betrayed in her remarks, informed a friend at one of the Saratoga balls, whither he had made haste to meet "the best society," that there were "not more than three good matches in society!" *La Dame aux Camélias*, Marie Duplessis, was, to our fancy, a much more feminine, and admirable, and moral, and human person, than the adored Clorinda. And yet what she said was the legitimate result of the

state of our fashionable society. It worships wealth, and the pomp which wealth can purchase, more than virtue, genius, or beauty. We may be told that it has always been so in every country, and that the fine society of all lands is as profuse and flashy as our own. We deny it, flatly. Neither English, nor French, nor Italian, nor German society, is so unspeakably barren as that which is technically called "society" here. In London, and Paris, and Vienna, and Rome, all the really eminent men and women help make up the mass of society. A party is not a mere ball, but it is a congress of the wit, beauty, and fame of the capital. It is worth while to dress, if you shall meet Macaulay, or Hallam, or Guizot, or Thiers, or Landseer, or Delaroche,—Mrs. Norton, the Misses Berry, Madame Recamier, and all the brilliant women and famous foreigners. But why should we desert the pleasant pages of those men, and the recorded gossip of those women, to be squeezed flat against a wall, while young Doughface pours oyster gravy down our shirt front, and Carolina Pettitoes wonders at "Mr. Düsseldorf's" industry?

If intelligent people decline to go, you justly remark, it is their own fault. Yes, but if they stay away it is very certainly their great gain. The elderly people are always neglected with us, and nothing surprises intelligent strangers more, than the tyrannical supremacy of Young America. But we are not surprised at this neglect. How can we be if we have our eyes open? When Caroline Pettitoes retreats from the floor to the sofa, and instead of a "polker" figures at parties as a matron, do you suppose that "tough old Joes" like ourselves are going to desert the young Caroline upon the floor, for Madame Pettitoes upon the sofa? If the pretty young Caroline, with youth, health, freshness, a fine, budding form, and wreathed in a semi-transparent haze of flounced and flowered gauze, is so vapid that we prefer to accost her with our eyes alone, and not with our tongues, is the same Caroline married into a Madame Pettitoes, and fanning herself upon a sofa,—no longer particularly fresh, nor young, nor pretty, and no longer budding but very fully blown,—likely to be fascinating in conversation? We cannot wonder that the whole connection of Pettitoes, when advanced to the matron state, is

entirely neglected. Proper homage to age we can all pay at home, to our parents and grandparents. Proper respect for some persons is best preserved by avoiding their neighborhood.

And what, think you, is the influence of this extravagant expense and senseless show upon these same young men and women? We can easily discover. It saps their noble ambition, assails their health, lowers their estimate of men and their reverence for women, cherishes an eager and aimless rivalry, weakens true feeling, wipes away the bloom of true modesty, and induces an ennui, a satiety, and a kind of dilettante misanthropy, which is only the more monstrous because it is undoubtedly real. You shall hear young men of intelligence and cultivation, to whom the unprecedented circumstances of this country offer opportunities of a great and beneficent career, complaining that they were born within this blighted circle—regretting that they were not bakers and tallow-chandlers, and under no obligation to keep up appearances—deliberately surrendering all the golden possibilities of that Future which this country, beyond all others, holds before them—sighing that they are not rich enough to marry the girls they love, and bitterly upbraiding fortune that they are not millionnaires—suffering the vigor of their years to exhale in idle wishes and pointless regrets—disgracing their manhood by lying in wait behind their “so gentlemanly” and “aristocratic” manners, until they can pounce upon a “fortune” and ensnare an heiress into matrimony: and so having dragged their gifts, their horses of the sun, into a service which shames out of them all their native pride and power, they sink in the mire, and their peers and emulators exclaim that they have “made a good thing of it.”

Are these the processes by which a noble race is made and perpetuated? At Mrs. Potiphar’s we heard several Pendennises longing for a similar luxury, and announcing their firm purpose, never to have wives, nor houses, until they could have them as splendid as jewelled Mrs. Potiphar, and her palace, thirty feet front. Where were their heads and their hearts, and their arms? How looks this craven despondency, before the stern virtues of the ages we call dark? When a man is so

voluntarily imbecile as to regret he is not rich, if that is what he wants, before he has struck a blow for wealth; or so dastardly as to renounce the prospect of love, because sitting sighing, in velvet dressing-gown and slippers, he does not see his way clear to ten thousand a year; when young women coiffed *à merveille*, of unexceptionable "style," who, with or without a prospective penny, secretly look down upon honest women who struggle for their livelihood, like noble and Christian beings, and, as such, are rewarded; in whose society a man must forget that he has ever read, thought or felt; who destroy in the mind, the fair ideal of woman, which the genius of art and poetry, and love, their inspirer, has created; then it seems to us, it is high time that the subject should be regarded not as a matter of breaking butterflies upon the wheel, but as a sad and sober question, in whose solution, all fathers and mothers, and the state itself, are interested. When keen observers, and men of the world, from Europe, are amazed and appalled at the giddy whirl and frenzied rush of our society—a society singular in history, for the exaggerated prominence it assigns to wealth, irrespective of the talents that amassed it, they and their possessor being usually hustled out of sight—is it not quite time to ponder a little upon the Court of Louis XIV., and the "merrie days" of King Charles II.? Is it not clear that, if what our good wag, with caustic irony, called "best society," were really such, every thoughtful man would read upon Mrs. Potiphar's softly-tinted walls, the terrible "mene, mene" of imminent destruction?

Venice in her purple prime of luxury, when the famous law was passed, making all gondolas black, that the nobles should not squander fortunes upon them, was not more luxurious than New York today. Our hotels have a superficial splendor, derived from a profusion of gilt and paint, wood and damask. Yet, in not one of them can the traveller be so quietly comfortable as in an English Inn, and nowhere in New York can the stranger procure a dinner, at once so neat and elegant, and economical, as at scores of Cafes in Paris. The fever of display has consumed comfort. A gondola plated with gold was no easier than a black wooden one. We could well spare a little gilt upon the walls, for more cleanliness upon the public table; nor is it worth while to cover the

walls with mirrors to reflect a want of comfort, One prefers a wooden bench to a greasy velvet cushion, and a sanded floor to a soiled and threadbare carpet. An insipid uniformity is the Procrustes-bed, upon which "society" is stretched. Every new house is the counterpart of every other, with the exception of more gilt, if the owner can afford it. The interior arrangement, instead of being characteristic, instead of revealing something of the tastes and feelings of the owner, is rigorously conformed to every other interior. The same hollow and tame complaisance rules in the intercourse of society. Who dares say precisely what he thinks upon a great topic? What youth ventures to say sharp things, of slavery, for instance, at a polite dinner-table? What girl dares wear curls, when Martelle prescribes puffs or bandeaux? What specimen of young America dares have his trowsers loose or wear straps to them? We want individuality, heroism, and, if necessary, an uncompromising persistence in difference.

This is the present state of parties. They are wildly extravagant, full of senseless display; they are avoided by the pleasant and intelligent, and swarm with reckless regiments of "Brown's men." The ends of the earth contribute their choicest products to the supper, and there is everything that wealth can purchase, and all the spacious splendor that thirty feet front can afford. They are hot, and crowded, and glaring. There is a little weak scandal, venomous, not witty, and a stream of weary platitude, mortifying to every sensible person. Will any of our Pendennis friends intermit their indignation for a moment, and consider how many good things they have said or heard during the season? If Mr. Potiphar's eyes should chance to fall here, will he reckon the amount of satisfaction and enjoyment he derived from Mrs. Potiphar's ball, and will that lady candidly confess what she gained from it besides weariness and disgust? What eloquent sermons we remember to have heard in which the sins and the sinners of Babylon, Jericho and Gomorrah were scathed with holy indignation. The cloth is very hard upon Cain, and completely routs the erring kings of Judah. The Spanish Inquisition, too, gets frightful

knocks, and there is much eloquent exhortation to preach the gospel in the interior of Siam. Let it be preached there, and God speed the word. But also let us have a text or two in Broadway and the Avenue.

The best sermon ever preached upon society, within our knowledge, is "Vanity Fair." Is the spirit of that story less true of New York than of London? Probably we never see Amelia at our parties, nor Lieutenant George Osborne, nor good gawky Dobbin, nor Mrs. Rebecca Sharp Crawley, nor old Steyne. We are very much pained, of course, that any author should take such dreary views of human nature. We, for our parts, all go to Mrs. Potiphar's to refresh our faith in men and women. Generosity, amiability, a catholic charity, simplicity, taste, sense, high cultivation, and intelligence, distinguish our parties. The statesman seeks their stimulating influence; the literary man, after the day's labour, desires the repose of their elegant conversation; the professional man and the merchant hurry up from down town to shuffle off the coil of heavy duty, and forget the drudgery of life in the agreeable picture of its amenities and graces presented by Mrs. Potiphar's ball. Is this account of the matter, or "Vanity Fair," the satire? What are the prospects of any society of which that tale is the true history? There is a picture in the Luxembourg gallery at Paris, "The Decadence of the Romans," which made the fame and fortune of Couture, the painter. It represents an orgie in the court of a temple, during the last days of Rome. A swarm of revellers occupy the middle of the picture, wreathed in elaborate intricacy of luxurious posture, men and women intermingled; their faces, in which the old Roman fire scarcely flickers, brutalized with excess of every kind; their heads of dishevelled hair bound with coronals of leaves, while, from goblets of an antique grace, they drain the fiery torrent which is destroying them. Around the bacchanalian feast stand, lofty upon pedestals, the statues of old Rome, looking with marble calmness and the severity of a rebuke beyond words upon the revellers. A youth of boyish grace, with a wreath woven in his tangled hair, and with red and drowsy eyes, sits listless upon one pedestal, while upon another stands a boy, insane with drunkenness, and proffering a dripping goblet to the marble mouth of the statue. In the corner of the

picture, as if just quitting the court—Rome finally departing—is a group of Romans with care-worn brows, and hands raised to their faces in melancholy meditation. In the foreground of the picture, which is painted with all the sumptuous splendor of Venetian art, is a stately vase, around which hangs a festoon of gorgeous flowers, its end dragging upon the pavement. In the background, between the columns, smiles the blue sky of Italy—the only thing Italian not deteriorated by time. The careful student of this picture, if he has been long in Paris, is some day startled by detecting, especially in the faces of the women represented, a surprising likeness to the women of Paris, and perceives, with a thrill of dismay, that the models for this picture of decadent human nature are furnished by the very city in which he lives.

II. — OUR NEW LIVERY, AND OTHER THINGS.

A LETTER FROM MRS. POTIPHAR TO MISS CAROLINE PETTITOES.

NEW YORK, *April*.

MY DEAR CAROLINE,—Lent came so frightfully early this year, that I was very much afraid my new bonnet *à l'Imperatrice* would not be out from Paris soon enough. But fortunately it arrived just in time, and I had the satisfaction of taking down the pride of Mrs. Croesus, who fancied hers would be the only stylish hat in church the first Sunday. She could not keep her eyes away from me, and I sat so unmoved, and so calmly looking at the Doctor, that she was quite vexed. But, whenever she turned away, I ran my eyes over the whole congregation, and would you believe that, almost without an exception, people had their old things? However, I suppose they forgot how soon Lent was coming. As I was passing out of church, Mrs. Croesus brushed by me:

"Ah!" said she, "good morning. Why bless me! you've got that pretty hat I saw at Lawson's. Well, now, it's really quite pretty; Lawson has some taste left yet; what a lovely sermon the Doctor gave us. By the by, did you know that Mrs. Gnu had actually bought the blue velvet? It's too bad, because I wanted to cover my prayer-book with blue, and she sits so near, the effect of my book will be quite spoiled. Dear me! there she is beckoning to me; good-bye, do come and see us; Tuesdays, you know. Well, Lawson really does very well."

I was so mad with the old thing, that I could not help catching her by her mantle and holding on while I whispered loud enough for everybody to hear:

"Mrs. Croesus, you see I have just got my bonnet from Paris. It's made after the Empress's. If you would like to have yours made over in the fashion, dear Mrs. Croesus, I shall be so glad to lend you mine."

"No, thank you, dear," said she, "Lawson won't do for me. Bye-bye."

And so she slipped out, and, I've no doubt, told Mrs. Gnu that she had seen my bonnet at Lawson's. Isn't it too bad? Then she is so abominably cool. Somehow, when I am talking with Mrs. Croesus, who has all her own things made at home, I don't feel as if mine came from Paris at all. She has such a way of looking at you, that it's quite dreadful. She seems to be saying in her mind, "La! now, well done, little dear." And I think that kind of mental reservation (I think that's what they call it) is an insupportable impertinence. However, I don't care, do you?

I've so many things to tell you that I hardly know where to begin. The great thing is the livery, but I want to come regularly up to that, and forget nothing by the way. I was uncertain for a long time how to have my prayer-book bound. Finally, after thinking about it a great deal, I concluded to have it done in pale blue velvet, with gold clasps, and a gold cross upon the side. To be sure, it's nothing very new. But what *is* new now-a-days? Sally Shrimp has had hers done in emerald, and I know Mrs. Croesus will have crimson for hers, and those people who sits next us in church (I wonder who they are; it's very unpleasant to sit next to people you don't know; and, positively, that girl, the dark-haired one with large eyes, carries the same muff she did last year; it's big enough for a family) have a kind of brown morocco binding. I must tell you one reason why I fixed upon the pale-blue. You know that aristocratic-looking young man, in white cravat and black pantaloons and waistcoat, whom we saw at Saratoga a year ago, and who always had such a beautiful sanctimonious look, and such small white hands; well, he is a minister, as we supposed, "an unworthy candidate, and unprofitable husbandman," as he calls himself in that delicious voice of his. He has been quite taken up among us. He has been asked a good deal to dinner, and there was hope of his being settled as colleague to the Doctor, only Mr. Potiphar (who can be stubborn, you know) insisted that the Rev.

Cream Cheese, though a very good young man, he didn't doubt, was addicted to candlesticks. I suppose that's something awful. But, could you believe anything awful of him? I asked Mr. Potiphar what he meant by saying such things.

"I mean," said he, "that he's a Puseyite, and I've no idea of being tied to the apron-strings of the Scarlet Woman."

Dear Caroline, who *is* the Scarlet Woman? Dearest, tell me, upon your honor, if you have ever heard any scandal of Mr. Potiphar?

"What is it about candlesticks?" said I to Mr. Potiphar. "Perhaps Mr. Cheese finds gas too bright for his eyes; and that's his misfortune, not his fault.

"Polly," said Mr. Potiphar, who *will* call me Polly, although it sounds so very vulgar, "please not to meddle with things you don't understand. You may have Cream Cheese to dinner as much as you choose, but I will not have him in the pulpit of my church."

The same day Mr. Cheese happened in about lunch-time, and I asked him if his eyes were really weak.

"Not at all," said he, "why do you ask?"

Then I told him that I had heard he was so fond of candlesticks.

Ah! Caroline, you should have seen him then. He stopped in the midst of pouring out a glass of Mr. P.'s best old port, and holding the decanter in one hand, and the glass in the other, he looked so beautifully sad, and said in that sweet low voice:

"Dear Mrs. Potiphar, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Then he filled up his glass, and drank the wine off with such a mournful, resigned air, and wiped his lips so gently with his cambric handkerchief (I saw that it was a hem-stitch), that I had no voice to ask him to take a bit of the cold chicken, which he did, however, without my asking him. But when he said in the same low voice, "A little more breast, dear Mrs. Potiphar," I was obliged to run into the drawing room for a moment, to recover myself.

Well, after he had lunched I told him that I wished to take his advice upon something connected with the church, (for a prayer-book *is,* you know, dear,) and he looked so sweetly at me, that, would you believe it, I almost wished to be a Catholic, and to confess three or four times a week, and to have him for my confessor. But it's very wicked to wish to be a Catholic, and it wasn't real much, you know; but somehow I thought so. When I asked him in what velvet he would advise me to have my prayer-book bound, he talked beautifully for about twenty minutes. I wish you could have heard him. I'm not sure that I understood much of what he said—how should I?—but it was very beautiful. Don't laugh, Carrie, but there was one thing I did understand, and which, as it came pretty often, quite helped me through: it was, "Dear Mrs. Potiphar;" you can't tell how nicely he says it. He began by telling me that it was very important to consider all the details and little things about the church. He said they were all Timbales or Cymbals—or something of that kind; and then he talked very prettily about the stole, and the violet and scarlet capes of the cardinals, and purple chasubles, and the lace edge of the Pope's little short gown; and—do you know it was very funny—but it seemed to me, somehow, as if I was talking with Portier or Florine Lefevre, except that he used such beautiful words. Well, by and by, he said:—

"Therefore, dear Mrs. Potiphar, as your faith is so pure and childlike, and as I observe that the light from the yellow panes usually falls across your pew, I would advise that you cymbalize your faith (wouldn't that be noisy in church?) by binding your prayer-book in pale blue; the color of skim-milk, dear Mrs. Potiphar, which is so full of pastoral associations."

Why did he emphasize the word "pastoral?" Do you wonder that I like Cream Cheese, dear Caroline, when he is so gentle and religious—and such a pretty religion too! For he is not only well-dressed, and has such aristocratic hands and feet, in the parlor, but he is so perfectly gentlemanly in the pulpit. He never raises his voice too loud, and he has such wavy gestures. Mr. Potiphar says that may be all very true, but he knows perfectly well that he has a hankering for artificial flowers, and

that, for his part, he prefers the Doctor to any preacher he ever heard "because," he says, "I can go quietly to sleep, confident that he will say nothing that might not be preached from every well-regulated pulpit; whereas, if we should let Cream Cheese into the desk, I should have to keep awake to be on the look-out for some of these new-fangled idolatries: and, Polly Potiphar, I, for one, am determined to have nothing to do with the Scarlet Woman."

Darling Caroline—I don't care much—but did he ever have anything to do with a Scarlet Woman?

After he said that about artificial flowers, I ordered from Martelle the sweetest sprig of *immortelle* he had in his shop, and sent it anonymously on St. Valentine's day. Of course I didn't wish to do anything secret from my husband, that might make people talk, so I wrote—"Rev. Cream Cheese; from his grateful *Skim-milk*." I marked the last words, and hope he understood that I meant to express my thanks for his advice about the pale-blue cover. You don't think it was too romantice, do you, dear?

You can imagine how pleasantly Lent is passing since I see so much of him: and then it is so appropriate to Lent to be intimate with a minister. He goes with me to church a great deal; for Mr. Potiphar, of course, has no time for that, except on Sundays; and it is really delightful to see such piety. He makes the responses in the most musical manner; and when he kneels upon entering the pew, he is the admiration of the whole church. He buries his face entirely in a cloud of cambric pocket-handkerchief, with his initial embroidered at the corner; and his hair is beautifully parted down behind, which is very fortunate, as otherwise it would look so badly, when only half his head showed. I feel *so* good when I sit by his side; and when the Doctor (as Mr. P. says) "blows up" those terrible sinners in Babylon and the other Bible towns, I always find the Rev. Cream's eyes fixed upon me, with so much sweet sadness, that I am very, very sorry for the naughty people the Doctor talks about. Why did they do so, do you suppose, dear Caroline? How thankful we ought to be that we live now with so many churches, and such fine ones, and with such gentlemanly ministers as Mr. Cheese. And how nicely it's arranged that,

after dancing and dining for two or three months constantly, during which, of course, we can only go to church Sundays, there comes a time for stopping, when we're tired out, and for going to church every day, and (as Mr. P. says) "striking a balance;" and thinking about being good, and all those things. We don't lose a great deal, you know. It makes a variety, and we all see each other, just the same, only we don't dance. I do think it would be better if we took our lorgnettes with us, however, for it was only last Wednesday, at nine o'clock prayers, that I saw Sheena Silke across the church in their little pew at the corner, and I am sure that she had a new bonnet on; and yet, though I looked at it all the time trying to find out, prayers were fairly over before I discovered whether it was really new, or only that old white one made over with a few new flowers. Now, if I had had my glass, I could have told in a moment, and shouldn't have been obliged to lose all the prayers.

But, as I was saying, those poor old people in Babylon and Nineveh! only think, if they had had the privileges of prayers for six or seven weeks in Lent, and regular preaching the rest of the year, except, of course, in the summer—(by the by, I wonder if they all had some kind of Saratoga or Newport to go to?—I mean to ask Mr. Cheese)—they might have been good, and all have been happy. It's quite awful to hear how eloquent and earnest the Doctor is when he preaches against Babylon. Mr. P. says he likes to have him "pitch into those old sinners; it does 'em so much good;" and then he looks quite fierce. Mr. Cheese is going to read me a sermon he has written upon the maidenhood of Lot's wife. He says that he quotes a great deal of poetry in it, and that I must *dam* up the fount of my tears when he reads it. It was an odd expression for a minister, wasn't it? and I was obliged to say, "Mr. Cheese, you forget yourself." He replied, "Dear Mrs. Potiphar, I will explain;" and he did so; so that I admired him more than ever.

Dearest Caroline,—if you should only like him! He asked one day about you; and when I told him what a dear, good girl you are, he said: "And her father has worldly possessions, has he not?"

I answered, yes; that your father was very rich. Then he sighed, and said that he could never marry an heiress unless he clearly saw it to be his duty. Isn't it a beautiful resignation?

I had no idea of saying so much about him, but you know it's proper, when writing a letter in Lent, to talk about religious matters. And, I must confess, there is something comfortable in having to do with such things. Don't you feel better, when you've been dancing all the week, and dining, and going to the opera, and flirting and flying around, to go to church on Sundays? I do. It seems, somehow, as if we ought to go. But I do wish Mrs. Croesus would sit somewhere else than just in front of us, for her new bonnets and her splendid collars and capes makes me quite miserable: and then she puts me out of conceit of my things by talking about Lawson, or somebody, as I told you in the beginning.

