

TRAVELLING COMPANIONS.

I.

THE most strictly impressive picture in Italy is incontestably the Last Supper of Leonardo at Milan. A part of its immense solemnity is doubtless due to its being one of the first of the great Italian masterworks that you encounter in coming down from the North. Another secondary source of interest resides in the very completeness of its decay. The mind finds a rare delight in filling each of its vacant spaces, effacing its rank defilement, and repairing, as far as possible, its sad disorder. Of the essential power and beauty of the work there can be no better evidence than this fact that, having lost so much, it has yet retained so much. An unquenchable elegance lingers in those vague outlines and incurable scars; enough remains to place you in sympathy with the unfathomable wisdom of the painter. The fresco covers a wall, the reader will remember, at the end of the former refectory of a monastery now suppressed, the precinct of which is occupied by a regiment of cavalry. Horses stamp, soldiers rattle their oaths, in the cloisters which once echoed to the sober tread of monastic sandals and the pious greetings of meek-voiced friars.

It was the middle of August, and summer sat brooding fiercely over the streets of Milan. The great brick-wrought dome of the church of St. Mary of the Graces rose black with the heat against the brazen sky. As my *fiacre* drew up in front of the church, I found another vehicle in possession of the little square of shade which carpeted the glaring pavement before the adjoining convent. I left the two drivers to share this advantage as they could, and made haste to enter the cooler presence of the Cenacolo. Here I found the occupants of the *fiacre* without, a young lady and an elderly man.

Here also, besides the official who takes your tributary franc, sat a long-haired copyist, wooing back the silent secrets of the great fresco into the cheerfullest commonplaces of yellow and blue. The gentleman was earnestly watching this ingenious operation; the young lady sat with her eyes fixed on the picture, from which she failed to move them when I took my place on a line with her. I too, however, speedily became as unconscious of her presence as she of mine, and lost myself in the study of the work before us. A single glance had assured me that she was an American.

Since that day, I have seen all the great art treasures of Italy: I have seen Tintoretto at Venice, Michael Angelo at Florence and Rome, Correggio at Parma; but I have looked at no other picture with an emotion equal to that which rose within me as this great creation of Leonardo slowly began to dawn upon my intelligence from the tragical twilight of its ruin. A work so nobly conceived can never utterly die, so long as the half-dozen main lines of its design remain. Neglect and malice are less cunning than the genius of the great painter. It has stored away with masterly skill such a wealth of beauty as only perfect