Mr. Potiphar has sent out for the new carpets. I had only two spoiled at my ball, you know, and that was very little. One always expects to sacrifice at least two carpets upon occasion of seeing one's friends. That handsome one in the supper room was entirely ruined. Would you believe that Mr. P. when he went downstairs the next morning, found our Fred and his cousin hoeing it with their little toes? It was entirely matted with preserves and things, and the boys said that they were scraping it clean for breakfast. The other spoiled carpet was in the gentlemen's dressing-room where the punch-bowl was. Young Gauche Boosey, a very gentlemanly fellow, you know, ran up after polking, and was so confused with the light and heat that he went quite unsteadily, and as he was trying to fill a glass with the silver ladle (which is rather heavy), he somehow leaned too hard upon the table, and down went the whole thing, table, bowl, punch, and Boosey, and ended my poor carpet. I was sorry for that, and also for the bowl, which was a very handsome one, imported from China by my father's partner—a wedding gift to me —and for the table, a delicate rosewood stand, which was a work table of my sister Lucy's—whom you never knew, and who died long and long

ago. However, I was amply repaid by Boosey's drollery afterward. He is a very witty young man, and when he got up from the floor, saturated with punch (his clothes I mean), he looked down at the carpet and said:

"Well, I've given that such a punch it will want some *lemon-aid* to recover."

I suppose he had some idea about lemon acid taking out spots.

But, the best thing was what he said to me. He is so droll that he insisted upon coming down, and finishing the dance just as he was. The funny fellow brushed against all the dresses in his way, and, finally said to me, as he pointed to a lemon-seed upon his coat:

"I feel so very *lemon-choly* for what I have done."

I laughed very much (you were in the other room), but Mr. P. stepped up and ordered him to leave the house. Boosey said he would do no such thing; and I have no doubt we should have had a scene, if Mr. P. had not marched him straight to the door, and put him into a carriage, and told the driver where to take him. Mr. P. was red enough when he came back.

"No man shall insult me or my guests, by getting drunk in my house," said he; and he has since asked me not to invite Boosey nor "any of his kind," as he calls them, to our house. However, I think it will pass over. I tell him that all young men of spirit get a little excited with wine sometimes, and he mustn't be too hard upon them.

"Madame," said he to me, the first time I ventured to say that, "no man with genuine self-respect ever gets drunk twice; and, if you had the faintest idea of the misery which a little elegant intoxication has produced in scores of families that you know, you would never insinuate again that a little excitement from wine is an agreeable thing. There's your friend Mrs. Croesus (he thinks she's my friend, because we call each other 'dear'!); she is delighted to be a fashionable woman, and to be described as the 'peerless and accomplished Mrs. Croesus' in letters from the Watering-places to the Herald; but I tell you, if anything of the woman or the mother is left in the fashionable Mrs. Croesus, I could wring her heart as it never was wrung—and never shall be by me—by

showing her the places that young Timon Croesus haunts, the people with whom he associates and the drunkenness, gambling, and worse dissipations of which he is guilty.

"Timon Croesus is eighteen or nineteen, or, perhaps, twenty years old; and Polly, I tell you, he is actually *blasé*, worn out with dissipation, the companion of blacklegs, the chevalier of Cyprians, tipsy every night, and haggard every morning. Timon Croesus is the puny caricature of a man, mentally, morally, and physically. He gets 'elegantly intoxicated' at your parties; he goes off to sup with Gauche Boosey; you and Mrs. Croesus think them young men of spirit,—it is an exhilarating case of sowing wildcats, you fancy,—and, when, at twenty-five, Timon Croesus stands ruined in the world, without aims or capacities, without the esteem of a single man or his own self-respect—youth, health, hope, and energy, all gone forever—then you and your dear Mrs. Croesus will probably wonder at the horrible harvest. Mrs. Potiphar, ask the Rev. Cream Cheese to omit his sermon upon the maidenhood of Lot's wife, and preach from this text: 'They that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind.' Good heavens! Polly, fancy our Fred growing up to such a life! I'd rather bury him to-morrow!"

I never saw Mr. P. so much excited. He fairly put his handkerchief to his eyes, and I really believe he cried! But I think he exaggerates these things: and as he had a very dear friend that went worse and worse, until he died frightfully, a drunkard, it is not strange he should speak so warmly about it. But as Mrs. Croesus says:

"What can you do? You can't curb these boys, you don't want to break their spirits, you don't want to make them milk-sops."

When I repeated this speech to Mr. P., he said to me with a kind of solemnity:

"Tell Mrs. Croesus that I am not here to judge nor dictate: but she may be well assured, that every parent is responsible for every child of his to the utmost of the influence he can exert, whether he chooses to consider

himself so or not; and if not now, in this world, yet somewhere and somehow, he must hear and heed the voice that called to Cain in the garden, 'Where is Abel, thy brother?'"

I can't bear to hear Mr.P. talk in that way; it sounds so like preaching. Not precisely like what I hear at church but like what we mean when we say "preaching," without referring to any particular sermon. However, he grants that young Timon is an extreme case: but, he says, it is the result that proves the principle, and a state of feeling which not only allows, but indirectly fosters, that result, is frightful to think of.

"Don't think of it then, Mr. P.," said I. He looked at me for a moment with the sternest scowl I ever saw upon a man's face, then he suddenly ran up to me, and kissed me on the forehead (although my hair was all dressed for Mrs. Gnu's dinner), and went out of the house. He hasn't said much to me since, but he speaks very gently when he does speak, and sometimes I catch him looking at me in such a singular way, so half mournful, that Mr. Cheese's eyes don't seem so very sad after all.

However, to return to the party, I believe nothing else was injured except the curtains in the front drawing-room, which were so smeared with ice-cream and oyster gravy, that we must get new ones; and the cover of my porcelain tureen was broken by the servant, though the man said he didn't really mean to do it, and I could say nothing; and a party of young men, after the German Cotillion, did let fall that superb cut-glass Claret, and shivered it, with a dozen of the delicately engraved straw-stems that stood upon the waiter. That was all, I believe—oh! except that fine "Dresden Gallery," the most splendid book I ever saw, full of engravings of the great pictures in Dresden, Vienna, and the other Italian towns, and which was sent to Mr. P. by an old friend, an artist, whom he had helped along when he was very poor. Somebody unfortunately tipped over a bottle of claret that stood upon the table, (I am sure I don't know how it got there, though Mr. P. says Gauche Boosey knows,) and it lay soaking into the book, so that almost every picture has a claret stain, which looks so funny. I am very sorry, I am sure, but as I tell Mr. P., it's no use crying for spilt milk. I was telling Mr.

Boosey of it at the Gnus' dinner. He laughed very much, and when I said that a good many of the faces were sadly stained, he said in his droll way, "You ought to call it *L'Opera di Bordeaux; Le Domino rouge*." I supposed it was something funny, so I laughed a good deal. He said to me later: "Shall I pour a little claret into your book—I mean into your glass?"

Wasn't it a pretty *bon-mot?*

Don't you think we are getting very *spirituel* in this country?

I believe there was nothing else injured except the bed-hangings in the back room, which were somehow badly burnt and very much torn in pulling down, and a few of our handsomest shades that were cracked by the heat, and a few plates, which it was hardly fair to expect wouldn't be broken, and the colored glass door in my *escritoire*, against which Flattie Podge fell as she was dancing with Gauche Boosey; but he may have been a little excited, you know, and she, poor girl, couldn't help tumbling, and as her head hit the glass, of course, it broke, and cut her head badly, so that the blood ran down and naturally spoiled her dress; and what little *escritoire* could stand against Flattie Podge? So that went, and was a good deal smashed in falling. That's all, I think, except that the next day Mrs. Croesus sent a note, saying that she had lost her largest diamond from her necklace, and she was sure that it was not in the carriage, nor in her own house, nor upon the sidewalk, for she had carefully looked everywhere, *and she would be very glad if I would return it by the bearer*.

Think of that.

Well, we hunted everywhere, and found no diamond. I took particular pains to ask the servants if they had found it, for if they had, they might as well give it up at once, without expecting any reward from Mrs. Croesus, who wasn't very generous. But they all said they hadn't found any diamond: and our man John, who you know is so guileless,—although it *was* a little mysterious about that emerald pin of mine,—brought me a bit of glass that had been nicked out of my large custard

dish, and asked me if that was not Mrs. Croesus's diamond. I told him no, and gave him a gold dollar for his honesty. John is an invaluable servant; he is so guileless.

Do you know I am not so sure about Mrs. Croesus's diamond!

Mr. P. made a great howling about the ball. But it was very foolish, for he got safely to bed by six o'clock, and he need have no trouble about replacing the curtains, and glass, etc. I shall do all that, and the sum total will be sent to him in a lump, so that he can pay it.

Men are so unreasonable. Fancy us at seven o'clock that morning, when I retired. He wasn't asleep. But whose fault was that?

"Polly," said he, "that's the last."

"Last what?" said I. — "Last ball at my house," said he.

"Fiddle-dee-dee," said I. — "I tell you, Mrs. Potiphar, I am not going to open my house for a crowd of people who don't go away till daylight; who spoil my books and furniture; involve me in a foolish expense; for a gang of rowdy boys, who drink my Margaux, and Lafitte, and Marcobrunner, (what kind of drinks are those, dear Caroline?) and who don't know Chambertin from liquorice-water,—for a swarm of persons few of whom we know fewer, still care for me, and to whom I am only 'Old Potiphar,' the husband of you, a fashionable woman. I am simply resolved to have no more such tomfoolery in my house."

"Dear Mr. P.," said I, "you'll feel much better when you have slept. Besides, why do you say such things? Mustn't we see our friends, I should like to know; and if we do, are you going to let your wife receive them in a manner inferior to old Mrs. Podge or Mrs. Croesus? People will accuse you of meanness, and of treating me ill; and if some persons hear that you have reduced your style of living, they will begin to suspect the state of your affairs. Don't make any rash vows, Mr. P.," said I, "but go to sleep."

(Do you know that speech was just what Mrs. Croesus told me she had said to her husband under similar circumstances?)

Mr. P. fairly groaned, and I heard that short, strong little word that sometimes inadvertently drops out of the best regulated mouths, as young Gooseberry Downe says when he swears before his mother. Do you know Mrs. Settum Downe? Charming woman, but satirical.

Mr. P. groaned, and said some more ill-natured things, until the clock struck nine, and he was obliged to get up. I should be sorry to say to anybody but you, dearest, that I was rather glad of it; for I could then fall asleep at my ease; and these little connubial felicities (I think they call them) are so tiresome. But everybody agreed it was a beautiful ball; and I had the great gratification of hearing young Lord Mount Ague (you know you danced with him, love) say that it was quite the same thing as a ball at Buckingham Palace, except, of course, in size, and the number of persons, and dresses, and jewels, and the plate, and glass, and supper, and wines, and furnishing of the rooms, and lights, and some of those things, which are naturally upon a larger scale at a palace than in a private house. But, he said, excepting such things, it was quite as fine. I am afraid that Lord Mount Ague flatters; just a little bit you know.

Yes; and there was young Major Staggers, who said that "Decidedly it was *the* party of the season."

"How odd," said Mrs. Croesus, to whom I told it, and, I confess, with a little pride. "What a sympathetic man: that is, for a military man, I mean. Would you believe, dear Mrs. Potiphar, that he said precisely the same thing to me two days after my ball?"

Now, Caroline, dearest, *perhaps* he did!

With all these pleasant things said about one's party, I cannot see that it is such a dismal thing as Mr. P. tries to make out. After one of his solemn talks, I asked Mr. Cheese what he thought of balls, whether it was so very wicked to dance, and go to parties, if one only went to church twice a day on Sundays. He patted his lips a moment with his handkerchief, and then he said,—and, Caroline, you can always quote the Rev. Cream Cheese as authority,—

"Dear Mrs. Potiphar, it is recorded in Holy Scripture that the King danced before the Lord."

Darling, *if anything should happen,* I don't believe he would object much to our dancing.

What gossips we women are, to be sure! I meant to write you about our new livery and I am afraid I have tired you out already. You remember when you were here, I said that I meant to have a livery, for my sister Margaret told me that when they used to drive in Hyde Park, with the old Marquis of Mammon, it was always so delightful to hear him say, "Ah! there is Lady Lobster's livery."

It was so aristocratic. And in countries where certain colors distinguish certain families, and are hereditary, so to say, it is convenient and pleasant to recognize a coat-of-arms, or a livery, and to know that the representative of a great and famous family is passing by.

"That's a Howard, that's a Eussell, that's a Dorset, that's de Colique, that's Mount Ague," old Lord Mammon used to say as the carriages whirled by. He knew none of them personally, I believe, except de Colique and Mount Ague, but then it was so agreeable to be able to know their liveries.

Now why shouldn't we have the same arrangement? Why not have the Smith colors, and the Brown colors, and the Black colors, and the Potiphar colors, etc., so that the people might say, "Ah! there goes the Potiphar arms."

There is one difficulty, Mr. P. says, and that is, that he found five hundred and sixty-seven Smiths in the Directory, which might lead to some confusion. But that was absurd, as I told him, because everybody would know which of the Smiths was able to keep a carriage, so that the livery would be recognized directly the moment that any of the family were seen in a carriage. Upon which he said, in his provoking way, "Why have any livery at all, then?" and he persisted in saying that no Smith was ever *the* Smith for three generations, and that he knew at least twenty, each of whom was able to set up his carriage and stand by his colors.

"But then a livery is so elegant and aristocratic," said I, "and it shows that a servant is a servant."

That last was a strong argument, and I thought Mr. P. would have nothing to say against it; but he rattled on for some time, asking me what right I had to be aristocratic, or, in fact, anybody else;—went over his eternal old talk about aping foreign habits, as if we hadn't a right to adopt the good usages of all nations, and finally said that the use of liveries among us was not only a "pure peacock absurdity," as he called it, but that no genuine American would ever ask another to assume a menial badge.

"Why!" said I, "is not an American servant a servant still?"

"Most undoubtedly," he said; "and when a man is a servant, let him serve faithfully; and in this country especially, where to-morrow he may be served, and not the servant, let him not be ashamed of serving. But, Mrs. Potiphar, I beg you to observe that a servant's livery is not, like a general's uniform the badge of honorable service, but of menial service. Of course, a servant may be as honorable as a general, and his work quite as necessary and well done. But, for all that, it is not so respected nor coveted a situation, I believe; and, in social estimation, a man suffers by wearing a livery, as he never would if he wore none. And while in countries in which a man is proud of being a servant (as every man may well be of being a good one), and never looks to anything else, nor desires any change, a livery may be very proper to the state of society, and very agreeable to his own feelings, it is quite another thing in a society constituted upon altogether different principles, where the servant of to-day is the senator of to-morrow. Besides that, which I suppose is too fine-spun for you, livery is a remnant of a feudal state, of which we abolish every trace as fast as we can. That which is represented by livery is not consonant with our principles."

How the man runs on, when he gets going this way! I said, in answer to all this flourish, that I considered a livery very much the thing; that European families had liveries and American families might have liveries;—that there was an end of it, and I meant to have one. Besides if it is a matter of family, I should like to know who has a better right?

There was Mr. Potiphar's grandfather, to be sure, was only a skilful blacksmith and a good citizen, as Mr. P. says, who brought up a family in the fear of the Lord.

How oddly he puts those things!

But *my* ancestors, as you know, are a different matter. Starr Mole, who interests himself in genealogies, and knows the family name and crest of all the English nobility, has "climbed our family tree," as Staggers says, and finds that I am lineally descended from one of those two brothers who came over in some of those old times, in some of those old ships, and settled in some of those old places somewhere. So you see, dear Caroline, if birth gives any one a right to coats of arms and liveries, and all those things, I feel myself sufficiently entitled to have them.

But I don't care anything about that. The Gnus, and Croesuses, and Silkes, and the Settum Downes, have their coats of arms, and crests, and liveries, and I am not going to be behind, I tell you. Mr. P. ought to remember that a great many of these families were famous before they came to this country; and there is a kind of interest in having on your ring, for instance, the same crest that your ancestor two or three centuries ago had upon her ring. One day I was quite wrought up about the matter, and I said as much to him.

"Certainly," said he, "certainly; you are quite right. If I had Sir Philip Sidney to my ancestor, I should wear his crest upon my ring, and glory in my relationship, and I hope I should be a better man for it. I wouldn't put his arms upon my carriage, however, because that would mean nothing but ostentation. It would be merely a flourish of trumpets to say that I was his descendant, and nobody would know that, either, if my name chanced to be Boggs. In my library I might hang a copy of the family escutcheon as a matter of interest and curiosity to myself, for I'm sure I shouldn't understand it. Do you suppose Mrs. Gnu knows what *gules argent* are? A man may be as proud of his family as he chooses, and, if he has noble ancestors, with good reason. But there is no sense in parading that pride. It is an affectation, the more foolish that it achieves nothing—no more credit at Stewart's—no more real respect in society.

Besides, Polly, who were Mrs. Gnu's ancestors, or Mrs. Croesus's, or Mrs. Settum Downe's? Good, quiet, honest, and humble people, who did their work, and rest from their labors. Centuries ago, in England, some drops of blood from 'noble' veins may have mingled with the blood of the forefathers; or even, the founder of the family name may be historically famous. What then? Is Mrs. Gnu's family ostentation less absurd? Do you understand the meaning of her crest, and coats of arms, and liveries? Do you suppose she does herself? But in forty-nine cases out of fifty, there is nothing but a similarity of name upon which to found all this flourish of aristocracy."

My dear old Pot is getting rather prosy, Carrie. So when he had finished that long speech, during which I was looking at the lovely fashion plates in Harper, I said:

"What colors do you think I'd better have?"

He looked at me with that singular expression, and went out suddenly, as if he were afraid he might say something.

He had scarcely gone before I heard:

"My dear Mrs. Potiphar, the sight of you is refreshing as Hermon's dew."

I colored a little; Mr. Cheese says such things so softly. But I said good morning, and then asked him about liveries, etc.

He raised his hand to his cravat, (it was the most snowy lawn, Carrie, and tied in a splendid bow.)

"Is not this a livery, dear Mrs. Potiphar?"

And then he went off into one of those pretty talks, in what Mr. P. calls the "language of artificial flowers," and wound up by quoting Scripture, —"Servants, obey your masters."

That was enough for me. So I told Mr. Cheese that as he had already assisted me in colors once, I should be most glad to have him do so again. What a time we had, to be sure, talking of colors, and cloths, and gaiters, and buttons, and knee-breeches, and waistcoats, and plush, and coats, and lace, and hatbands, and gloves, and cravats, and cords, and

tassels, and hats. Oh! it was delightful. You can't fancy how heartily the Rev. Cream entered into the matter. He was quite enthusiastic, and at last he said, with so much expression, "Dear Mrs. Potiphar, why not have a *chasseur?*"

I thought it was some kind of French dish for lunch, so I said:

"I am so sorry, but we haven't any in the house."

"Oh," said he, "but you could hire one, you know."

Then I thought it must be a musical instrument—a Panharmonicon, or something of that kind, so I said in a general way—

"I am not very, very fond of it."

"But it would be so fine to have him standing on the back of the carriage, his plumes waving in the wind, and his lace and polished belts flashing in the sun, as you whirled down Broadway."

Of course I knew then that he was speaking of those military gentlemen who ride behind carriages, especially upon the Continent, as Margaret tells me, and who in Paris are very useful to keep the savages and wild beasts at bay in the *Champ Elysees*, for you know they are intended as a guard.

But I knew Mr. P. would be firm about that, so I asked Mr. Cheese not to kindle my imagination with the *Chasseur*.

We concluded finally to have only one full-sized footman, and a fat driver.

"The corpulence is essential, dear Mrs. Potiphar," said Mr. Cheese. "I have been much abroad; I have mingled, I trust, in good, which is to say, Christian society: and I must say, that few things struck me more upon my return than that the ladies who drive very handsome carriages, with footmen, etc., in livery, should permit such thin coachmen upon the box. I really believe that Mrs. Settum Downe's coachman doesn't weigh more than a hundred and thirty pounds, which is ridiculous. A lady might as well hire a footman with insufficient calves, as a coachman who weighs less than two hundred and ten. That is the minimum. Besides, I don't observe any wigs upon the coachmen. Now, if a lady sets up her carriage

with the family crest and fine liveries, why, I should like to know, is the wig of the coachman omitted, and his cocked hat also? It is a kind of shabby, half-ashamed way of doing things—a garbled glory. The cock-hatted, knee-breeched, paste-buckled, horse-hair-wigged coachman, one of the institutions of the aristocracy. If we don't have him complete, we somehow make ourselves ridiculous. If we do have him complete, why then"—

Here Mr. Cheese coughed a little, and patted his mouth with his cambric. But what he said was very true. I *should* like to come out with the wig—I mean upon the coachman; it would so put down the Settum Downes. But I'm sure old Pot wouldn't have it. He lets me do a great deal. But there is a line which I feel he won't let me pass. I mentioned my fears to Mr. Cheese.

"Well," he said, "Mr. Potiphar may be right. I remember an expression of my carnal days about 'coming it too strong.' which seems to me to be applicable just here."

After a little more talk, I determined to have red plush breeches, with a black cord at the side—white stockings—low shoes with large buckles—a yellow waistcoat, with large buttons—lappels to the pockets—and a purple coat, very full and fine, bound with gold lace—and the hat banded with a full gold rogette. Don't you think that would look well in Hyde Park? And, darling Carrie, why shouldn't we have in Broadway what they have in Hyde Park?

When Mr. P. came in, I told him all about it. He laughed a good deal, and said, "What next?" So I am not sure that he would be so very hard upon the wig. The next morning I had appointed to see the new footman, and as Mr. P. went out he turned and said to me, "Is your footman coming to-day?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Well," said he, "don't forget the calves. You know that everything in the matter of livery depends upon the calves."

And he went out laughing silently to himself, with—actually, Carrie—a tear in his eye.

But it was true, wasn't it? I remember in all the books and pictures how much is said about the calves. In advertisements, etc., it is stated that none but well-developed calves need apply, at least it is so in England, and, if I have a livery, I am not going to stop half-way. My duty was very clear. When Mr. Cheese came in, I said I felt awkward in asking a servant about his calves,—it sounded so queerly. But I confessed that it was necessary.

"Yes, the path of duty is not always smooth, dear Mrs. Potiphar. It is often thickly strewn with thorns," said he, as he sank back in the *fautteuil*, and put down his *petit verre of Marasquin*.

Just after he had gone the new footman was announced. I assure you, although it is ridiculous, I felt quite nervous. But when he came in, I said calmly—

"Well, James, I am glad you have come."

"Please, ma'am, my name is Henry," said he.

I was astonished at his taking me up so, and said, decidedly—"James, the name of my footman is always James. You may call yourself what you please, I shall always call you James."

The idea of the man's undertaking to arrange my servants' names for me!

Well, he showed me his references, which were very good, and I was quite satisfied. But there was the terrible calf business that must be attended to. I put it off a great while, but I had to begin.

"Well, James!"—and there I stopped.

"Yes, ma'am," said he.

"I wish—yes—ah!"—and I stopped again.

"Yes, ma'am," said he.

"James, I wish you had come in knee-breeches."

"Ma'am?" said he in great surprise.

"In knee-breeches, James," repeated I. — "What be they, ma'am? what for, ma'am?" said he, a little frightened, as I thought.

"Oh! nothing, nothing; but—but—"

"Yes, ma'am," said James.

"But—but, I want to see—to see—"

"What ma'am?" said James.

"Your legs," gasped I; and the path *was* thorny enough, Carrie, I can tell you. I had a terrible time explaining to him what I meant, and all about the liveries, etc. Dear me! what a pity these things are not understood: and then we should never have this trouble about explanations. However, I couldn't make him agree to wear the livery. He said:

"I'll try to be a good servant, ma'am, but I cannot put on those things and make a fool of myself. I hope you won't insist, for I am very anxious to get a place."

Think of his dictating to me. I told him that I did not permit my servants to impose conditions upon me (that's one of Mrs. Croesus's sayings), that I was willing to pay him good wages and treat him well, but that my James must wear my livery. He looked very sorry, said that he should like the place very much,—that he was satisfied with the wages, and was sure that he should please me, but he could not put on those things. We were both determined, and so parted. I think we were both sorry; for I should have to go all through the calf-business again, and he lost a good place.

However, Caroline dear, I have my livery and my footman, and am as good as anybody. It's very splendid when I go to Stewart's to have the red plush and the purple, and the white calves springing down to open the door, and to see people look, and say, "I wonder who that is?" And everybody bows so nicely, and the clerks are so polite, and Mrs. Gnu is melting with envy on the other side, and Mrs. Croesus goes about saying, "Dear little woman, that Mrs. Potiphar, but so weak! Pity, pity!" And Mrs. Settum Downe says, "Is that the Potiphar livery? Ah, yes, Mr. Potiphar's grandfather used to shoe my grandfather's horses!"—(as if to be useful in the world, were a disgrace,—as Mr. P. says) and young Downe, and Boosey, and Timon Croesus come up and stand about so

gentlemanly, and say, “Well Mrs. Potiphar, are we to have no more charming parties this season?”—and Boosey says, in his droll way, “Let’s keep the ball a-rolling!” That young man is always ready with a witticism. Then I step out and James throws open the door, and the young men raise their hats, and the new crowd says, “I wonder who that is!” and the plush and purple, and calves spring up behind, and I drive home to dinner.

Now, Carrie, dear, isn’t that nice?

Well, I don’t know how it is—but things are so queer. Sometimes when I wake up in the morning, in my room, which I have had tapestried with fluted rose silk, and lie thinking, under the lace curtains; although I may have been at one of Mrs. Gnu’s splendid parties the night before, and am going to Mrs. Silke’s to dinner, and to the opera and Mrs. Settum Downe’s in the evening, and have nothing to do all the day but go to Stewart’s, or Martelle’s or Lefevre’s, and shop, and pay morning calls;—do you know, as I say, that sometimes I hear an old familiar tune played upon a hand-organ far away in some street, and it seems to me in that half-drowsy state under the laces, that I hear the girls and boys singing it in the fields where we used to play. It is a kind of dream, I suppose, but often, as I listen, I am sure that I hear Henry’s voice again that used to ring so gayly among the old trees, and I walk with him in the sunlight to the bank by the river, and he throws in the flower—as he really did—and says, with a laugh, “If it goes this side of the stump I am saved; if the other, I am lost;” and then he looks at me as if I had anything to do with it, and the flower drifts slowly off and off, and goes the other side of the old stump, and we walk homeward silently, until Henry laughs out, and says, “Thank heaven, my fate is not a flower;” and I swear to love him for ever and ever, and marry him, and live in a dingy little old room in some of the dark and dirty streets in the city.

Then I doze again: but presently the music steals into my sleep, and I see him as I saw him last standing in his pulpit, so calm and noble, and drawing the strong men as well as the weak women by his earnest persuasion; and after service he smiles upon me kindly, and says, “This

is my wife, and the wife, who looks like the Madonna in that picture of Andrea Del Sarto's, which you liked so at the gallery, leads us to a little house buried in roses, looking upon a broad and lovely landscape," and Henry whispers to me as a beautiful boy bounds into the room, "Mrs. Potiphar, I am very happy."

I doze again until Adele comes in and opens the shutters. I do not hear the music any more; but those days I do somehow seem to hear it all the time. Of course, Mr. P. is gone long before I wake, so he knows nothing about all this. I generally come in at night after he is asleep, and he is up and has his breakfast, and goes down town before I wake in the morning. He comes home to dinner, but he is apt to be silent; and after dinner he takes his nap in the parlor over his newspaper, while I go up and let Adele dress my hair for the evening. Sometimes Mr. P. groans into a clean shirt and goes with me to the ball; but not often. When I come home, as I said, he is asleep, so I don't see a great deal of him, except in the summer, when I am at Saratoga or Newport; and then, not so much, after all, for he usually only passes Sunday, and I must be a good Christian, you know, and go to church. On the whole, we have not a very intimate acquaintance; but I have a great respect for him. He told me the other day that he should make at least thirty thousand dollars this year.

My darling Carrie—I am very sorry I can't write you a longer letter. I want to consult you about wearing gold powder like the new Empress. It would kill Mrs. Croesus if you and I should be the first to come out in it; and don't you think the effect would be fine, when we were dancing, to shower the gold mist around us! How it would sparkle upon the gentlemen's black coats! ("Yes," says Mr. P., "and how finely Gauche Boosey, and Timon Croesus, and young Downe will look in silk tights and small clothes!") They say it's genuine gold ground up. I have already sent for a white velvet and lace—the Empress's bridal dress, you know. That foolish old P. asked me if I had sent for the Emperor and the Bank of France too.

“Men ask such absurd questions,” said I. — “Mrs. Potiphar, I never asked but one utterly absurd question in my life,” said he, and marched out of the house.

Au revoir, chère Caroline. I have a thousand things to say, but I know you must be tired to death.

Fondly yours,

POLLY POTIPHAR.

P. S.—Our little Fred. is quite down with the scarlet fever. Potiphar says I mustn’t expose myself, so I don’t go into the room; but Mrs. Jollup, the nurse, tells me through the keyhole how he is. Mr. P. sleeps in the room next the nursery, so as not to carry the infection to me. He looks very solemn as he walks down town. I hope it won’t spoil Fred’s complexion. I should be so sorry to have him a little fright! Poor little thing!

P. S. 2d.—Isn’t it funny about the music?

III. — A MEDITATION BY PAUL POTIPHAR, ESQ.

Well, my new house is finished—and so am I. I hope Mrs. Potiphar is satisfied. Everybody agrees that it is "palatial." The daily papers have had columns of description, and I am, evidently, according to their authority, "munificent," "tasteful," "enterprising," and "patriotic."

Amen! but what business have I with palatial residences? What more can I possibly want, than a spacious, comfortable house? Do *I* want buhl *escritoires*? Do I want or *molu* things? Do I know anything about pictures and statues? In the name of heaven do I want rose-pink bed-curtains to give my grizzly old phiz a delicate "uroral hue," as Cream Cheese says of Mrs. P.'s complexion? Because I have made fifty thousand this last year in Timbuctoo bonds, must I convert it all into a house, so large that it will not hold me comfortably,—so splendid that I might as well live in a porcelain vase, for the trouble of taking care of it,—so prodigiously "palatial" that I have to skulk into my private room, put on my slippers, close the door, shut myself up with myself, and wonder why I married Mrs. Potiphar?

This house is her doing. Before I married her, I would have worn yellow silk breeches on 'Change if she had commanded me—for love. Now I would build her two houses twice as large as this, if she required it —for peace. It's all over. When I came home from China I was the desirable Mr. Potiphar, and every evening was a field-day for me, in which I reviewed all the matrimonial forces. It is astonishing, now I come to think of it, how skilfully Brigadier-General Mrs. Pettitoes deployed those daughters of hers; how vigorously Mrs. Tabby led on her forlorn hope; and how unweariedly, Murat-like, Mrs. De Famille charged at the head of her cavalry. They deserve to be made Marshals of France, all of them. And I am sure, that if women ought ever to receive honorary testimonials, it is for having "married a daughter well."

That's a pretty phrase! The mammas marry, the misses are married.

And yet, I don't see why I say so. I fear I am getting sour. For certainly, Polly's mother didn't marry Polly to me. I fell in love with her, the rest followed. Old Gnu says that it's true Polly's mother didn't marry her, but she did marry herself, to me.

{Illustration}

"Do you really think, Paul Potiphar," said he, a few months ago, when I was troubled about Polly's getting a livery, "that your wife was in love with you, a dry old chip from China? Don't you hear her say whenever any of her friends are engaged, that they 'have done very well!' and made a 'capital match!' and have you any doubt of her meaning? Don't you know that this is the only country in which the word 'money' must never be named in the young female ear; and in whose best society—not universally nor without exception, of course not; Paul, don't be a fool—money makes marriages? When you were engaged, 'the world' said that it was a 'capital thing' for Polly. Did that mean that you were a good, generous, intelligent, friendly, and patient man, who would be the companion for life she ought to have? You know, as well as I do, and as all the people who said it know, that it meant you were worth a few hundred thousands, that you could build a splendid house, keep horses and chariots, and live in style. You and I are sensible men, Paul, and we take the world as we find it; and know that if a man wants a good dinner he must pay for it. We don't quarrel with this state of things. How can it be helped? But we need not virtuously pretend it's something else. When my wife, being then a gay girl, first smiled at me, and looked at me, and smelt at the flowers I sent her in an unutterable manner, and proved to me that she didn't love me by the efforts she made to show that she did, why, I was foolishly smitten with her, and married her. I knew that she did not marry me, but sundry shares in the Patagonia and Nova Zembla Consolidation, and a few hundred house lots upon the island. What then? I wanted her, she was willing to take me,—being sensible enough to know that the stock and the lots had an incumbrance. *Voila tout,* as young Boosey says. Your wife wants you to build a house. You'd better

build it. It's the easiest way. Make up your mind to Mrs. Potiphar, my dear Paul, and thank heaven you've no daughters to be married off by that estimable woman."

Why does a man build a house? To live in, I suppose—to have a home. But is a fine house a home? I mean, is a "palatial residence," with Mrs. Potiphar at the head of it, the "home" of which we all dream more or less, and for which we ardently long as we grow older? A house, I take it, is a retreat to which a man hurries from business, and in which he is compensated by the tenderness and thoughtful regard of a woman, and the play of his children, for the rough rubs with men. I know it is a silly view of the case, but I'm getting old and can't help it. Mrs. Potiphar is perfectly right when she says:

"You men are intolerable. After attending to your own affairs all day, and being free from the fuss of housekeeping, you expect to come home and shuffle into your slippers, and snooze over the evening paper—if it were possible to snooze over the exciting and respectable evening journal you take—while we are to sew, and talk with you if you are talkative, and darn the stockings, and make tea. You come home tired, and likely enough, surly, and gloom about like a thundercloud if dinner isn't ready for you the instant you are ready for it, and then sit mum and eat it; and snap at the children, and show yourselves the selfish, ugly things you are. Am *I* to have no fun, never go to the opera, never go to a ball, never have a party at home? Men are tyrants, Mr. Potiphar. They are ogres who entice us poor girls into their castles, and then eat up our happiness and scold us while they eat."

Well, I suppose it is so. I suppose I am an ogre and enticed Polly into my castle. But she didn't find it large enough, and teased me to build another. I suppose she does sit with me in the evening, and sew, and make tea, and wait upon me. I suppose she does, but I've not a clear idea of it. I know it's unkind of me, when I have been hard at work all day, trying to make and secure the money that gives her and her family everything they want, and which wearies me body and soul, to expect her to let me stay at home, and be quiet. I know I ought to dress and go into

Gnu's house, and smirk at his wife, and stand up in a black suit before him attired in the same way, and talk about the same stocks that we discussed down town in the morning in colored trowsers. That's a social duty, I suppose. And I ought to see various slight young gentlemen whirl my wife around the room, and hear them tell her when they stop, that it's very warm. That's another social duty, I suppose. And I must smile when the same young gentlemen put their elbows into my stomach, and hop on my feet in order to extend the circle of the dance. I'm sure Mrs. P. is right. She does very right to ask, "Have we no social duties, I should like to know?"

And when we have performed these social duties in Gnu's house, how mean it is, how "it looks," not to build a larger house for him and Mrs. Gnu to come and perform their social duties in. I give it up. There's no doubt of it.

One day Polly said to me:

"Mr. Potiphar, we're getting down town."

"What do you mean, my dear?"

"Why, everybody is building above us, and there are actually shops in the next street. Singe, the pastry-cook, has hired Mrs. Croesus's old house."

"I know it. Old Croesus told me so some time ago; and he said how sorry he was to go. 'Why, Potiphar,' said he, 'I really hoped when I built there, that I should stay, and not go out of the house, finally, until I went into no other. I have lived there long enough to love the place, and have some associations with it; and my family have grown up in it, and love the old house too. It was our *home*. When any of us said 'home' we meant not the family only, but the house in which the family lived, where the children were all born, and where two have died, and my old mother, too. I'm in a new house now, and have lost my reckoning entirely. I don't know the house; I've no associations with it. The house is new, the furniture is new, and my feelings are new. It's a farce for me to begin again, in this way. But my wife says it's all right, that everybody does it,

and wants to know how it can be helped; and, as I don't want to argue the matter, I look amen.' That's the way Mr. Croesus submits to his new house, Mrs. Potiphar."

She doesn't understand it. Poor child! how should she? She, and Mrs. Croesus, and Mrs. Gnu, and even Mrs. Settum Downe, are all as nomadic as Bedouin Arabs. The Rev. Cream Cheese says, that he sees in this constant migration from one house to another, a striking resemblance to the "tents of a night," spoken of in Scripture. He imparts this religious consolation to me when I grumble. He says, that it prevents a too-closely clinging affection to temporary abodes. One day, at dinner, that audacious wag, Boosey, asked him if the "many manthuns" mentioned in the Bible, were not as true of mortal as of immortal life. Mrs. Potiphar grew purple, and Mr. Cheese looked at Boosey in the most serious manner over the top of his champagne-glass. I am glad to say that Polly has properly rebuked Gauche Boosey for his irreligion, by not asking him to her Saturday evening *matinees dansantes*.

There was no escape from the house, however. It must be built. It was not only Mrs. Potiphar that persisted, but the spirit of the age and of the country. One can't live among shops. When Pearl street comes to Park Place, Park Place must run for its life up to Thirtieth street. I know it can't be helped, but I protested, and I will protest. If I've got to go, I'll have my grumble. My wife says:

"I'm ashamed of you, Potiphar. Do you pretend to be an American, and not give way willingly to the march of improvement? You had better talk with Mr. Cream Cheese upon the 'genius of the country.' You are really unpatriotic, you show nothing of the enterprising spirit of your time." "Yes," I answer. "That's pretty from you; you are patriotic aren't you, with your liveries and illimitable expenses, and your low bows to money, and your immense intimacy with all lords and ladies that honor the city by visiting it. You are prodigiously patriotic with your inane imitations of a splendor impossible to you in the nature of things. You are the ideal American woman, aren't you, Mrs. Potiphar?"

Then I run, for I'm afraid of myself, as much as of her. I am sick of this universal plea of patriotism. It is used to excuse all the follies that outrage it. I am not patriotic if I do not do this and that, which, if done, is a ludicrous caricature of something foreign. I am not up to the time if I persist in having my own comfort in my own way. I try to resist the irresistible march of improvement, if I decline to build a great house, which, when it is built, is a puny copy of a bad model. I am very unpatriotic if I am not trying to outspend foreign noblemen, and if I don't affect, without education, or taste, or habit, what is only beautiful, when it is the result of the three.

However, this is merely my grumble. I knew, the first morning Mrs. Potiphar spoke of a new house, that I must build it. What she said was perfectly true; we were getting down town, there was no doubt of the growing inconvenience of our situation. It was becoming a dusty noisy region. The congregation of the Rev. Far Niente had sold their church and moved up town. Now doesn't it really seem as if we were a cross between the Arabs who dwell in tents and those who live in cities, for we are migratory in the city? A directory is a more imperative annual necessity here than in any other civilized region. My wife says it is a constant pleasure to her to go round and see the new houses and the new furniture of her new friends, every year. I saw that I must submit. But I determined to make little occasional stands against it. So one day I said:

"Polly, do you know that the wives of all the noblemen who will be your very dear and intimate friends and models when you go abroad, always live in the same houses in London, and Paris, and Rome, and Vienna? Do you know that Northumberland House is so called because it is the hereditary town mansion of the Duke, and that the son and daughter-in-law of Lord Londonderry will live after him in the house where his father and mother lived before him? Did that ever occur to you, my dear?"

“Mr. Potiphar,” she replied, “do you mean to go by the example of foreign noblemen? I thought you always laughed at me for what you call ‘aping.’”

“So I do, and so I will continue to do, Mrs. Potiphar; only I thought that, perhaps, you would like to know the fact, because it might make you more lenient to me when I regretted leaving our old house here. It has an aristocratic precedent.”

Poor, dear little Mrs. P.! It didn’t take as I meant it should, and I said no more. Yet it does seem to me a pity that we lose all the interest and advantage of a homestead. The house and its furniture become endeared by long residence, and by their mute share in all the chances of our life. The chair in which some dear old friend so often sat—father and mother, perhaps—and in which they shall sit no more; the old-fashioned table with the cuts and scratches that generations of children have made upon it; the old book-cases; the heavy side-board; the glass, from which such bumpers sparkled for those who are hopelessly scattered now, or for ever gone; the doors they opened; the walls that echoed their long-hushed laughter,—are we wise when we part with them all, or, when compelled to do so, to leave them eagerly?

I remember my brother James used to say: “What is our envy for our country friends, but that their homes are permanent and characteristic? Their children’s children may play in the same garden. Each annual festival may summon them to the old hearth. In the meeting-house they sit in the wooden pews where long ago they sat and dreamed of Jerusalem, and now as they sit there, that long ago is fairer than the holy city. Through the open window they see the grass waving softly in the summer air, over old graves dearer to them than many new houses. By a thousand tangible and visible associations they are still, with a peculiar sense of actuality, near to all they love.”

Polly would call it a sentimental whim—if she could take Mrs. Croesus’s advice before she spoke of it—but what then? When I was fifteen, I fell desperately in love with Lucy Lamb. “Pooh, pooh,” said my father, “you are romantic, it’s til a whim of yours.”

And he succeeded in breaking it up. I went to China, and Lucy married old Firkin, and lived in a splendid house, and now lies in a splendid tomb of Carrara marble, exquisitely sculptured.

When I was forty, I came home from China, and the old gentleman said, “I want you to marry Arabella Bobbs, the heiress. It will be a good match.”

I said to him,

“Pooh, pooh, my dear father, you are mercenary; it’s all a whim of yours.”

“My dear son, I know it,” said he, “the whole thing a whim. You can live on a hundred dollars a year, if you choose. But you have the whim of a good dinner, of a statue, of a book. Why not? Only be careful in following your whims, that they really come to something. Have as many whims as you please, but don’t follow them all.”

“Certainly not,” said I; and fell in love with the present Mrs. Potiphar, and married her off-hand. So, if she calls this genuine influence of association a mere whim—let it go at that. She is a whim, too. My mistake simply was in not following out the romantic whim, and marrying Lucy Lamb. At least it seems to me so, this morning. In fact sitting in my very new “palatial residence,” the whole business of life seems to me rather whimsical.

For here I am, come into port at last. No longer young,—but worth a good fortune,—master of a great house,—respected down town,—husband of Mrs. Potiphar,—and father of Master Frederic ditto. Per contra; I shall never be in love again,—in getting my fortune I have lost my real life,—my house is dreary,—Mrs. Potiphar is not Lucy Lamb,—and Master Frederic—is a good boy.

The game is all up for me, and yet I trust I have good feeling enough left to sympathize with those who are still playing. I see girls as lovely and dear as any of which poets have sung—as fresh as dew-drops, and beautiful as morning. I watch their glances, and understand them better than they know.—for they do not dream that “old Potiphar” does any thing more than pay Mrs. P.‘s bills. I see the youths nervous about

neckcloths, and anxious that their hair shall be parted straight behind. I see them all wear the same tie, the same trowsers, the same boots. I hear them all say the same thing, and dance with the same partners in the same way. I see them go to Europe and return—I hear them talk slang to show that they have exhausted human life in foreign parts and observe them demean themselves according to their idea of the English nobleman. I watch them go in strongly for being "manly," and "smashing the spoonies"—asserting intimacies with certain uncertain women in Paris, and proving it by their treatment of ladies at home. I see them fuddle themselves on fine wines and talk like cooks, play heavily and lose, and win, and pay, and drink, and maintain a conservative position in politics, denouncing "Uncle Tom's Cabin," as a false and fanatical tract; and declaring that our peculiar institutions are our own affair, and that John Bull had better keep his eyes at home to look into his coal mines. I see this vigorous fermentation subside, and much clear character deposited—and, also, much life and talent muddled forever.

It is whimsical, because this absurd spectacle is presented by manikins who are made of the same clay as Plutarch's heroes-because, deliberately, they prefer cabbages to roses. I am not at all angry with them. On the contrary, when they dance well I look on with pleasure. Man ought to dance, but he ought to do something else, too. All genial gentlemen in all ages have danced. Who quarrels with dancing? Ask Mrs. Potiphar if I ever objected to it. But then, people must dance at their own risk. If Lucy Lamb, by dancing with young Boosey when he is tipsy, shows that she has no self-respect, how can I, coolly talking with Mrs. Lamb in the corner, and gravely looking on, respect the young lady? Lucy tells me that if she dances with James she must with John. I cannot deny it, for I am not sufficiently familiar with the regulations of the mystery. Only this; if dancing with sober James makes it necessary to dance with tipsy John—it seems to me, upon a hasty glance at the subject, that a self-respecting Lucy would refrain from the dance with James. Why it should be so, I cannot understand. Why Lucy must dance with every man who asks her, whether he is in his senses, or knows how to dance, or is agreeable to her or not, is a profound mystery to Paul

Potiphar. Here is a case of woman's wrongs, decidedly. We men cull the choicest partners, make the severest selections, and the innocent Lucys gracefully submit. Lucy loves James, and a waltz with him (as P. P. knows very well from experience) is "a little heaven below" to both. Now, dearest Lucy, why must you pay the awful penance of immediately waltzing with John, against whom your womanly instinct rebels? And yet the laws of social life are so stern, that Lucy must make the terrible decision, whether it is better to waltz with James or worse to waltz with John! "Whether," to put it strongly with Father Jerome, "heaven is pleasanter than hell is painful."

I say that I watch these graceful gamesters, without bitter feeling. Sometimes it is sad to see James woo Lucy, win her, marry her, and then both discover that they have made a mistake. I don't see how they could have helped it; and when the world, that loves them both so tenderly, holds up its pure hands of horror, why, Paul Potiphar, goes quietly home to Mrs. P., who is dressing for Lucy's ball, and says nothing. He prefers to retire into his private room, and his slippers, and read the last number of *Bleak House*, or a chapter in *Vanity Fair*. If Mrs. Potiphar catches him at the latter, she is sure to say:

"There it is again; always reading those exaggerated sketches of society. Odious man that he is. I am sure he never knew a truly womanly woman."

"Polly, when he comes back in September I'll introduce him to you," is the only answer I have time to make, for it is already half past ten, and Mrs. P. must be off to the ball.

I know that our set is not the world, nor the country, nor the city. I know that the amiable youths who are in league to crush spooneyism are not many, and well I know, that in our set (I mean Mrs. P.'s) there are hearts as noble and characters as lofty as in any time and in any land. And yet, as the father of a family (viz. Frederic, our son), I am constrained to believe that our social tendency is to the wildest extravagance. Here, for instance, is my house. It cost me eighty-five thousand dollars. It is superbly furnished. Mrs. P. and I don't know

much about such things. She was only stringent for buhl, and the last Parisian models, so we delivered our house into the hands of certain eminent upholsterers to be furnished, as we send Frederic to the tailor's to be clothed. To be sure, I asked what proof we had that the upholsterer was possessed of taste. But Mrs. P. silenced me, by saying that it was his business to have taste, and that a man who sold furniture, naturally knew what was handsome and proper for my house.

The furnishing was certainly performed with great splendor and expense. My drawing-rooms strongly resemble the warehouse of an ideal cabinetmaker. Every whim of table—every caprice of chair and sofa, is satisfied in those rooms. There are curtains like rainbows, and carpets, as if the curtains had dripped all over the floor. There are heavy cabinets of carved walnut, such as belong in the heavy wainscotted rooms of old palaces, set against my last French pattern of wall paper. There are lofty chairs like the thrones of archbishops in Gothic cathedrals, standing by the side of the elaborately gilded frames of mirrors. Marble statues of Venus and the Apollo support my mantels, upon which *or molu* Louis Quatorze clocks ring the hours. In all possible places there are statues, statuettes, vases, plates, teacups, and liquor-cases. The woodwork, when white, is elaborated in Moresco carving—when oak and walnut, it is heavily moulded. The contrasts are pretty, but rather sudden. In truth, my house is a huge curiosity shop of valuable articles,—clustered without taste, or feeling, or reason. They are there, because my house was large and I was able to buy them; and because, as Mrs. P. says, one must have buhl and *or molu*, and new forms of furniture, and do as well as one's neighbors, and show that one is rich, if he is so. They are there, in fact, because I couldn't help it. I didn't want them, but then I don't know what I did want. Somehow I don't feel as if I had a home, merely because orders were given to the best upholsterers and fancy-men in town to send a sample of all their wares to my house. To pay a morning call at Mrs. Potiphar's is, in some ways, better than going shopping. You see more new and costly things in a shorter time. People say, "What a love of

a chair!" "What a darling table!" "What a heavenly sofa!" and they all go and tease their husbands to get things precisely like them. When Kurz Pacha the Sennaar Minister, came to a dinner at my house, he said:

"Bless my soul! Mr. Potiphar, your house is just like your neighbor's."

I know it. I am perfectly aware that there is no more difference between my house and Croesus's, than there is in two ten dollar bills of the same bank. He might live in my house and I in his, without any confusion. He has the same curtains, carpets, chairs, tables, Venuses, Apollos, busts, vases, etc. And he goes into his room, and thinks it's all a devilish bore, just as I do. We have each got to refurnish every few years, and therefore have no possible opportunity for attaching ourselves to the objects about us. Unfortunately Kurz Pacha particularly detested precisely what Mrs. P. most liked, because it is the fashion to like them. I mean the Louis Quatorze and the Louis Quinze things.

"Taste, dear Mrs. Potiphar," said the Pacha, "was a thing not known in the days of those kings. Grace was entirely supplanted by grotesqueness, and now, instead of pure and beautiful Greek forms, we must collect these hideous things. If you are going backward to find models, why not go as far as the good ones? My dear madame, an *or molu* Louis Quatorze clock would have given Pericles a fit. Your drawing-rooms would have thrown Aspasia into hysterics. Things are not beautiful because they cost money; nor is any grouping handsome without harmony. Your house is like a woman dressed in Ninon de l'Enclos's bodice, with Queen Anne's hooped skirt, who limps in Chinese shoes, and wears an Elizabethan ruff round her neck, and a Druse's horn on her head. My dear madam, this is the kind of thing we go to see in museums. It is the old stock joke of the world."

By Jove! how mad Mrs. Potiphar was! She rose from table, to the great dismay of Kurz Pacha, and I could only restrain her by reminding her that the Sennaar Minister had but an imperfect idea of our language, and that in Sennaar people probably said what they thought when they conversed.

“You’d better go to Sennaar, then, yourself, Mr. Potiphar,” said my wife, as she smoothed her rumpled feathers.

“‘Pon my word, madam, it’s my own opinion,” replied I. — Kurz Pacha, who is a philosopher (of the Sennaar school), asks me if people have no ideas of their own in building houses. I answer, none, that I know of, except that of getting the house built. The fact is, it is as much as Paul Potiphar can do, to make the money to erect his palatial residence, and then to keep it going. There are a great many fine statues in my house, but I know nothing about them: I don’t see why we should have such heathen images in reputable houses. But Mrs. P. says:

“Pooh! have you no love for the fine arts?”

There it is. It doesn’t do not to love the fine arts; so Polly is continually cluttering up the halls and staircases with marble, and sending me heavy bills for the same.

When the house was ready, and my wife had purchased the furniture, she came and said to me:

“Now, my dear P., there is one thing we haven’t thought of.”

“What’s that?”

“Pictures, you know, dear.”

“What do you want pictures for?” growled I, rather surlily, I am afraid.

“Why, to furnish the walls; what do you suppose we want pictures for?”

“I tell you, Polly,” said I, “that pictures are the most extravagant kind of furniture. Pshaw! a man rubs and dabbles a little upon a canvas two feet square, and then coolly asks three hundred dollars for it.”

“Dear me, Pot,” she answered, “I don’t want home-made pictures. What an idea! Do you think I’d have pictures on my walls that were painted in this country?—No, my dear husband, let us have some choice specimens of the old masters. A landscape by Rayfel, for instance; or one of Angel’s fruit pieces, or a cattle scene by Verynees, or a Madonna of Giddo’s, or a boar hunt of Hannibal Crackkey’s.”

What was the use of fighting against this sort of thing? I told her to have it her own way. Mrs. P. consulted Singe the pastry cook, who told her his cousin had just come out from Italy with a lot of the very finest pictures in the world, which he had bribed one of the Pope's guard to steal from the Vatican, and which he would sell at a bargain.

They hang on my walls now. They represent nothing in particular; but in certain lights, if you look very closely, you can easily recognize something in them that looks like a lump of something brown. There is one very ugly woman with a convulsive child in her arms, to which Mrs. P. directly takes all her visitors, and asks them to admire the beautiful Shay douver of Giddo's. When I go out to dinner with people that talk pictures and books, and that kind of thing, I don't like to seem behind, so I say, in a critical way, that Giddo was a good painter. None of them contradict me, and one day when somebody asked, "Which of his pictures do you prefer?" I answered straight, "His Shay douver," and no more questions were asked.

They hang all about the house now. The Giddo is in the dining room. I asked the Sennaar Minister if it wasn't odd to have a religious picture in the dining-room. He smiled, and said that it was perfectly proper if I liked it, and if the picture of such an ugly woman didn't take away my appetite.

"What difference does it make," said he, in the Sennaar manner, "it would be equally out of keeping with every other room in your house. My dear Potiphar, it is a perfectly unprincipled house, this of yours. If your mind were in the condition of your house, so ill-assorted, so confused, so overloaded with things that don't belong together, you would never make another cent. You have order, propriety, harmony, in your dealings with the Symmes's Hole Bore Co., and they are the secrets of your success. Why not have the same elements in your house? Why pitch every century, country, and fashion, higgledy-piggledy into your parlors and dining-room? Have everything you can get, in heaven's name, but have everything in its place. If you are a plodding tradesman, knowing and caring nothing about pictures, or books, or statuary, or *objets de*

vertu; don't have them. Suppose your neighbor chooses to put them in his house. If he has them merely because he had the money to pay for them, he is the butt of every picture and book he owns."

When I meet Mr. Croesus in Wall street, I respect him as I do a king in his palace, or a scholar in his study. He is master of the occasion. He commands like Nelson at the Nile. I, who am merely a diplomatist, skulk and hurry along, and if Mr. Croesus smiles, I inwardly thank him for his charity. Wall street is Croesus's sphere, and all his powers play there perfectly. But when I meet him in his house, surrounded by objects of art, by the triumphs of a skill which he does not understand, and for which he cares nothing,—of which, in fact, he seems afraid, because he knows any chance question about them would trip him up,—my feeling is very much changed. If I should ask him what *or molu* is, I don't believe he could answer, though his splendid *or molu* clock rang, indignant, from the mantel. But if I should say, 'Invest me this thousand dollars,' he would secure me eight per cent. It certainly isn't necessary to know what *or molu* is, nor to have any other *objet de vertu* but your wife. Then why should you barricade yourself behind all these things that you really cannot enjoy, because you don't understand? If you could not read Italian, you would be a fool to buy Dante, merely because you knew he was a great poet. And, in the same way, if you know nothing about matters of art, it is equally foolish for you to buy statues and pictures, although you hear on all sides that, as Mrs. P. says, one must love art.

"As for learning from your own pictures, you know perfectly well, that until you have some taste in the matter, you will be paying money for your pictures blindly, so that the only persons upon whom your display of art would make any impression, will be the very ones to see that you know nothing about it.

"In Sennaar, a man is literally 'the master of the house.' He isn't surrounded by what he does not understand; he is not obliged to talk book, and picture, when he knows nothing about these matters. He is not afraid of his parlor, and you feel instantly upon entering the house,

the character of the master. Please, my dear Mr. Potiphar, survey your mansion, and tell me what kind of a man it indicates. If it does not proclaim (in your case) the President of the Patagonia Junction, a man shrewd, and hard, and solid, without taste or liberal cultivation, it is a painted deceiver. If it tries to insinuate by this chaotic profusion of rich and rare objects, that you are a cultivated, accomplished, tasteful, and generous man, it is a bad lie, because a transparent one. Why, my dear old Pot., the moment your servant opens the front door, a man of sense perceives the whole thing. You and Mrs. Potiphar are bullied by all the brilliancy you have conjured up. It is the old story of the fisherman and the genii. And your guests all see it. They are too well-bred to speak of it; but I come from Sennaar, where we do not lay so much stress upon that kind of good-breeding.

"Mr. Paul Potiphar, it is one thing to have plenty of money, and quite another to know how to spend it."

{Illustration}

Now, as I told him, this kind of talk may do very well in Sennaar, but it is absurd in a country like ours. How are people to know that I'm rich, unless I show it? I'm sorry for it, but how shall I help it, having Mrs. P. at hand?

"How about the library?" said she one day.

"What library?" inquired I. — "Why, our library, of course."

"I haven't any."

"Do you mean to have such a house as this without a library?"

"Why," said I plaintively, "I don't read books—I never did, and I never shall; and I don't care anything about them. Why should I have a library?"

"Why, because it's part of a house like this."

"Mrs. P., are you fond of books?"

"No, not particularly. But one must have some regard to appearances. Suppose we are Hottentots, you don't want us to look so, do you?"

I thought that it was quite as barbarous to imprison a lot of books that we should never open, and that would stand in gilt upon the shelves, silently laughing us to scorn, as not to have them if we didn't want them. I proposed a compromise.

"Is it the looks of the thing, Mrs. P.?" said I. — "That's all," she answered.

"Oh! well, I'll arrange it."

So I had my shelves built, and my old friends Matthews and Rider furnished me with complete sets of handsome gilt covers to all the books that no gentleman's library should be without, which I arranged carefully, upon the shelves, and had the best looking library in town. I locked 'em in, and the key is always lost when anybody wants to take down a book. However, it was a good investment in leather, for it brings me in the reputation of a reading man and a patron of literature.

Mrs. P. is a religious woman—the Rev. Cream Cheese takes care of that—but only yesterday she proposed something to me that smells very strongly of candlesticks.

"Pot., I want a *prie-dieu*."

"Pray-do what?" answered I. — "Stop, you wicked man. I say I want a kneeling-chair."

"A kneeling-chair?" I gasped, utterly confused.

"A *prie-dieu*—a *prie-dieu*—to pray in, you know."

My Sennaar friend, who was at table, choked. When he recovered, and we were sipping the "Blue seal," he told me that he thought Mrs. Potiphar in a *prie-dieu* was rather a more amusing idea than Giddo's Madonna in the dining-room.

"She will insist upon its being carved handsomely in walnut. She will not pray upon pine. It is a romantic, not a religious, whim. She'll want a missal next; vellum or no prayers. This is piety of the 'Lady Alice' school. It belongs to a fine lady aid a fine house precisely as your library does, and it will be precisely as genuine. Mrs. Potiphar in a *prie-dieu* is like that blue morocco Comus in your library. It is charming to look at, but

there's nothing in it. Let her have the *prie-dieu* by all means, and then begin to build a chapel. No gentleman's house should be without a chapel. You'll have to come to it, Potiphar. You'll have to hear Cream Cheese read morning prayers in a purple chasuble,—*que sais-je*? You'll see religion made a part of the newest fashion in houses, as you already see literature and art, and with just as much reality and reason."

Privately, I am glad the Sennaar minister has gone out of town. It's bad enough to be uncomfortable in your own house without knowing why; but to have a philosopher of the Sennaar school show you why you are so, is cutting it rather too fat. I am gradually getting resigned to my house. I've got one more struggle to go through next week in Mrs. Potiphar's musical party. The morning soirees are over for the season, and Mrs. P. begins to talk of the watering places. I am getting gradually resigned; but only gradually.

"Oh! dear me, I wonder if this is the "home, sweet home" business the girls used to sing about! Music does certainly alter cases. I can't quite get used to it. Last week I was one morning in the basement breakfast-room, and I heard an extra cried. I ran out of the area door—dear me!—before I thought what I was bout, I emerged bareheaded from under the steps, and ran a little way after the boy. I know it wasn't proper. I am sorry, very sorry. I am afraid Mrs. Croesus saw me; I know Mrs. Gnu told it all about that morning: and Mrs. Settum Downe called directly upon Mrs. Potiphar, to know if it were really true that I had lost my wits, as everybody was saying. I don't know what Mrs. P. answered. I am sorry to have compromised her so. I went immediately and ordered a pray-do of the blackest walnut. My resignation is very gradual. Kurz Pacha says they put on gravestones in Sennaar three Latin words—do you know Latin? if you don't come and borrow some of my books. The words are: *ora pro me!*"

IV. — FROM THE SUMMER DIARY OF MINERVA

TATTLE.

NEWPORT, *August*.

It certainly is not papa's fault that he doesn't understand French; but he ought not to pretend to. It does put one in such uncomfortable situations occasionally. In fact, I think it would be quite as well if we could sometimes "sink the paternal," as Timon Croesus says. I suppose everybody has heard of the awful speech pa made in the parlor at Saratoga. My dearest friend, Tabby Dormouse, told me she had heard of it everywhere, and that it was ten times as absurd each time it was repeated. By the by, Tabby is a dear creature, isn't she? It's so nice to have a spy in the enemy's camp, as it were, and to hear everything that everybody says about you. She is not handsome,—poor, dear Tabby! There's no denying it but she can't help it. I was obliged to tell young Downe so, quite decidedly, for I really think he had an idea she was good-looking. The idea of Tabby Dormouse being handsome! But she is a useful little thing in her way; one of my intimates.

The true story is this.

Ma and I had persuaded pa to take us to Saratoga, for we heard the English party were to be there, and we were anxious they should see *some* good society at least. It seems such a pity they shouldn't know what handsome dresses we really do have in this country! And I mentioned to some of the most English of our young men, that there might be something to be done at Saratoga. But they shrugged their shoulders, especially Timon Croesus and Gauche Boosey, and said—

"Well, really, the fact is, Miss Tattle, all the Englishmen I have ever met are—in fact—a little snobbish. However."

That was about what they said. But I thought, considering their fondness of the English model in dress and manner, that they might have been more willing to meet some genuine aristocracy. Yet, perhaps, that handsome Col. Abattew is right in saying with his grand military air, —

"The British aristocracy, madam,—the British aristocracy is vulgar."

Well, we all went up to Saratoga. But the distinguished strangers did not come. I held back that last muslin of mine, the yellow one, embroidered with the Alps, and a distant view of the isles of Greece worked on the flounces, until it was impossible to wait longer. I meant to wear it at dinner the first day they came, with the pearl necklace and the opal studs, and that heavy ruby necklace (it is a low-necked dress). The dining-room at the "United States" is so large that it shows off those dresses finely, and if the waiter doesn't let the soup or the gravy slip, and your neighbor, (who is, like as not, what Tabby Dormouse, with her incapacity to pronounce the *r*, calls "some 'aw, 'uff man from the country,") doesn't put the leg of his chair through the dress, and if you don't muss it sitting down—why, I should like to know a prettier place to wear a low-necked muslin, with jewels, than the dining-room of the "United States" at Saratoga.

Kurz Pacha, the Sennaar minister, who was up there, and who is so smitten with Mrs. Potiphar, said that he had known few happier moments in this country than the dining hour at the "United States."

"When the gong sounds," says he, "I am reminded of the martial music of Sennaar. When I seat myself in the midst of such splendor of toilette, and in an apartment so stately and so appropriate for that display, I recall the taste of the Crim Tartars, to whose ruler I had the honor of being first accredited ambassador. When I behold, with astonished eyes, the entrance of that sable society, the measured echo of whose footfalls so properly silences the conversation of all the nobles, I seem to see the regular army of my beloved Sennaar investing a conquered city. This, I cry to myself, with enthusiasm, this is the height of civilization; and I privately hand one of the privates in that grand army, a gold dollar, to

bring me a dish of beans. Each green bean, O greener envoy extraordinary, I say to myself, with rapture, should be well worth its weight in gold, when served to such a congress of kings, queens, and hereditary prince royals as are assembled here. And I find," continues the Pacha, "that I am right. The guest at this banquet is admitted to the freedom of corn and potatoes, only after negotiations with the sable military. It is quite the perfection of organization. What hints I shall gather for the innocent pleasure-seekers of Sennaar who still fancy that when they bargain for a draught of rose sherbet, they have tacitly agreed for a glass to drink it from!

"Why, the first day I came," he went on, "I was going to my room, and met the chambermaid coming out. Now, as I had paid a colored gentleman a dollar for my dinner, in addition to the little bill which I settle at the office, I thought it was equally necessary to secure my bed by a slight fee to the goddess of the chambers. I therefore pulled out my purse, and offered her a bill of a small amount. She turned the color of tomatoes.

"'Sir,' exclaimed she, and with dignity, 'do you mean to insult me?'

"'Good heavens, miss,' cried I, 'quite the contrary,' and thinking it was not enough, I presented another bill of a larger amount.

"'Sir,' said she, half sobbing, 'you are no gentleman; I shall leave the house!'

"I was very much perplexed. I began again:

"'Miss—my dear—I mean madam—how much *must* I pay you to secure my room?'

"'I don't understand you, sir,' replied the chambermaid, somewhat mollified.

"'Why, my dear girl, if I paid Sambo a dollar for my dinner, I expect to pay Dolly something for my chamber, of course.'

"'Well, sir, you are certainly very kind,—I—with pleasure, I'm sure,' replied she, entirely appeased, taking the money and vanishing.

"I," said Kurz Pacha, "entered my room and locked the door. But I believe I was a little hasty about giving her the money. The perfection of civilization has not yet mounted the stairs. It is confined to the dining-room. How beautiful is that strain from the *Favorita*, Miss Minerva, tum, tum, ti ti, tum tum, tee tee," and the delightful Sennaar ambassador, seeing Mrs. Potiphar in the parlor, danced humming away.

There are few pleasanter men in society. I should think with his experience he would be hard upon us, but he is not. The air of courts does not seem to have spoiled him.

"My dear madam," he said one evening to Mrs. Potiphar, "if you laugh at anything, your laughing is laughed at next day. Life is short. If you can't see the jewel in the toad's head, still believe in it. Take it for granted. The *Parisienne* says that the English woman has no *je ne sais quoi*, The English woman says the *Parisienne* has no *aplomb*. Amen! When you are in Turkey—why gobble. Why should I decline to have a good time at the Queen's drawing-room, because English women have no *je ne sais quoi*, or at the grand opera, because French women lack *aplomb*? Take things smoothly. Life is a merry-go-round. Look at your own grandfather, dear Mrs. Potiphar,—fine old gentleman, I am told,—rather kept in what the artists call the middle-distance, at present,—a capital shoemaker, who did his work well—Alexander and John Howard did no more:—well here you are, you see, with liveries and a pew in the right church, and altogether a front seat in the universe—merry-go-round, you know; here we go up, up, up; here we go down, down, down, etc. By the bye, pretty strain that from Linda; tum tum, ti, tum tum," and away hopped the Sennaar minister.

Mrs. Potiphar was angry. Who wouldn't have been? To have the old family shoes thrown in one's teeth! But our ambassador is an ambassador. One must have the best society, and she swallowed it as she has swallowed it a hundred times before. She quietly remarked—

"Pity Kurz Pacha drinks so abominably. He quite forgets what he's saying!"

I suppose he does, if Mrs. P. says so; but he seems to know well enough all the time: as he did that evening in the library at Mrs. Potiphar's, when he drew Cerulea Bass to the book-shelves, and began to dispute about a line in Milton, and then suddenly looking up at the books, said—

"Ah! there's Milton; now we'll see." But when he opened the case, which was foolishly left unlocked, he took down only a bit of wood, bound in blue morocco, which he turned slowly over, so that everybody saw it, and then quietly returned it to the shelf saying only—

"I beg pardon."

Old Pot, as Mrs. P. calls him, happened to be passing at the moment, and cried out in his brusque way—

"Oh! I haven't laid in my books yet. Those are only samples—pattern-cards, you know. I don't believe you'll find there a single book that a gentleman's library shouldn't be without. I got old Vellum to do the thing up right, you know. I guess he knows about the books to buy. But I've just laid in some claret that you'll like, and I've got a sample of the Steinberg. Old Corque understands that kind of thing, if anybody does." And the two gentlemen went off to try the wine.

I am astonished that a man of Kurz Pacha's tact should have opened the book-case. People have no right to suppose that the pretty bindings on one's shelves are books. Why, they might as well insist upon trying if the bloom on one's cheek, or the lace on one's dress, or, in fact, one's figure, were real. Such things are addressed to the eye. No gentleman uses his hands in good society. I've no doubt they were originally put into gloves to keep them out of mischief.

I am as bad as dear Mrs. Potiphar about coming to the point of my story. But the truth is, that in such engrossing places as Saratoga and Newport, it is hardly possible to determine which is the pleasantest and most important thing among so many. I am so fond of that old, droll Kurz Pacha, that if I begin to talk about him I forget everything else. He says such nice things about people that nobody else would dare to say, and that everybody is so glad to hear. He is invaluable in society. And yet

one is never safe. People say he isn't gentlemanly; but when I see the style of man that is called gentlemanly, I am very glad he is not. All the solemn, pompous men who stand about like owls, and never speak, nor laugh, nor move, as if they really had any life or feeling are called "gentlemanly." Whenever Tabby says of a new man—"But then he is so gentlemanly!" I understand at once. It is another case of the well-dressed wooden image. Good heavens! do you suppose Sir Philip Sidney, or the Chevalier Bayard or Charles Fox, were "gentlemanly" in this way? Confectioners who undertake parties might furnish scores of such gentlemen, with hands and feet of any required size, and warranted to do nothing "ungentlemanly." For my part, I am inclined to think that a gentleman is something positive, not merely negative. And if sometimes my friend the Pacha says a rousing and wholesome truth, it is none the less gentlemanly because it cuts a little. He says it's very amusing to observe how coolly we play this little farce of life,—how placidly people get entangled in a mesh at which they all rail, and how fiercely they frown upon anybody who steps out of the ring. "You tickle me and I'll tickle you; but at all events, you tickle me," is the motto of the crowd.

"*Allons!*" says he, "who cares? lead off to the right and left—down the middle and up again. Smile all round, and bow gracefully to your partner; then carry your heavy heart up chamber, and drown in your own tears. Cheerfully, cheerfully, my dear Miss Minerva.—Saratoga until August, then Newport till the frost, the city afterwards; and so an endless round of happiness."

And he steps off humming *Il segreto per esser felice!*

Well, we were all sitting in the great drawing-room at the "United States." We had been bowling in our morning dresses, and had rushed in to ascertain if the distinguished English party had arrived. They had not. They were in New York, and would not come. That was bad, but we thought of Newport and probable scions of nobility there, and were consoled. But while we were in the midst of the talk, and I was whispering very intimately with that superb and aristocratic Nancy Fungus, who should come in but father, walking towards us with a

wearied air, dragging his feet along, but looking very well dressed for him. I smiled sweetly when I saw that he was quite presentable, and had had the good sense to leave that odious white hat in his room, and had buttoned his waistcoat. The party stopped talking as he approached; and he came up to me.

"Minna, my dear," said he, "I hear everybody is going to Newport.

"Oh! yes, dear father," I replied, and Nancy Fungus smiled. Father looked pleased to see me so intimate with a girl he always calls "so aristocratic and high-bred looking," and he said to her—

"I believe your mother is going, Miss Fungus?"

"Oh! yes, we always go," replied she, "one must have a few weeks at Newport."

"Precisely, my dear," said poor papa, as if he rather dreaded it, but must consent to the hard necessity of fashion. "They say, Minna, that all the *parvenus* are going this year, so I suppose we shall have to go along."

There was a blow! There was perfect silence for a moment, while poor pa looked amiable as if he couldn't help embellishing his conversation with French graces. I waited in horror; for I knew that the girls were all tittering inside, and every moment it became more absurd. Then out it came. Nancy Fungus leaned her head on my shoulder, and fairly shook with laughter. The others hid behind their fans, and the men suddenly walked off to the windows and slipped on to the piazza. Papa looked bewildered, and half smiled. But it was a very melancholy business, and I told him that he had better go up and dress for dinner.

It was impossible to stay after that. The unhappy slip became the staple of Saratoga conversation. Young Boosey (Mrs. Potiphar's witty friend) asked Morris audibly at dinner, "Where do the *parvenus sit?* I want to sit among the *parvenus*."

"Of course you do, sir," answered Morris, supposing he meant the circle of the *crême de la crême*.

{Illustration}

And so the thing went on multiplying itself. Poor papa doesn't understand it yet, I don't dare to explain. Old Fungus who prides himself so upon his family (it is one of the very ancient and honorable Virginia families, that came out of the ark with Noah, as Kurz Pacha says of his ancestors when he hears that the founder of a family "came over with the Conqueror,") and who cannot deny himself a joke, came up to pa in the bar-room, while a large party of gentlemen were drinking cobblers, and said to him with a loud laugh:

"So all the *parvenus* are going to Newport: are they, Tattle?"

"Yes!" replied pa, innocently, "that's what they say. So I suppose we shall all have to go, Fungus."

There was another roar that time, but not from the representative of Noah's Ark. It was rather thin joking but it did very well for the warm weather, and I was glad to hear a laugh against anybody but poor pa.

We came to Newport, but the story came before us, and I have been very much annoyed at it. I know it is foolish for me to think of it. Kurz Pacha said:

"My dear Miss Minerva, I have no doubt it would pain you more to be thought ignorant of French than capable of deceit. Yet it is a very innocent ignorance of your father's. Nobody is bound to know French; but you all lay so much stress upon it, as if it were the whole duty of women to have an 'air' and to speak French, that any ignorance becomes at once ludicrous. It's all your own doing. You make a very natural thing absurd, and then grieve because some friend becomes a victim. There is your friend Nancy Fungus, who speaks 'French as well as she does English.' That may be true; but you ought to add, that one is of just as much use to her as the other—that is of no use at all, except to communicate platitudes. What is the use of a girl's learning French to be able to say to young *Téle de Choux*, that it is a very warm day, and that will hardly be *spirituelle* in her exotic French. It edge of French is going to supply her with ideas to express. A girl who is flat in her native English will hardly be *spirituelle* in her exotic French. It is a delightful language for the natives, and for all who have thoroughly mastered its

spirit. Its genius is airy and sparkling. It is especially the language of society, because society is, theoretically, the playful encounter of sprightliness and wit. It is the worst language I know of for poetry, ethics, and the habit of the Saxon mind. It is wonderful in the hands of such masters as Balzac and George Sand, and is especially adapted to their purposes. Yet their books are forbidden to Nancy Fungus, Tabby Dormouse, Daisy Clover, and all their relations. They read *Telemaque*, and long to be married, that they may pry into *Leila and Indiana*: their French meanwhile, even if they wanted to know anything of French literature,—which is too absurd an idea,—serves them only to say nothing to uncertain hairy foreigners who haunt society, and to understand their nothings, in response. I am really touched for this Ariel, this tricksy sprite of speech when I know that it must do the bidding of those who can never fit its airy felicity to any worthy purpose. I have tried these accomplishel damsels who speak French and Italian as well as they do English. But our conversation was only a clumsy translation of English commonplace. And yet, Miss Minerva, I think even so sensible a woman as you, looks with honor and respect upon one of that class. Dear me! excuse me! What am I thinking of? I'm engaged to drive little Daisy Clover on the beach at six o'clock. She is one of those who garnish their conversation with French scraps. Really you must pardon me, if she is a friend of yours; but that dry gentlemanly fellow, D'Orsay Firkin, says that Miss Clover's conversation is a dish of *téte de veau farci*. Aren't you coming to the beach? Everybody goes to-day. Mrs. Gnu has arrived, and the Potiphars are here,—that is, Mrs. P. Old Pot. arrives on Sunday morning early, and is off again on Monday evening. He's grown very quiet and docile. Mrs. P. usually takes him a short drive on Monday morning, and he comes to dinner in a white waistcoat. In fact, as Mrs. Potiphar says, 'My husband has not the air *distingué* which I should be pleased to see in him, but he is quite as well as could be expected.' Upon which Firkin twirls his hat in a significant way; you and I smile intelligently, dear Miss Minerva; Mrs. Green and Mrs Settum Downe exchange glances; we all understand Mrs. Potiphar and each other, and Mrs. Potiphar understands us, and it is all very sweet and

pleasant, and the utmost propriety is observed, and we don't laugh loud until we're out of hearing, and then say in the very softest whispers, that it was a remarkably true observation. This is the way to take life, my dear lady. Let us go gently. Here we go backwards and forwards. You tickle, and I'll tickle, and we'll all tickle, and here we go round—round—roundy!"

And the Sennaar minister danced out of the room.

He is a droll man, and I don't quite understand him. Of course I don't entirely like him for it always seems as if he meant something a little different from what he says. Laura Larmes, who reads all the novels, and rolls her great eyes around the ball room,—who laughs at the idea of such a girl as Blanche Amory in Pendennis,—who would be pensive if she were not so plump,—who likes "nothing so much as walking on the cliff by moonlight,"—who wonders that girls should want to dance on warm summer nights when they have Nature, "and such nature" before them,—who, in fact, would be a mere emotion if she were not a bouncing girl,—Laura Larmes wonders that any man can be so happy as Kurz Pacha.

"Ah! Kurz Pacha," she says to him as they stroll upon the piazza, after he has been dancing (for the minister dances, and swears it is essential to diplomacy to dance well), "are you really so very happy? Is it possible you can be so gay? Do you find nothing mournful in life?"

"Nothing, my best Miss Laura," he replies, "to speak of; as somebody said of religion. You, who devote yourself to melancholy, the moon, and the source of tears, are not so very sad as you think. You cry a good deal, I don't doubt. But when grief goes below tears, and forces you in self-defence to try to forget it, not to sit and fondle it,—then you will understand more than you do now. I pity those of your sex upon whom has fallen the reaction of wealth,—for whom there is no career,—who must sit at home and pine in a splendid ennui,—who have learned and who know, spite of sermons and 'sound sensible view of things,' that to enjoy the high 'privilege of reading books,—of cultivating their minds; and, when they are married, minding their babies, and ministering to

the drowsy, after-dinner ease of their husbands, is not the fulfilment of their powers and hopes. But, my amiable Miss Larmes, this is a class of girls and women who are not solicitous about wearing black when their great-aunt in Denmark dies, whom they never saw, nor when the only friend who made heaven possible to them, falls dead at their sides. Nor do they avoid Mrs. Potiphar's balls as a happiness which they are not happy enough to enjoy—nor do they suppose that all who attend that festivity—dancing to Mrs. P.'s hired music and drinking Mr. P.'s fines wines—are utterly given over to hilarity and superficial enjoyment. I do not even think they would be likely to run—with rounded eyes, deep voice, and in very exuberant health—to any one of us jaded votaries of fashion, and say, How can you be so happy? My considerate young friend, 'strong walls do not a prison make'—nor is a man necessarily happy because he hops. You are certainly not unhappy because you make eyes at the moon, and adjudge life to be vanity and vexation. Your mind is only obscured by a few morning vapors. They are evanescent as the dew, and when you remember them at evening they will seem to you but as pensive splendors of the dawn."

Laura has her revenge for all this snubbing, of course. She does not attempt to disguise her opinion that Kurz Pacha is a man of "foreign morals," as she well expresses it. "A very gay, agreeable man, who glides gently over the surface of things, but knows nothing of the real trials and sorrows of life," says the melancholy Laura Larmes, whose appetite continues good, and who fills a large armchair comfortably.

It is my opinion, however, that people of a certain size should cultivate the hilarious rather than the unhappy. Diogenes, with the proportions of Alderman Gobble, could not have succeeded as a Cynic.

Here at Newport there is endless opportunity of detecting these little absurdities of our fellow-creatures. In fact, one of the greatest charms of a watering-place, to me, is the facility one enjoys of understanding the whole game, which is somewhat concealed in the city. Watering-place life is a full dress parade of social weaknesses. We all enjoy a kind of false intimacy, an accidental friendship. Old Carbuncle and young Topaz

meet on the common ground of a good cigar. Mrs. Peony and Daisy Clover are intimate at all hours. Why? Because, on the one hand, Mrs. P. knows that youth, and grace and beauty, are attractive to men, and that if Miss Rosa Peony, her daughter, has not those advantages, it is well to have in the neighborhood a magnet strong enough to draw the men.

On the other hand, Daisy Clover is a girl of good sense enough to know —even if she didn't know it by instinct—that men in public places like the prestige of association with persons of acknowledged social position, which, by hook or by crook, Mrs. Peony undoubtedly enjoys. Therefore, to be of Mrs. P.'s party is to be well placed in the catalogue—the chances are fairer—the gain is surer. Upon seeing Daisy Clover with quiet little Mrs. Clover, or plain old aunt Honeysuckle,—people would inquire, Who are the Clovers? And no one would know. But to be with Mrs. Peony, morning, noon, and night, is to answer all questions of social position.

But, unhappily, in the city things are changed. There no attraction is necessary but the fine house, gay parties, and understood rank of Mrs. Peony to draw men to Miss Rosa's side. In Newport it does very well not to dance with her. But in the city it doesn't do not to be at Mrs. Peony's ball. Who knows it so well as that excellent lady? Therefore darling Daisy is dropped a little when we all return.

"Sweet girl," Mrs. P. says, "really a delightful companion for Rosa in the summer, and the father and mother are such nice, excellent people. Not exactly people that one knows, to be sure—but Miss Daisy is really amiable and quite accomplished."

Daisy goes to an occasional party at the Peonys. But at the opera and the theatre, and at the small intimate parties of Rosa and her friends, the darling Daisy of Newport is not visible. However, she has her little revenges. She knows the Peonys well: and can talk intelligently about them, which puts her quite on a level with them in the estimation of her own set. She rules in the lower sphere if not in the higher, and Daisy Clover is in the way of promotion. Yes, and if she be very rich, and papa and mamma are at all presentable, or if they can be dexterously hushed

up, there is no knowing but Miss Daisy Clover will suddenly bloom upon the world as Mrs. P.'s daughter-in-law, wife of that "gentlemanly" young man, Mr. Puffer Peony.

Naturally it pains me very much to be obliged to think so of the people with whom I associate. But I suppose they are as good as any. As Kurz Pacha says: "If I fly from a Chinaman because he wears his hair long like a woman, I must equally fly the Frenchman because he shaves his like a lunatic. The story of Jack Spratt is the apologue of the world." It is astonishing how intimate he is with our language and literature. By-the-bye, that Polly Potiphar has been mean enough to send out to Paris for the very silk that I relied upon as this summer's *cheval de bataille*, and has just received it superbly made up. The worst of it is that it is just the thing for her. She wore it at the hall the other night, and expected to have crushed me, in mine. Not she! I have not summered it at Newport for—well, for several years, for nothing, and although I am rather beyond the strict white muslin age, I thought I could yet venture a bold stroke. So I arrayed *à la* Daisy Clover—not too much, *pas trop jeune*. And awaited the onset.

Kurz Pacha saw me across the room, and came up, with his peculiar smile. He did not look at my dress, but he said to me, rather wickedly, looking at my bouquet:

"Dear me! I hardly hoped to see spring flowers so late in the summer."

Then he raised his eyes to mine, and I am conscious that I blushed.

"It's very warm. You feel very warm, I am sure, my dear Miss Tattle," he continued, looking straight at my face.

"You are sufficiently cool, at least, I think," replied I. — "Naturally," said he, "for I've been in the immediate vicinity of the boreal pole for half an hour—a neighborhood in which, I am told, even the most ardent spirits sometimes freeze—so you must pardon me if I am more than usually dull, Miss Minerva."

And the Pacha beat time to the waltz with his head.

I looked at the part of the room from which he had just come, and there, sure enough, in the midst of a group, I saw the tall, and stately, and still Ada Aiguille.

"He is a hardy navigator," continued Kurz Pacha, "who sails for the boreal pole. It is glittering enough, but shipwreck by daylight upon a coral reef, is no pleasanter than by night upon Newport shoals."

"Have you been shipwrecked, Kurz Pacha?" asked I suddenly.

He laughed softly: "No, Miss Minerva, I am not one of the hardy navigators; I keep close in to the shore. Upon the slightest symptom of an agitated sea, I furl my sails, and creep into a safe harbor. Besides, dear Miss Minna I prefer tropical cruises to the Antarctic voyage."

And the old wretch actually looked at my black hair. I might have said something—approving his taste, perhaps, who knows?—when I saw Mrs. Potiphar. She was splendidly dressed in the silk, and it's a pity she doesn't become a fine dress better. She made for me directly.

"Dear Minna, I'm so glad to see you. Why how young and fresh you look to-night. Really, quite blooming! And such a sweet pretty dress, too, and the darling baby-waist and all—"

"Yes," said that witty Gauche Boosey, "permit me, Miss Tattle,—quite an incarnate seraphim, upon my word."

"You are too good," replied I, "my dear Polly, it is your dress which deserves admiration, and I flatter myself in saying so, for it is the very counterpart of one I had made some months ago."

"Yes, darling, and which you have not yet worn," replied she. "I said to Mr. P., 'Mr. P.' said I, 'there are few women upon whose amiability I can count as I can upon Minerva Tattle's, and, therefore, I am going to have a dress like hers. Most women would be vexed about it, and say ill-natured things if I did so. But if I have a friend, it is Minerva Tattle; and she will never grudge it to me for a moment.' It's pretty; isn't it? Just look here at this trimming."

And she showed me the very handsomest part of it, and so much handsomer than mine, that I can never wear it.

“Polly, I am so glad you know me so well,” said I. “I’m delighted with the dress. To be sure, it’s rather *prononce* for your style; but that’s nothing.”

Just then a polka struck up. “Come along! give me this turn,” said Boosey, and putting his arm round Mrs. Potiphar’s waist, he whirled her off into the dance.

How I did hope that somebody would come to ask me. Nobody came.

“You don’t dance?” asked Kurz Pacha, who stood by during my little talk with Polly P.

“Oh, yes,” answered I, and hummed the polka.

Kurz Pacha hummed too, looked on at the dancers a few minutes then turned to me, and looking at my bouquet, said:

“It is astonishing how little taste there is for spring-flowers.”

At that moment young Croesus “came in” warm with the whirl of the dance, with Daisy Clover.

“It’s very warm,” said he, in a gentlemanly manner.

“Dear me! yes, very warm,” said Daisy.

“Been long in Newport?”

“No; only a few days. We always come, after, Saratoga for a couple of weeks. But isn’t it delightful?”

“Quite so,” said Timon, coolly, and smiling at the idea of anybody’s being enthusiastic about anything. That elegant youth has pumped life dry; and now the pump only wheezes.

“Oh!” continued Daisy, “it’s so pleasant to run away from the hot city, and breathe this cool air. And then Nature is so beautiful. Are you fond of Nature, Mr. Croesus?”

“Tolerably,”’ returned Timon.

“Oh! but Mr. Croesus! to go to the glen and skip stones, and then walk on the cliff, and drive to Bateman’s, and the fort, and to go to the beach by moonlight; and then the bowling-alley, and the archery, and the

Germania. Oh! it's a splendid place. But perhaps, you don't like natural scenery, Mr. Croesus?"

"Perhaps not," said Mr. Croesus.

"Well, some people don't," said darling little Daisy, folding up her fan, as if quite ready for another turn.

"Come, now; there it is," said Timon, and, grasping her with his right arm, they glided away.

"Kurz Pacha," said I, "I wonder who sent Ada Aiguille that bouquet?"

"Sir John Franklin, I presume," returned he.

"What do you mean by that," asked I. — Before he could answer, Boosey and Mrs. Potiphar stopped by us.

"No, no, Mr. Boosey," panted Mrs. P., "I will not have him introduced. They say his father actually sells dry goods by the yard in Buffalo."

"Well, but *he* doesn't, Mrs. Potiphar.

"I know that, and it's all very well for you young men to know him, and to drink, and play billiards, and smoke, with him. And he is handsome to be sure, and gentlemanly, and I am told, very intelligent. But, you know, we can't be visiting our shoemakers and shopmen. That's the great difficulty of a watering-place, one doesn't know who's who. Why Mrs. Gnu was here three summers ago, and there sat next to her, at table, a middle-aged foreign gentleman, who had only a slight accent, and who was so affable and agreeable, so intelligent and modest, and so perfectly familiar with all kinds of little ways, you know, that she supposed he was the Russian Minister, who, she heard, was at Newport incognito for his health. She used to talk with him in the parlor, and allowed him to join her upon the piazza. Nobody could find out who he was. There were suspicions, of course. But he paid his bills, drove his horses, and was universally liked. Dear me! appearances are so deceitful! who do you think he was?"

"I'm sure I can't imagine."

"Well, the next spring she went to a music store in Philadelphia, to buy some guitar strings for Claribel, and who should advance to sell them but the Russian Minister! Mrs. Gnu said she colored—"

"So I've always understood," said Gauche, laughing.

"Fie! Mr. Boosey," continued Mrs. P. smiling. "But the music-seller didn't betray the slightest consciousness. He sold her the strings, received the money, and said nothing, and looked nothing. Just think of it! She supposed him to be a gentleman, and he was really a music-dealer. You see that's the sort of thing one is exposed to here, and though your friend may be very nice, it isn't safe for me to know him. In a country where there's no aristocracy one can't be too exclusive. Mrs. Peony says she thinks that in future she shall really pass the summer in a farm-house or if she goes to a watering-place, confine herself to her own rooms and her carriage, and look at the people through the blinds. I'm afraid, myself, it's coming to that. Everybody goes to Saratoga now, and you see how Newport is crowded. For my part I agree with the Rev. Cream Cheese, that there are serious evils in a republican form of government. What a hideous head-dress that is of Mrs. Settum Downe's! What a lovely polka-redowa!"

"So it is, by Jove! Come on," replied the gentlemanly Boosey, and they swept down the hall.

"*Ah! ciel!*" exclaimed a voice close by us—Kurz Pacha and I turned at the same moment. We beheld a gentleman twirling his moustache and a lady fanning. They were smiling intelligently at each other, and upon his whispering something that I could not hear, she said, "*Fi! donc*" and folding her fan and laying her arm upon his shoulder, they slid along again in the dance.

"Who is that?" inquired the Pacha.

"Don't you know Mrs. Vite?" said I, glad of my chance. "Why, my dear sir, she is our great social success. She shows what America can do under a French *regime*. She performs for society the inestimable service of giving some reality to the pictures of Balzac and George Sand, by the quality of her life and manners. She is just what you would expect a weak

American girl to be who was poisoned by Paris,—who mistook what was most obvious for what was most characteristic,—whose ideas of foreign society and female habits were based upon an experience of resorts, more renowned for ease than elegance,—who has no instinct fine enough to tell her that a *lionne* cannot be a lady,—who imitates the worst manners of foreign society, without the ability or opportunity of perceiving the best,—who prefers a *double entendre* to a *bon-mot*,—who courts the applause of men whose acquaintance gentlemen are careless of acknowledging,—who likes fast driving and dancing, low jokes, and low dresses, who is, therefore, bold without wit, noisy without mirth, and notorious without a desirable reputation. That is Mrs. Vite."

Kurz Pacha rolled up his eyes.

"Good Jupiter! Miss Minerva," cried he, "is this you that I hear? Why you are warmer in your denunciation of this little wisp of a woman than you ever were of fat old Madame Gorgon, with her prodigious paste diamonds. Really, you take it too hard. And you, too, who used to skate so nimbly over the glib surface of society, and cut such coquettish figures of eight upon the characters of your friends. You must excuse me, but it seems to me odd that Miss Minerva Tattle, who used to treat serious things so lightly, should now be treating light things so seriously. You ought to frequent the comic opera more, and dine with Mrs. Potiphar once a week. If your good humor can't digest such a *hors d'oeuvre* as little Mrs. Vite, what will you do with such a *pièce de résistance* as Madame Gorgon?"

Odious plain speaker! Yet I like the man. But, before I could reply, up came another couple—Caroline Pettitoes and Norman de Famille.

"You were at the bowling-alley?" said he.

"Yes," answered Caroline.

"You saw them together?"

"Yes."

"Well, what do you think?"

“Why, of course, that if he is not engaged to her he ought to be. He has taken her out in his wagon three times, he has sent her four bouquets, he waltzes with her every night, he bowls with her party every morning, and if that does not mean that he wants to marry her, I should like to know what it does mean,” replied Caroline, tossing her head.

Norman de Famille smiled, and Caroline continued with rather a flushed face, because Norman had been doing very much the same thing with her:

“What is a girl to understand by such attentions?”

“Why, that the gentleman finds it an amusing game, and hopes she is equally pleased,” returned De Famille.

“*Merci*, M. de Famille,” said Caroline, with an energy I never suspected in her, “and at the end of the game she may go break her heart, I suppose.”

“Hearts are not so brittle, Miss Pettitoes,” replied Norman. “Besides, why should you girls always play for such high stakes?”

They were just about beginning the waltz again, when the music stopped, and they walked away. But I saw the tears in Caroline’s eyes. I don’t know whether they were tears of vexation, or of disappointment. The men have the advantage of us because they can control their emotions so much better. I suppose Caroline blushed and cried, because she found herself blushing and crying, quite as much as because she fancied her partner didn’t care for her.

I turned to Kurz Pacha, who stood by my side, smiling, and rubbing his hands.

“A charming evening we have had of it, Miss Minerva,” said he, “an epitome of life—a kind of last-new-novel effect. The things that we have heard and seen here, multiplied and varied by a thousand or so, produce the net result of Newport. Given, a large house, music, piazzas, beaches, cliff, port, griddle-cakes, fast horses, sherry-cobblers, ten-pins, dust, artificial flowers, innocence, worn-out hearts, loveliness, black-legs, bank-bills, small men, large coat-sleeves, little boots, jewelry, and polka-

redowas *ad libitum*, to produce August in Newport. For my part, Miss Minerva, I like it. But it is a dizzy and perilous game. I profess to seek and enjoy emotions, so I go to watering-places. Ada Aiguille says she doesn't like it. She declares that she thinks less of her fellow-creatures after she has been here a little while. She goes to the city afterward to refit her faith, probably. Daisy Clover thinks it's heavenly. Darling little Daisy! life is an endless German cotillion to her. She thinks the world is gay but well-meaning, is sure that it goes to church on Sundays and never tells lies. Cerulea Bass looks at it for a moment with her hard, round, ebony eyes, and calmly wonders that people will make such fools of themselves. And you, Miss Minerva, pardon me,—you come because you are in the habit of coming—because you are not happy out of such society, and have a tantalizing sadness in it. Your system craves only the piquant sources of scandal and sarcasm, which can never satisfy it. You wish that you liked tranquil pleasures and believed in men and women. But you get no nearer than a wish. You remember when you did believe, but you remember with a shudder and a sigh. You pass for a brilliant woman. You go out to dinners and balls; and men are, what is called, 'afraid of you.' You scorn most of us. You are not a favorite, but your pride is flattered by the very fear on the part of others which prevents your being loved. Time and yourself are your only enemies, and they are in league, for you betray yourself to him. You have found youth the most fascinating and fatal of flirts, but he, although your heart and hope clung to him despairingly, has jilted you and thrown you by. Let him go, if you can, and throw after him the white muslin and the baby-waist. Give up milk and the pastoral poets. Sail, at least, under your own colors; even pirates hoist a black flag. An old belle who endeavors to retain by sharp wit and spicy scandal the place she held only in virtue of youth and spirited beauty is, in a new circle of youth and beauty, like an enemy firing at you from the windows of your own house. The difficulty of your position, dear Miss Minerva, is, that you can never deceive those who alone are worth deceiving. Daisy Clover and Young America, of course, consider you a talented, tremendous kind of woman. Daisy Clover wonders all the men are not in love with you. Young America sniffs and

shakes its little head, and says disapprovingly, 'Strong-minded woman!' But you fail, you know, notwithstanding. You couldn't bring old Potiphar to his knees when he first came home from China, and he must needs plunge in love with Miss Polly, whom you despised, but who has certainly profited by her intimacy with Mrs. Gnu, Mrs. Croesus, and Mrs. Settum Downe, as you saw by her conversation with you this evening.

"Ah, Miss Minerva, I am only a benighted diplomat from Sennaar, but when I reflect upon all I see around me in your country; when I take my place with terror in a railroad car, because the certainty of frightful accidents fills all minds with the same vague apprehensions as if a war were raging in the land; when I see the universal rush and fury—young men who never smile, and who fall victims to paralysis; old men who are tired of life and dread death; young women pretty and incapable; old women listless and useless; and both young and old, if women of sense, perishing of ennui, and longing for some kind of a career;—why, I don't say that it is better anywhere else,—perhaps it isn't,—in most ways it certainly is not. I don't say certainly, that there's a higher tone of life in London or Paris than in New York, but only that, whatever it may be there, this, at least, is rather a miserable business."

"What is your theory of life, then?" asked I. "What do you propose?"

Kurz Pacha smiled again.

{Illustration}

"Suppose, Miss Minerva, I say the Golden Rule is my *theory* of life. You think it vague; but it is in that like most theories. Then I propose that we shall all be good. Don't you think it a feasible proposition? I see that you think you have effectually disposed of all complaint by challenging the complainer to suggest a remedy. But it is clear to me that a man in the water has a right to cry out, although he may not distinctly state how he proposes to avoid drowning. Your reasoning is that of those excellent Americans who declare that foreign nations ought not to strike for a republic until they are fit for a republic—as if empires and monarchies founded colleges to propagate democracy. Probably you think it wiser that men shouldn't go into the water until they can swim.

Mr. Carlyle, I remember, was bitterly reproached for grumbling in his "Chartism," and other works, as if a man had no moral right to complain of hunger until he had grasped a piece of bread. 'What do you propose to do, Mr. Carlyle?' said they, 'what with the Irish, for instance?' Mr. C. said that he would compel every Irishman to work, or he would sink the island in the sea. 'Barbarous man, this is your boasted reform!' cried they in indignant chorus, unsuited either way, and permitting the Irish to go to the dogs in the meanwhile. So suffer me, dearest Miss Minerva, to regret a state of things which no sensible man can approve. Even if it seems to you light, allow me, at least, to treat it seriously, nor suppose I love anything less, because I would see it better. You are the natural fruit of this state of things, O Minerva Tattle! By thy fruits ye shall know them."

After a few moments, he added in the old way:

"Don't think I am going to break my heart about it, nor lose my appetite. Look at the absurdity of the whole thing. I am preaching to you in your baby-waist, here in a Newport ball-room at midnight. I humbly beg your pardon. There are more potent preachers here than I. Besides, I'm engaged to Mrs. Potiphar's supper at 12. Take things more gently, dear Miss Minerva. Don't make faces at Mrs. Vite, nor growl at your darling Polly. Women as smart as you are, will say precisely as smart thing of you as you say of them. We shall all laugh, first with you, and then at you. But don't deny yourself the pleasure of saying the smart things in hope that they will also refrain. That's vanity, not virtue. People are much better than you think, but they are also much worse. I might have been king of Sennaar, but I am only his ambassador. You might have been only a chambermaid, but you are the brilliant and accomplished Miss Tattle. Tum, tum, tum, ti, ti, ti,—what a pretty waltz! Here come Daisy and Timon Croesus, and now Mrs. Potiphar and Gauche Boosey, and now again Caroline Pettitoes and De Famille. She is smiling again, you see. She darts through the dance like a sunbeam as she is. Caroline is a philosopher. Just now, you remember, it was down, down, down,—now it is up, up, up. It is a good world, if you don't rub it

the wrong way. Sit in the sun as much as possible. One preserves one's complexion, but gets so cold in the shade. Ah! there comes Mrs. Potiphar. Why, she is radiant! She shakes her fan at me. Adieu, Miss Minerva. Sweet dreams. To-morrow morning at the Bowling Alley at eleven, you know, and the drive at six. *Au revoir*."

And he was gone. The ball was breaking up. A few desperate dancers still floated upon the floor. The chairs were empty. The women were shawling, and the men stood attendant with bouquets. I went to a window and looked out. The moon was rising, a wan, waning moon. The broad fields lay dark beneath, and as the music ceased, I heard the sullen roar of the sea. If my heart ached with an indefinite longing,—if it felt that the airy epicurism of the Pacha was but a sad cynicism, masquerading in smiles,—if I dreaded to ask whether the wisest were not the saddest,—if the rising moon, and the plunging sea, and the silence of midnight, were mournful, if I envied Daisy Clover her sweet sleep and vigorous waking,—why, no one need ever know it, nor suspect that the brilliant Minerva Tattle is a failure.

V. — THE POTIPHARS IN PARIS.

A LETTER FROM MISS CAROLINE PETTITOES TO MRS. SETTUM DOWNE.

PARIS, *October*.

MY DEAR MRS. DOWNE,—Here we are at last! I can hardly believe it. Our coming was so sudden that it seems like a delightful dream. You know at Mrs. Potiphar's supper last August in Newport, she was piqued by Gauche Boosey's saying, in his smiling, sarcastic way:

"What! do you really think this is a pretty supper? Dear me! Mrs. Potiphar, you ought to see one of our *petits soupers* in Paris, hey Croesus?" and then he and Mr. Timon Croesus lifted their brows knowingly, and smiled, and glanced compassionately around the table.

"Paris, Paris!" cried Mrs. Potiphar; "you young men are always talking about Paris, as if it were heaven. Oh! Mr. P., do take me to Paris. Let's make up a party, and slip over. It's so easy now, you know. Come, come, Pot. I know you won't deny me. Just for two or three months, The truth is," said she, turning to D'Orsay Firkin, who wore that evening the loveliest shirt-bosom I ever saw, "I want to send home some patterns of new dresses to Minerva Tattle."

They all laughed, and in the midst Kurz Pacha, who was sitting at the side of Mrs. Potiphar, inquired:

"What colors suit the Indian summer best, Mrs. Potiphar?"

"Well, a kind of misty color," said Boosey, laughingly, and emphasizing *missed*, as if he meant some pun upon the word.

"Which conceals the outline of the landscape," interrupted Mrs. Gnu.

"Cajoling you with a sense of warmth on the very edge of winter, eh?" asked the Sennaar minister.

Another loud laugh rang round the table.

"I thought Minerva Tattle was a friend of yours, Kurz Pacha," said Mrs. Gnu, smiling mischievously, and playing with her beautiful bouquet, which Mrs. Potiphar told me Timon Croesus had sent her.

"Certainly, so she is," replied he. "Miss Minerva and I understand each other perfectly. I like her society immensely. The truth is, I am always better in autumn; the air is both cool and bright."

As he said this he looked fixedly at Mrs. Gnu, and there was not quite so much laughing. I am sure I don't know what they meant by talking about autumn. I was busy talking with Mr. Firkin about Daisy Clover's pretty morning dress at the Bowling Alley, and admiring his shirt-bosom. Suddenly there was a knock at the door, and an exquisite bouquet was handed in for Kurz Pacha.

"Why didn't you wait until to-morrow?" said he, sharply.

The man stammered some excuse, and the ambassador took the flowers. Mrs. Gnu looked at them closely, and praised them very much, and quietly glanced at her own, which were really splendid. Kurz Pacha showed them to all the ladies at table, and then handed them to Mrs. Potiphar, saying to her, as he half looked at Mrs. Gnu:

"There is nothing autumnal here."

"Mrs. Potiphar thanked him with real delight, and he turned toward Mrs. Gnu, at whom he had been constantly looking, and who was playing placidly with her bouquet, and said with an air of one paying a great compliment:

"To offer *you* a bouquet, madame, would be to throw pearls before swine."

We were all silent for a moment, and then the young men sprang up together, while we women laughed, half afraid.

"Good heavens! Kurz Pacha, what do you mean?" cried Mrs. Potiphar.

"Mean?" answered he, evidently confused, and blushing; "why, I'm afraid I have made some mistake. I meant to say something very polite, but my English sometimes gives way."

“Your impudence never does,” muttered Mrs. Gnu, who was unbecomingly red in the face.

“My dear madame,” said the minister to her, “I assure you I meant only to use a proverb in a complimentary way; but somehow I have got the wrong pig by the ear.”

There was another burst of laughter. The young men fairly lay down and screamed. Mr. Potiphar exploded in great ha ha’s and ho ho’s, from the end of the table.

“Mrs. Potiphar,” said Mrs. Gnu, with dignity, “I didn’t suppose I was to be insulted at your table.”

And she went toward the door.

“Mrs. Gnu, Mrs. Gnu,” said Polly, smothering her laughter as well as she could, “don’t go. Kurz Pacha will explain. I’m sure he means no insult.”

Here she burst out laughing again; while the poor Sennaar Ambassador stood erect, and utterly confounded by what was going on.

“I’m sure—I didn’t know—I didn’t—I wouldn’t—Mrs. Gnu knows;” said he, in the greatest embarrassment. “I beg your pardon sincerely, madame.” And he looked so humble and repentant that I was really sorry for him; but I saw Mr. Firkin laughing afresh every time he looked at the Ambassador, as if he saw something sly behind his penitence.

“Perhaps,” said Firkin at last, “Kurz Pacha means to say that to offer flowers to a lady who has already so beautiful a bouquet, would be to carry coals to Newcastle.”

“That is it,” cried the Pacha; “to Newcastle,”—and he bowed to Mrs. Gnu.

“Come, Mrs. Gnu, it’s only a mistake,” said Mrs. Potiphar.

But Mrs. Gnu looked rather angry still, although Gauche Boosey tried very hard to console her, saying as many *bon mots* as he could think of—and you know how witty he is. He said at last;

“Why is Mrs. Gnu like Rachel?”

“Rachel who?” asked I. — I’m sure it was an innocent question; but they all fell to laughing again, and Mr. Firkin positively cried with fun.

“D’ye give it up?” asked Mr. Boosey.

“Yes,” said Mrs. Potiphar.

“Why, because she will not be comforted.”

There wasn’t half so much laughing at this as at my question—although Mrs. Potiphar said it was capital, and I thought so too, when I found out who Rachel was.

But Mrs. Gnu continued to be like Rachel, and Mr. Boosey continued to try to amuse her. I think it was very hard she wouldn’t be amused by such a funny man; and he said at last aloud to her, meaning all of us to hear:

“Well, Mrs. Gnu, upon my honor, it is no epicure to try to console you.”

She did laugh at this, however, and so did the others.

“Have you ever been in Sennaar, Mr. Boosey?” said Kurz Pacha.

“No; why?”

“Why, I thought we might have learned English at the same school.”

Mr. Boosey looked puzzled; but Mr. Potiphar broke in:

“Well, Mrs. Gnu, I’m glad to see you smile at last. After all, the remark of the Ambassador’s was only what they would call in France, ‘a perfect bougie of a joke.’”

“Good evening, Mrs. Potiphar,” cried the Sennaar Minister, rising suddenly, and running toward the door. We heard him next under the window going off in great shouts of laughter, and whistling in the intervals, “Hail Columbia!” What shocking habits he has for a minister! I don’t know how it was that Mr. Potiphar was in such good humor; but he promised his wife that she should go to Paris, and that she might select her party. So she invited us all who were at the table. Mrs. Gnu declined: but I knew mamma would let me go with the Potiphars.

"Dear Pot.," said Mrs. P., "we shall be gone so short a time, and shall be so busy, and hurrying from one place to another, that we had better leave little Freddy behind. Poor, dear little fellow, it will be much better for him to stay."

Mr. P. looked a little sober at this; but he said nothing except to ask:

"Shall you all be ready to sail in a fortnight?"

"Certainly, in a week," we all answered.

"Well, then, we must hurry home to prepare," said he. "I shall write for state-rooms for us in Monday's boat, Polly."

"Very well; that's a dear Pot.," said she; and as we all rose she went up to him, and took his arm tenderly. It was an unusual sight: I never saw her do it before. Mrs. Gnu said to me:

"Well, really, that's rather peculiar. I think people had better make love in private."

"No, by Jove," whispered Mr. Boosey to me; "and I am afraid he had drank freely, as I have once or twice before heard that he did; but the world is such a gossip!—no, she doesn't let *her* good works of that kind shine before men."

"Why, Mr. Boosey," said I, "how can you?"

"Will you believe, darling Mrs. Downe, that instead of answering, he sort of winked at me, and said, under his voice, 'Good night, Caroline.' I drew myself up, you may depend, and said coldly:

"Good evening, Mr. Boosey."

He drew himself up too, and said:

"I called you Caroline, you called me Mr. Boosey."

And then looking straight and severely at me, he actually winked again.

Then of course, I knew he was not responsible for his actions.

Ah me, what things we are! Just as I was leaving the room with Mrs. Gnu, who had matronized me, Mr. Boosey came up with such a soft, pleading look in his eyes that seemed to say, "please forgive me," and put

out his hand so humbly, and appeared so sorry and so afraid that I would not speak to him, that I really pitied him: but when, in his low, rich voice, he said:

"Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered!"—

I couldn't hold out; wasn't it pretty? So I put out my hand, and he shook it tenderly, and said "tomorrow" in a way—well, dear Mrs. Downe, I will be frank with you—that made me happy all night.

At this rate I shall never get to Paris. But the next day it was known everywhere we were going and everybody congratulated us. Our party met at the Bowling Alley, and we began to make all kinds of plans.

"Oh! *we'll* take care of all the arrangements," said Mr. Boosey, nodding toward Mr. Croesus and Mr. Firkin.

"Mr. Boosey, were you presented to the Emperor?" inquired Kurz Pacha.

"Certainly I was," replied he; "I have a great respect for Louis Napoleon. Those Frenchmen didn't know what they wanted; but he knew well enough what he wanted: they didn't want him, perhaps, but he did want them, and now he has them. A true nephew of his uncle, Kurz Pacha; and you can see what a man the great Napoleon must have been, when the little Napoleon succeeds so well upon the strength of the name."

"Why, you are really enthusiastic about the Emperors," said the Ambassador.

"Certainly," replied Mr. Boosey, "I have always been a great Neapolitan."

Kurz Pacha stared at him a moment, and then took a large pinch of snuff solemnly. I think it's very ill bred to stare as he does sometimes, when somebody has made a remark. I saw nothing particular in that speech of Mr. Boosey's; and yet D'Orsay Firkin smiled to himself as he told Mrs. Gnu it was her turn.

"I wonder, my dear Mrs. Potiphar," said the Sennaar Minister seating himself by her side, as the game went on, "that Europeans should have so poor an idea of America and Americans, when such crowds of the very best society are constantly crossing the ocean. Now, you and your friends are going to Paris, perhaps to other parts of Europe, and I should certainly suppose that, without flattery, (taking another pinch of snuff,) the foreigners whom you meet might get rid of some of their prejudices against the Americans. You will go, you know, as the representatives of a republic where social ranks are not organized to the exclusion of any; but where talent and character always secure social consideration. The simplicity of the republican idea and system will appear in your manners and modes of life. Leaving to the children of a society based upon antique and aristocratic principles, to squander their lives in an aimless luxury, you will carry about with you, as it were the fresh airs and virgin character of a new country and civilization. When you go to Paris, it will be like a sweet country breeze blowing into a perfumer's shop. The customers will scent something finer than the most exquisite essence, and will prefer the fresh fragrance of the flower to the most elaborate distillation. Roses smell sweeter than attar of roses. You and your party, estimable lady, will be the roses. You will not (am I right *this* time?) carry coals to Newcastle; for if any of your companions think that the sharp eye of Paris will not pierce their pretensions, or the satiric tongue of Paris fail to immortalize it, they mistake greatly. You cannot beat Paris with its own weapons; and Paris will immensely respect you if you use your own. Poor little Mrs. Vite thinks she passes for a *Parisienne* in Paris. Why, there is not a *chiffonier* in the street at midnight that couldn't see straight through the little woman, and nothing would better please the *Jardin Mabille* than to have her for a butt. My dear madame, the ape is a very ingenious animal, and his form much resembles the human. Moles, probably, and the inhabitants of the planet Jupiter, do not discern the difference; but I rather think we do. A ten-strike by Venus! well done, Mrs. Gnu," cried the Ambassador; "now, Mrs. Potiphar."

The Pacha didn't play; but he asked Mr. Firkin what was a good average for a man, in the game.

"Well, a spare every time," said he.

"Mr. Firkin," asked Mrs. Gnu, "what is a good woman's average?"

"Does any lady here know that?" inquired the Pacha, looking round.

"No," said Mr. Boosey; "we must send and inquire of Miss Tattle." "How pleasantly the game goes on, dear Mrs. Gnu," said the Pacha; "but Miss Minerva ought to be here, she always holds such a good hand at every game."

"I think," said Mrs. Gnu, "that if she once got a good hold of any hand, she wouldn't let it go immediately."

"Good!" shouted Mr. Boosey.

"Hi! hi!" roared Mr. Potiphar.

The Pacha took snuff placidly, and said quietly:

"You've fairly trumped my trick, and taken it, Mrs. Gnu."

"I should say the trick has taken her," whispered Mr. Firkin at my elbow to Kurz Pacha.

The Sennaar Ambassador opened his eyes wide, and offered Mr. Firkin his snuff-box.

Monday came at length. It was well known that we were all going—the Potiphars and the rest of us. Everybody had spoken of the difficulty of getting state-rooms on the steamer to town, and hoped we had spoken in time.

"I have written and secured my rooms," said Mr. Potiphar to everybody he met; "I am not to be left in the lurch, my dear sir, it isn't my way." And then he marched on, Gauche Boosey said, as if at least both sides of the street were his way. He's changed a great deal lately.

The De Familles were going the same day. "Hope you've secured rooms, De Famille," said Mr. Potiphar blandly to him.

"No," answered he, shortly; "no, not yet; it isn't my way; I don't mean to give myself trouble about things; I don't bother; it isn't my way."

And each went his own way up and down the street. But early on Monday afternoon Mr. De Famille and his family drove toward Fall Kiver, from which place the boat starts.

Monday evening the Potiphars and the rest of us went to the wharf at Newport, and presently the boat came up. We bundled on board, and as soon as he could get to the office Mr. Potiphar asked for the keys of his rooms.

"Why, sir," said the clerk, "Mr. De Famille has them. He came on board at Fall Eiver and asked for your keys, as if the rooms had been secured for him."

"What does that mean?" demanded Mr. Potiphar.

"Oh! ah! I remember now," said Mr. Boosey. "I saw the De Familles all getting into a carriage for a little drive, as Mr. De F., said, about two o'clock this afternoon."

Mr. Potiphar looked like a thunder-storm. "What the devil does it mean?" asked he of the clerk, while the passengers hustled him, and punched him, and the hook of an umbrella-stick caught in his cravat-knot, and untied it.

"Send up immediately, and say that Mr. Potiphar wants his state-rooms," said he to the clerk.

In a few minutes the messenger returned and said—

"Mr. De Famille's compliments to Mr. Potiphar. Mr. De Famille and his family have retired for the night, but upon arriving in the morning he will explain everything to Mr. Potiphar's satisfaction.

"Jolly!" whispered Mr. Boosey, rubbing his hands, to Mr. Firkin, on whose arm I was leaning.

"Are you fond of the Italian opera, Mr. Potiphar?" inquired Kurz Pacha, blandly, Mrs. P. sat down upon a settee and looked at nothing.

"O Patience! do verify the quotation and smile," said the Ambassador to her.

"It's a mean swindle," said Mr. Potiphar. "I'll have satisfaction. I'll go break open the door," and he started.

“My dear, don’t be in a passion,” said Mrs. Potiphar, “and don’t be a fool. Remember that the De Familles are not people to be insulted. It won’t do to quarrel with the De Familles.”

“Splendid!” ejaculated Kurz Pacha.

“I’ve no doubt he’ll explain it all in the morning,” continued Mrs. Potiphar, “there’s some mistake; why not be cool about it? Besides, Mr. De Famille is an elderly gentleman and requires his rest. I do think you’re positively unchristian, Mr. Potiphar. The idea of insulting the De Familles!”

And Mrs. Potiphar patted her little feet upon the floor in front of the ladies’ cabin, where we were all collected.

“Where are you going to sleep?” asked Mr. Potiphar mildly.

“I’m sure I don’t know,” answered she.

We had an awful night. It was worse than any night at sea. Mrs. P. was propped up in one corner of a settee and I in the other, and when I was fixed comfortably there would come a great sea, and the boat would lurch, and I had to disarrange my position. It was horrid. But Mr. Potiphar was very good all night. He kept coming to see if Polly wanted anything, and if she were warm enough, and if she were well. Gauche Boosey, who was on the floor in the saloon, said he saw Mr. P. crawl up softly and try his state-room door. But it was locked, “and the snoring of old De Famille, who was enjoying his required rest,” said he, “came in regular broadsides through the blinds.”

I don’t know how Mr. De Famille explained. I only know Mrs. P. charged old Pot. to be satisfied with anything.

“There are some people, my darling Caroline,” she said to me, “with whom it does not do to quarrel. It isn’t christian to quarrel. I can’t afford to be on bad terms with the De Familles.”

“It is odd, isn’t it,” said Kurz Pacha to Mrs. P., as we were sailing down the harbor on our way to Europe, and talking of the circumstance of the state-rooms, “it is so odd, that in Sennaar, where to be sure, civilization has scarcely a foothold—I mean such civilization as you enjoy—this

proceeding would have been called dishonest! They do have the oddest use of terms in Sennaar! Why, I remember that I once bought a sheep, and as it was coming to my fold in charge of my shepherd, a man in a mask came out of a wood and walked away with the sheep, and appropriated the mutton-chops to his own family uses. And those singular people in Sennaar called it stealing. Shall I ever get through laughing at them when I return! There ought to be missionaries sent to Sennaar. Do you think the Rev. Cream Cheese would go? How gracefully he would say: 'Benighted brethren, in my country when a man buys a sheep or a state-room, and pays money for it, and another man appropriates it, depriving the rightful buyer of his chops and sheep, what does the buyer do? Does he swear? Does he rail? Does he complain? Does he even ask for the cold pickings? Not at all, brethren; he does none of these things. He sends Worcestershire sauce to the thief, or a pillow of poppies, and says to him, Friend, all of mine is thine, and all of thine is thine own. This, benighted people of Sennaar, is the practice of a Christian people. As one of our great poets says, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Think how delicately the Rev. Cream would pat his mouth with the fine cambric handkerchief, after rounding off such a homily! He might ask you and Mrs. Potiphar to accompany him as examples of this Christian pitch of self-sacrifice. On the whole, I wouldn't advise you to go. The rude races of Sennaar, might put that beautiful forgiveness of yours to extraordinary proofs. Holloa! there's a sea!"

We were dismally sea-sick. And I cared for nothing but arriving. Oh! dear, I think I would even have given up Paris, at least I thought so. But, oh! how *could* I think so! Just fancy a place where not only your own maid speaks French, but where everybody, the porters, the coachmen, the chambermaids, can't speak anything else! Where the very beggars beg, and the commonest people swear, in French! Oh! it's inexpressibly delightful. Why, the dogs understand it, and the horses—"everybody," as Kurz Pacha said to me, the morning after our arrival (for he insisted upon coming, "it was such a freak," he said,) "everybody rolls in a luxury of French, and, according to the boarding-school standard, is happy."

Everybody—but poor Mr. Potiphar!

He has a terrible time of it.

When we arrived we alighted at Meurice's,—all the fashionable people do; at least Gauche Boosey said Lord Brougham did, for he used to read it in Galignani and I suppose it is fashionable to do as Lord Brougham does. D'Orsay Firkin said that the Hotel Bristol was more *récherché*.

"Does that mean cheaper?" inquired Mr. Potiphar.

Mr. Firkin looked at him compassionately.

"I only want," said Mr. Potiphar, in a kind of gasping way, for it was in the cars on the way from Boulogne to Paris that we held this consultation—"I only want to go where there is somebody who can speak English."

"My dear sir, there are Commissionaires at all the hotels who are perfect linguists," said Mr. Firkin in a gentlemanly manner.

"Oh! dear me!" said Mr. P. wiping his forehead with the red bandanna that he always carries, despite Mrs. P., "what is a commissionaire?"

"An interpreter, a cicerone," said Mr. Firkin.

"A guide, philosopher, and friend," said Kurz Pacha.

"Kurz Pacha, do you speak French?" inquired Mr. P. nervously, as we rolled along.

"Oh! yes," replied he.

"Oh! dear me!" said Mr. Potiphar, looking disconsolately out of the window.

We arrived soon after.

"We are now at the *Barrière*" said Mr. Firkin.

"What do we do there?" asked Mr. Potiphar.

"We are inspected," said Mr. Firkin.

Mr. Potiphar drew himself up with a military air.

We alighted and walked into the room where all the baggage was arranged.

"*Est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose à déclarer?*" asked an officer, addressing Mr. Potiphar.

"Good heavens! what did you say?" said Mr. P., looking at him.

The officer smiled, and Kurz Pacha said something, upon which he bowed and passed on. We stepped outside upon the pavement, and I confess that even I could not understand everything that was said by the crowd and the coachmen. But Kurz Pacha led the way to a carriage, and we drove off to Meurice's.

"It's awful, isn't it?" said Mr. Potiphar, panting.

When we reached the hotel, a gentleman (Mr. Potiphar said he was sure he was a gentleman, from a remark he made—in English) came bowing out. But before the door of the carriage was opened, Mr. P. thrust his head out of the window, and holding the door shut, cried out, "Do you speak English here?"

"Certainly, sir," replied the clerk; and that was the remark that so pleased Mr. Potiphar.

My room was next to the Potiphars, and I heard a great deal, you may be sure. I didn't mean to, but I couldn't help it. The next morning, when they were about coming down, I heard Polly say—

"Now, Mr. Potiphar, remember, if you want to speak of your room it is *numero quatre-vingt cinq*" and she pronounced it very slowly. "Now try, Mr. P."

"Oh! dear me. Kattery vang sank," said he.

"Very good," answered she; "*au troisième*; that means, on the third floor. Now try."

"O tror—Otrorsy—O trorsy—Oh! dear me!" muttered he in a tone of despair.

"*ème*," said Mrs. P.

"Aim," said he.

"Well?" said Mrs. P.

"O trorsyaim," said he.

“That’s very well, indeed!” said Mrs. Potiphar, and they went out of the room. I joined them in the hall, and we ran on before Mr. P., but we soon heard some one speaking, and stopped.

“*Monsieur, veut il prendre un commissionaire?*”

“Kattery—vang—sank,” replied Mr. Potiphar, with great emphasis.

“*Comment?*” said the other.

“O tror—O tror—Oh! Polly—seeaim—seeaim!” returned Mr. P.

“You speak English,” said the commissionaire.

“Why! good God! do *you?*” asked Mr. P., with astonishment.

“I speaks every languages, sare,” replied the other, “and we will use the English, if you please. But Monsieur speaks *très bien* the French language.”

“Are you speaking English now?” asked Mr. Potiphar.

The commissionaire answered him that he was,—and Mr. P. thrust his arm through that of the commissionaire and said—

“My dear sir, if you are disengaged I should be very glad if you would accompany me in my walks through the town.”

“Mr. Potiphar!” said Polly, “come!”

“Coming, my dear,” answered he, as he approached with the commissionaire. It was in vain that Mrs. P. winked and frowned. Her husband would not take hints. So taking his other arm, and wishing the commissionaire good morning, she tried to draw him away. But he clung to his companion and said,

“Polly, this gentleman speaks English.”

“Don’t keep his arm,” whispered she; “he is only a servant.”

“Servant, indeed!” said he; “you should have heard him speak French, and you see how gentlemanly he is.”

It was some time before Polly was able to make her husband comprehend the case.

“Ah!” said he, at length; “Oh! I understand.”

All our first days were full of such little mistakes. Kurz Pacha come regularly to see us, and laughed more than I ever saw him laugh before. The young men were away a great deal, which was hardly kind. But they said they must call upon their old acquaintances; and Polly and I expected every day to be called upon by their lady friends.

"It's very odd that the friends of these young men don't call upon us," said Mrs. Potiphar to Kurz Pacha; "it would be only civil."

The Ambassador laughed a good deal to himself and then answered,

"But they are not visiting ladies."

"What do you mean," said she.

"Ask Mr. Firkin," replied he.

So when we saw them next, Mrs P. said,

"Mr. Firkin, I remember you used to tell me of the pleasant circles in which you visited in Paris, and how much superior French society is to American."

"Infinitely superior," replied Mr. Firkin.

"Much more *spirituel*," said Mr. Boosey.

"Well," said Mrs. Potiphar, "we are going to stay only a short time to be sure, but we should like very much to see a little good society."

"Ah!" said Mr. Firkin.

"Oh! yes, certainly," said Mr. Boosey; and the corners of his eyelids twitched.

"Perhaps you might suggest that you have some friends staying in town," said Mrs. P. "You know we're all intimate enough for that."

"Yes—oh yes," said Mr. Firkin, slowly; "but the truth is, it's a little awkward. These ladies are kind enough to receive us; but to ask favors of them, is, you see, different."

"Oh! yes," interrupted Mr. Boosey; "to ask favors of them is a very different thing," and his eyes really glistened.

"These are ladies, you see, dear Mrs. Potiphar," said Kurz Pacha, "who don't grant favors."

“But still,” continued Mr. Firkin, “if you only wanted to see them, you know, and be able to say at home that you knew Madame la Marquise So-and-so, and Madame la Comtesse So-and-so, and describe their dresses, why, we can manage it well enough; for we are engaged to a little party at the opera this evening with the Countess de Papillon and Madame Casta Diva, two of the best known ladies in Paris. But they never visit.”

“How superbly exclusive!” said Mrs. Potiphar; “I wonder how that would do at home! However, I should be glad to see the general air and the toilette, you know. If we were going to pass the whole winter I would know them of course. But things are different where you stay so short a time. Eh, Kurz Pacha?”

“Very different, Madame. But you are quite right. Make hay while the sun shines; use your eyes if you can’t use your tongue. Eyes are great auxiliaries, you can use the tongue afterward. You’ve no idea how well you can talk about French society if you only go to the opera with a friend who knows people, and to your banker’s soirées. If you chose to read a little of Balzac, beside, your knowledge will be complete.”

So we agreed to go to the opera. We passed the days shopping, and driving in the *Bois de Boulogne*. Sometimes the young men went with us, and D’Orsay Firkin confided to me one of his adventures, which was very romantic. You know how handsome he is, and how excessively gentlemanly, and how the girls were all in love with him last winter at home. Now you needn’t say that I was, for you know better. I liked him as a friend. But he told me that he had often seen a girl in one of the shops on the Boulevards watching him very closely. He never passed by, but she always saw him, and looked so earnestly at him, that at length he thought he would saunter carelessly into the shop, and ask for some trifle. The moment he entered she fixed her eyes full upon him, and he says they were large and lustrous, and a little mournful in expression. But he scarcely looked at her, and asked at the opposite counter for a pair of gloves. He tried them on, and in the mirror behind the counter he saw the girl still watching him. After lingering for some time, and

looking at everything but the girl, he sauntered slowly out again while her eyes, he said, grew evidently more mournful as she saw him leave without looking at her. Daily, for a week afterwards, he walked by the door, and she was always watching and looking after him with the most eager interest. Mr. Firkin did not say he was sorry for the little French girl, but I know that he really felt so. These men, that every woman falls in love with, are generous, I have always found. And I am sure he would never have confided this little affair to me, except for the very intimate terms upon which we are; for I have heard him say (speaking of other men) that nothing was meaner than for a man to tell of his conquests.

Well, the affair went on, he says, for some days longer. He was, at the time, constantly in attendance upon the Countess de Papillon, but often from the window of her carriage he has remarked the young girl pensively watching him, as she stretched gloves, or tied cravats around the necks of customers. At length he determined to follow the matter up, as he called it, and so marched into the shop one day, and going straight toward the mournful eyes, he asked for a pair of gloves. Mr. Firkin says the French women are so perfectly trained to conceal their emotions, that she did not betray, by any trembling, or turning pale, or stammering, the profound interest she felt for him, but quietly looked in his eyes, and in what Mr. Firkin called "a strain of Siren sweetness," asked what number he wore. He replied with his French *esprit*, as Kurz Pacha calls it, that he thought the size of her hand was about right for him; upon which she smiled in the most bewitching manner, and bringing out a large box of gloves, selected a pair of an exquisite *nuance*, as the French say, you know, and asking him to put out his hand, she proceeded to fit the glove to it, herself. Mr. Firkin remarked, that as she did so, she would raise her eyes to his whenever she found it necessary to press his fingers harder than usual, and when he thought the glove was fairly on, she kept pulling it down, and smoothing it; and finally taking his hand between both of hers, she brought the glove together, buttoned it, and said, "Monsieur has such a delicate hand," and smiled sweetly. Mr. Firkin said he bought an astonishing number of gloves that morning, and suddenly remembered that he wanted cravats. Fortunately

the new styles had just come in, Marie said (for he had discovered her name), and she opened a dazzling array of silks and satins, and asking him to remove his neckcloth, she wound her hand in a beautiful silk, and throwing her arms, for a little moment, quite around his neck, she tied it in front; her little hands sometimes hitting his chin. Then taking him by the hand she led him to a mirror, in which he might survey the effect, while she stood behind him looking into the mirror over his shoulder, her head really quite close to his, and, in her enthusiasm about the set of the cravat, having forgotten to take her hand out of his. He stood a great while before that mirror, trying to discover if it really was a becoming tie. He said he never found so much difficulty in deciding. But Marie decided everything for him, and laid aside piles of cravats, and gloves, and fancy buttons, and charms, until he was quite dizzy, and found that he hadn't money enough in his pocket to pay.

"It is nothing," said the trustful Marie, "Monsieur will call again." Touched by her confidence he has called several times since, and never escapes without paying fifty francs or so. Marie says the *Messieurs Americains* are princes. They never have smaller change than a Napoleon, and they are not only the most regal of customers but the most polite of gentlemen. Mr. Firkin says he has often seen Frenchmen watching him, as he stood in the shop, with the most quizzical expression, and once or twice he has thought he heard suppressed laughter from a group of the other girls and the French gentlemen. But it was a mistake, for when he turned, the Frenchmen had the politest expression, and the girls were very busy with the goods. Poor French gentlemen! how they must be annoyed to see foreigners carrying off not only all the gloves, but all the smiles, of the beautiful Maries. It is really pleasant to see Gauche Boosey and D'Orsay Firkin promenade on the Boulevards. They are more superbly dressed than anybody else. They have such coats, and trowsers, and waistcoats, and boots,—"always looking," says Kurz Pacha, "as if they came into a large fortune last evening, and were anxious to advertise the fact this morning." Even the boys in the streets turn to look at them.

Mr. Boosey always buys the pattern shirts, and woollen morning dresses, and fancy coats, that hang in the shop windows. "Then," he says, "I am sure of being at the height of the fashion." Mr. Firkin is more quiet. The true gentleman, he says, is known by the absence of everything *prononcé*. "He is a very true gentleman, then," even Kurz Pacha says, "for I have never found anything *prononcé* in Mr. D'Orsay Firkin." The Pacha tells a good story of them. "The week after their arrival Mr. B. appeared in a suit of great splendor. It was a very remarkable coat, and waistcoat, covered with gilt sprigs, and an embroidered shirt-bosom, altogether a fine coronation suit for the king of the Cannibal Islands. Mr. Firkin, as usual, was rigorously gentlemanly, in the quiet way. They walked together up the Boulevards, Mr. B. flashing in the sun, and Mr. F. sombre as a shadow. The whole world turned to remark the extreme gorgeousness of Mr. Boosey's attire, which was peculiar even in Paris. At first that ornament of society rather enjoyed it, but such universal attention became a little wearisome, and at length annoying. Finally Mr. Boosey could endure it no longer, and turning round he stopped Mr. Firkin and looking at him from top to toe, remarked, 'Really I see nothing so peculiar in your dress that the whole town should stop to stare at you' Mr. Boosey is a man of great discrimination," concluded the Ambassador.

He went with us to the opera, where we were to see the Countess de Papillon and Madame Casta Diva. The house was full, and the young gentlemen had told us where to look for their box. Mrs. Potiphar had made Mr. P. as presentable as possible, and begged the Sennaar Minister to see that Mr. P. did not talk too loud, nor go to sleep, nor offend the proprieties in any way; especially to cut off all his attempts at speaking French. She had hired the most expensive box.

"People respect money, my dear," said Mrs. Potiphar to me.

"But not always its owners, my dear," whispered Kurz Pacha in my other ear.

When we entered the box all the glasses in the house were levelled at us. Mrs. Potiphar gayly seated herself in the best seat, nodding and chatting with the Ambassador; her diamonds glittering, her brocade glistening, her fan waving, while I slipped into the seat opposite, and Mr. Potiphar stood behind me in a dazzling expanse of white waistcoat, and his glass in his eye, as Mrs. P. had taught him.

"A very successful entree" whispered the Pacha to Mrs. P. "I shall give out to my friends that it is the heiress presumptive of the Comanchees."

"No, really; what is the Comanchees?" said Polly levelling her glass all round the house, and laughing, and talking, and rustling, as if she were very, very happy.

Suddenly there was a fresh volley of glasses towards our box, and, to our perfect dismay, we turned and saw that Mr. Potiphar had advanced to the front, and having put down his eye-glass, had taken out his old, round, silver-barred spectacles, and was deliberately wiping them with that great sheet of a hideous red bandanna, "prepartory to an exhaustive survey of the house," whispered Kurz Pacha to me.

Mrs. P. wouldn't betray any emotion, but still smiling, she hissed to him, under her breath:

"Mr. P., get back this minute. Don't make a fool of yourself. *Mais, monsieur, c'est vraiment charmant*."

The latter sentence was addressed with smiles to the Ambassador, as she saw that the neighbor in the next box was listening.

"It's uncommonly warm," said Mr. Potiphar in a loud tone, as he wiped his forehead with the bandanna.

"Yes, I observe that Mrs. Potiphar betrays the heat in her face," said the Pacha, "which however, is merely a becoming carnation, Madame," concluded he, sinking his voice, and rubbing his hands.

At that moment in the box opposite, I saw our friends, Mr. Boosey and Mr. Firkin. By their sides sat two such handsome women! They wore a great quantity of jewelry, and had the easiest, most smiling faces you

ever saw. They entered making a great noise, and I could see that the modesty of our friends kept them in the rear. For they seemed almost afraid of being seen.

"I like that," said Kurz Pacha; "it shows that such stern republicans don't intend ever to appear delighted with the smiles of nobility."

"The largest one is Madame la Marquise Casta Diva," said Mrs. Potiphar, scanning them carefully, "I know her by her patrician air. What a splendid thing blood is, to be sure!"

She gave herself several minutes to study the toilette of the lady, while I looked at the younger lady, Countess de Papillon, who had all kinds of little fluttering ends of ribbons, and laces, and scallops, and ruffles, and was altogether so stylish!

"I see now where Mr. Firkin gets his elegant manners," said Mrs. Potiphar; "it is a great privilege for young Americans to be admitted familiarly into such society. I now understand better the tone of their conversation when they refer to the French Salons."

"Yes, my dear Madame," answered the Pacha, "this is indeed making the best of one's opportunities. This is well worth coming to Europe for. It is, in fact, for this that Europe is chiefly valuable to an American, as the experience of an observer shows. Paris is, notoriously, the great centre of historical and romantic interest. To be sure, Italy, Rome, Switzerland, and Germany,—yes, and even England,—have some few objects of interest and attention. But the really great things of Europe, the superior interests, are all in Paris. Why, just reflect. Here is the *Café de Paris*, the *Trois Frères*, and the *Maison Dorée*. I don't think you can get such dinners elsewhere. Then, there is the Grand Opera, the Comic Opera, and now and then the Italian—I rather think that is good music. Are there any such theatres as the *Vaudeville,* the *Varietés,* and the *Montansier,* where there is the most dexterous balancing on the edge of decency that ever you saw; and when the balance is lost, as it always is, at least a dozen times every evening, the applause is tremendous, showing that the audience have such a subtile sense of propriety that they can detect the slightest deviation from the right line. Is there not

the *Louvre*, where, if there is not the best picture of a single great artist, there are good specimens of all? Will you please to show me such a promenade as the Boulevards, such fetês as those of the *Champ Elysées*, such shops as those of the *Passages*, and the *Palais Royal*. Above all, will you indicate to such students of mankind as Mr. Boosey, Mr. Firkin, and I, a city more abounding in piquant little women, with eyes, and coiffures and toilettes, and *je ne sais quoi*, enough to make Diogenes a dandy, to obtain their favor? I think, dear Madame, you would be troubled to do it. And while these things are Paris, while we are sure of an illimitable allowance of all this in the gay capital, we do right to remain here. Let who will, sadden in mouldy old Rome, or luxuriate in the orange-groves of Sorento and the south, or wander among the ruins of the most marvellous of empires, and the monuments of art of the highest human genius, or float about the canals of Venice, or woo the Venus and the Apollo; and learn from the silent lips of those teachers a lore sweeter than the French novelists impart;—let who will, climb the tremendous Alps, and feel the sublimity of Switzerland as he rises from the summer of Italian lakes and vineyards to the winter of the glaciers, or makes the tour of all climates in a day by descending those mountains towards the south;—let those who care for it, explore in Germany the sources of modern history, and the remote beginnings of the American spirit;—ours be the Boulevards, the demoiselles, the operas, and the unequalled dinners. Decency requires that we should see Rome, and climb an Alps. We will devote a summer week to the one, and a winter month to the other. They will restore us renewed and refreshed for the manly, generous, noble, and useful life we lead in Paris."

"Admirably said," returned Mrs. Potiphar, who had been studying the ladies opposite while the Pacha was speaking, "but a little bit prosy," she whispered to me.

It would charm you to hear how intelligently Mrs. P. speaks about French society, since that evening at the opera. When we return, you will find how accomplished she is. We have been here only a few weeks, and we already know all the fashionable shops, and a little more French, and

we go to the confectioners, and eat *savarins* every morning at 12, and we drive in the *Bois de Boulogne* in the afternoon, and we dine splendidly, and in the evening we go to the opera or a theatre. To be sure, we don't have much society beside our own party. But then the shop-girls point out the distinguished women to Mrs. Potiphar, so that she can point them out when we drive; and our banker calls and keeps us up in gossip; and Mrs. Potiphar's maid, Adèle, is inestimable in furnishing information; and Mr. Potiphar gets a great deal out of his commissionaire, and goes about studying his Galignani's Guide, and frequents the English Heading Room, where I am told, he makes himself a little conspicuous when he finds that Englishmen won't talk, by saying, "Oh! dear me!" and wiping his face with a bandanna. He usually opens his advances by making sure of an Englishman, and saying, "*Bon matin,* —but, perhaps, sir, you don't speak French."

"You evidently do not, sir," replied one gentleman.

"No, sir; you're right there," answered Mr. P. But he couldn't get another word from his companion.

In this delightful round the weeks glide by.

"You must be enjoying yourself immensely," says the Pacha. "You understand life, my dear Mrs. Potiphar. Here you are, speaking very little French, in a city where the language is an atmosphere, and where you are in no sense acclimated until you can speak it fluently—with all French life shut out from you—living in a hotel—cheated by butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker—going to hear plays that you imperfectly understand—to an opera where you know nobody, and where your box is filled with your own countrymen, who are delightful, indeed, but whom you didn't come to Paris to see—constantly buying a hundred things because they are pretty, and because you are in Paris—entirely ignorant, and quite as careless, of the historical interests of the city, of the pictures, of the statues, and buildings—surrounded by celebrities of all kinds, of whom you never heard, and therefore lose the opportunity of seeing them—in fact, paying the most extravagant price for everything, and purchasing only the consciousness of being in Paris—why, you ought

to be happy, and considered to be having a fine time of it, if you are not? How naturally you will sigh for all this when you return and recur to Paris as the culmination of human bliss! Here's my honored Potiphar, who has this morning been taken to a darkened room in a grand old house, in a lonely, aristocratic street; and there a picture-agent has shown him a splendid Nicolas Poussin, painted in his prime for the family, whose heir in reduced circumstances must now part with it at a tearful sacrifice. Honored P.'s friend, the commissionaire, interprets this story, while the agent stands sadly meditating the sacrifice with which his duty acquaints him. He informs the good P., through the friendly commissionaire, that he has been induced to offer him the picture, not only because all Americans have so fine a taste (as his experience has proved to him) in paintings, nor because they are so much more truly munificent than the nobility of other nations, but because the heir in reduced circumstances wishes to think of the picture as entirely removed from the possibility of being seen in France. Family pride, which is almost crushed in disposing of so great and valued a work, would be entirely quenched, if the sale were to be known, and the picture recognized elsewhere in the country. Monsieur is a gentleman, and he will understand the feelings of a gentleman under such circumstances. The commissionaire and the picture-agent therefore preserve a profound silence, and my honored friend feels for his red bandanna, and is not comfortable in the lonely old house, with the picture and the people. The agent says that it is not unusual for the owner to visit the picture about that very hour, to hear what chance there is for its sale. If this knock should be he, it would not be very remarkable. The heir enters. He has a very heavy moustache, dark hair, and a slightly Hebrew cast of countenance.

"Mr. Potiphar is introduced. The heir contemplates the picture sadly, and he and the agent point out its beauties to each other. In fine, my honored Potiphar buys the work of art. To any one else, of course, in France, for instance, the price should be eleven thousand francs. But the French and the Americans have fraternized; a thousand francs shall be deducted.

"You see clearly it's quite worth while coming to Paris to do this, because I suppose, there are not more than ten or twenty artists at home who could paint ten or twenty times as good a picture for a quarter of the price. But you, dearest Mrs. P., who know all about pictures, naturally don't want American pictures in your house, any more than you want anything else American there.

"My young friends and allies, Messrs. Boosey, Firkin, and Croesus, say that they come to Paris to see the world. They get the words wrong, you know. They come that the world (that is, *their* world at home) may not see them. To accompany Mesdames de Papillon and Casta Diva to the opera, then to return to beautifully furnished apartments to sup, and to prolong the entertainment until morning, is what those charming youths mean when they say 'see the world.' To attend at that *réunion* of the *Haut Ton*, Monsieur Celarius' dancing academy, is to see good society in Paris, after the manner of those dashing men of the world. It's amusing enough, and it's innocent enough in its way. They won't go very far. They'll spend a good deal of money for nothing. They'll be plucked at gaming-houses. They'll be quietly laughed at by Mesdames de Papillon and Casta Diva, and the male friends of those ladies who enjoy the benefit of the lavish bounty of our young Croesus and Firkins. They'll swagger a good deal, and take airs, and come home and indulge in foreign habits now grown indispensable. They will pronounce upon the female toilette, and upon the *gantier le plus comme il faut*, in Paris. They will beg your pardon for expressing a little phrase in French—to which, really the English is inadequate. They will have, necessarily, the foreign air. Some of them will settle away into business men, and be very exemplary. Others will return to Paris, as moths to the light, asserting that the only place for a gentleman to live agreeably, to indulge his tastes, and get the most for his money, is Paris—which is strictly true of such gentlemen as they. A view of life that starts from the dinner-table, inevitably selects Paris for its career. For, obviously, if you live to dine well you must live where there is good cooking.

"You women are rather worse off than the young men, Mrs. P.; because you are necessarily so much more confined to the house. Unless, indeed, you imitate Mrs. Vite, who goes wherever the gentlemen go, and who is famous as *L'Américaine*. If you like that sort of thing, you can do as much of it as you please. It will always surround you with a certain kind of man,—and withdraw from your society a certain kind of woman, and a certain kind of respect."

{Illustration}

"To conclude my sermon, ladies, Europe is a charmed name to Americans, because in Europe are the fountains of all our education and training. History is the story of that hemisphere; the ruins of empires, arts, and civilizations, are here. Now, if there is any use in living at all, which I am far from asserting, is it worth while to get nothing out of Europe but a prolonged supper with Madame Casta Diva, or a wardrobe of all the charming dresses in Paris, and a facility of scandal which has all the wickedness and none of the wit of the finest French-woman? I beg a thousand pardons for preaching, but the text was altogether too pregnant."

And so Kurz Pacha whirled out of the room, humming a waltz of Strauss. He has heard of his recall to Sennaar since he has been here—and we shall hear nothing more of him. We, too, leave Paris in a few days for home, and you will not hear from us again. Mrs. Potiphar has been as busy as possible getting up the greatest variety of dresses. You will see that she has not been to Paris for nothing. Kurz Pacha asked us if we had been to the Louvre, where the great pictures are. But when I inquired if there were any of Mr. Düsseldorf's there, and he said no, why, of course, as he is my favorite, and I know more of his works than I do of any others, I didn't go. There are some very pretty things there, Mr. Boosey says. But ladies have no time for such matters. Do you know, the other evening we went to the ball at the Tuileries, and oh! it was splendid. There were one duke and three marquesses, and a great many counts, presented to me. They all said, "It's charming, this evening," and I said, "very charming, indeed." Wasn't it nice?

But you should have seen Mrs. Potiphar when the Emperor Napoleon III. spoke to her. You know what a great man he is, and what a benefactor to his country, and how pure, and noble, and upright his private character and career have been; and how, as Kurz Pacha said, he is radiant with royalty, and honors everybody to whom he speaks. Well, Mrs. P. was presented, and sank almost to the ground in her reverence. But she actually trembled with delight when the Emperor said:

"Madame, I remember with the greatest pleasure the beautiful city of New York."

I am sure the Emgress Eugenie would have been jealous, could she have heard the tone in which it was said. Wasn't it affable in such a great monarch towards a mere republican? I wonder how people can slander him so, and tell such stories about him. I never saw a nicer man; only he looks sleepy. I suppose the cares of state oppress him, poor man! But one thing you may be sure of, dear Mrs. Downe, if people at home laugh at the Emperor and condemn him, just find out *if they have ever been invited to the Tuileries*. If not, you will understand the reason of their hatred. Mrs. Potiphar says to the Americans here that she can't hear the Emperor spoken against, for they are on the best of terms.

"Of course the French dislike him" says Mr. Firkin, who has a turn for politics, "for they want a republic before they are ready for it."

How you would enjoy all this, dear, and how sorry I am you are not here. I think Mr. Potiphar is rather disconsolate. He whistles and looks out of the window down into the garden of the Tuileries, where the children play under the trees; and as he looks he stops whistling, and gazes sometimes for half an hour; and whenever he goes out afterward, he is sure to buy something for Freddy. When the shopkeeper asks where it shall be sent, Mr. P. says, in a loud, slow voice—"Hotel Mureece, Kattery-vang-sank-o-trorsyaim."

It is astonishing, as Kurz Pacha said that we are not more respected abroad. "Foreigners will never know what you really are," said he to Mr. P., "until they come to you. Your going to them has failed."

Good bye, dearest Mrs. Downe. We are so sorry to come home! You won't hear from us again.

Your ever affectionate

CAROLINE

VI. — KURZ PACHA TO THE KING OF SENNAAR,

UPON RECEIVING HIS LETTERS OF RECALL.

(NOW FIRST TRANSLATED.)

MOST SABLE AND SERENE MASTER:

I hear and obey. You said to me, Go, and I went. You now say, come, and I am coming, with the readiness that befits a slave, and the cheerfulness that marks the philosopher.

Accustomed from my youth to breathe the scented air of Sennaar saloons, and to lounge in listless idleness with young Sennaar, I am weary of the simple purity of manners that distinguishes this people, and long for the pleasing, if pointless frivolities of your court.

Coming, as you commanded, to observe and report the social state of the metropolis of a people who, in the presence of the world, have renounced the feudal organization of society, I have found them, as you anticipated, totally free from the petty ambitions, the bitter resolves, and the hollow pretences, that characterize the society of older states.

The people of the first fashion unite the greatest simplicity of character with the utmost variety of intelligence, and the most graceful elegance of manner. Knowing that for an American the only nobility is that of feeling; the only grace, generosity; and the only elegance, simplicity; they have achieved a society which is a blithe Arcadia, illustrating to the world the principles they profess, and making the friend of man rejoice.

We, who are reputed savages, might well be astonished and fascinated with the results of civilization, as they are here displayed. The universal courtesy and consideration—the gentle charity, which does not consider the appearance but the substance—the republican independence, which teaches foreign lords and ladies the worthlessness of mere rank, by

obviously respecting the character and not the title—the eagerness with which foreign habits are subdued, by the positive nature of American manners—the readiness to assist—the total want of coarse social emulation—the absence of ignorance, prejudice and vulgarity, in the selecter circles—the broad, sweet, catholic welcome to all that is essentially national and characteristic, which sends the young American abroad only that he may return eschewing European habits, and with a confidence in man and his country, chastened by experience—these have most interested and charmed me in the observation of this pleasing people.

It is here the pride of every man to bear his part in the universal labor. The young men, instead of sighing for other institutions, and the immunities of rank, prefer to deserve, by earning, their own patents of Nobility. They are industrious, temperate, and frugal, as becomes the youth to whom the destinies of so great a nation, and the hopes of the world, are committed. They are proud to have raised themselves from poverty, and they are never ashamed to confess that they are poor. They acknowledge the equal dignity of all kinds of labor, and do not presume upon any social differences between their baker and themselves. Knowing that luxury enervates a nation, they aim to show in their lives, as in their persons, that simplicity is the finest ornament of dress, as health best decorates the body. They are cheerfully obedient to those who command them, and gentle to those they command. Full of charity, and knowing that if every man has some sore weakness, he has also a human soul latent in him, they trust each man as if that soul might, at any moment, look out of his eyes, and acknowledge with tears, the sympathy that unites them.

They show in all this social independence and originality, the shrewd common-sense which we have so often heard ascribed to them. For if, by some fatal error, they should undertake a social rivalry, in kind, with the old world and all its splendid accessories of antiquity, wealth and hereditary refinement, the observer would see, what now is never beheld, foolish parvenus frenzied in the pursuit of an elegance which, in

its nature, is inaccessible to them. We should see lavish and unmeaning displays. We should see a gaudy ostentation,—serving only as a magnificent frame to the vanity of the subject. We should see the grave and thoughtful, the witty and accomplished, the men and women whose genius fitted them for society, withdrawing from its saloons, and preferring privacy to a vulgar and profuse publicity. We should see society become a dancing school, and men and women degenerated into dull and dandified boys and girls, content with (pardon me, sable sir, but it would be the truth) "style." We should see, as if in an effete civilization, marriages of convenience. We should hear the heirs, or the holders, of great fortunes, called "gentlemanly," if they were dull, and "a little wild" if they were debauched. We should see parents panting to "marry off" their dear daughters to the richest youths, and the richest youths affecting a "jolly" and "stunning" life,—reputed to know the world because they are licentious, and to have seen life because they have tasted foreign dissipation. We should hear insipidity praised as good-humor, and nonchalance as ease. We should have boorishness accounted manliness, and impudence wit. We should gradually lose faith in man as we associated with men, and soon perceive that the only safety for the city was in its constant recruiting from the simplicity and strength of the country.

The sharp common-sense of this people prevents so melancholy a spectacle. In fact, you have only to consider that this society does not remind you of the best characteristics of any other, to judge how unique it is.

But, for myself, as milk disagrees with my constitution, and my mind tires of this pastoral sweetness, I am too glad to obey your summons. In my younger days when I loved to press the stops of oaten pipes, and—a plaintive swain—fancied every woman what she seemed, and every man my friend,—I should have hailed the prospect of a life in an Arcadia like this. How gladly I should have climbed its Pisgah-peaks of hope, and have looked off into the Future, flowing with milk and honey. I would grieve (if I could) that my sated appetite refuses more,—that I must lay

down my crook and play the shepherd no longer. Yet I know well enough that in the perfumed atmosphere of the circle to which I return, I shall recur often, with more than regret, to the humane, polished, intelligent, and simple society I leave behind me,—shall wonder if Miss Minerva Tattle still prattles kindly among the birds and flowers,—if Mrs. Potiphar still leads, by her innate nobility, and not by the accident of wealth, the swarm of gay, and graceful, and brilliant men and women that surround her.

I humbly trust, sable son of midnight, my lord and master, that my present report and summary will be found worthy of that implicit confidence immemorially accorded to diplomatic communications. I could ask for it no other reception.

Your slave,

KURZ PACHA.

VII. — FROM THE REV. HENRY DOVE TO MRS. POTIPHAR.

(PRIVATE.)

EDENSIDE.

MY DEAR MRS. POTIPHAR:

I am very anxious that you should allow me to receive your son Frederic as a pupil, at my parsonage, here in the country. I have not lived in the city without knowing something about it, despite my cloth, and I am concerned at the peril to which every young man is there exposed. There is a proud philosophy in vogue that everything that *can* be injured had better be destroyed as rapidly as possible, and put out of the way at once. But I recall a deeper and tenderer wisdom which declared, "A bruised reed will he not break." The world is not made for the prosperous alone, nor for the strong. We may wince at the truth, but we must at length believe it,—that the poor in spirit, and the poor in will, and the poor in success, are appointed as pensioners upon our care.

In my house your son will miss the luxuries of his home, but he will, perhaps, find as cordial a sympathy in his little interests, and as careful a consultation of his desires and aims. He will have pure air, a tranquil landscape, a pleasant society; my books, variously selected, my direction and aid in his studies, and a neighborhood to town that will place its resources within his reach. A city, it seems to me, is mainly valuable as a gallery of opportunities. But a man should not live exclusively in his library, nor among his pictures. Letters and art may well decorate his life. But if they are not subsidiary to the man, and his character, then he is a sadder spectacle than a vain book or a poor picture. The eager whirl

of a city tends either to beget a thirst that can only be sated by strong, yet dangerous excitement, or to deafen a man's ear, and harden his heart, to the really noble attractions around him.

It is well to know men. But men are not learned at the billiard table, nor in the barroom, nor by meeting them in an endless round of debauch, nor does a man know the world because he has been to Paris. It is a sad thing for a young man to seek applause by surpassing his companions in that which makes them contemptible. The best men of our own time have little leisure, and the best of other days have committed their better part to books, wherein we may know and love them.

There is nothing more admirable than good society, as there is nothing so fine as a noble man, nor so lovely as a beautiful woman. And to the perfect enjoyment of such society an ease and grace are necessary, which are hardly to be acquired, but are rather, like beauty and talent, the gift of Nature. That ease and grace will certainly run great risk of disappearing, in the embrace of a fashion unchastened by common sense; and it is observable that the sensitive *gaucherie* of a countryman is more agreeable than the pert composure of a citizen.

I do not deny that your son must lose something, if you accede to my request, but I assuredly believe that he will gain more than he will lose. My profession makes me more dogmatic, probably, than is strictly courteous. But I have observed, in my recent visits to town, that Courtesy, also, is getting puny and unmanly, and that a counterfeit, called Compliment, is often mistaken for it. You will smile, probably at my old-fashioned whims, and regret that I am behind my time. But really, it strikes me, that the ineffectual imitation of an exploded social organization is, at least, two centuries behind my time. The youth who, socially speaking, are termed Young America, represent, in character and conduct, anything but their own time and their own country.

I will not deny that the secret of my interest in your son, is an earlier interest in yourself—a wild dream we dreamed together, so long ago that it seems not to be a part of my life. The companion of those other days I

do not recognize in the glittering lady I sometimes see. But in her child I trace the likeness of the girl I knew, and it is to the memory of that girl—whose lovely traits I will still believe are not destroyed, but are somewhere latent in the woman—that I consecrate the task I wish to undertake. I am married, and I am happy. But sometimes through the sweet tranquillity of my life streams the pensive splendor of that long-vanished summer, and I cannot deny the heart that will dream of what might have been.

Madame, I can wish you nothing more sincerely than that as your lot is with the rich in this world, it may be with the poor in the world to come.

Your obedient servant,

HENRY DOVE.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE POTIPHAR PAPERS ***
Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.
Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.
START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> *This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.*

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.
1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.
1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

- • You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- • You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- • You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- • You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.
1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet

and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.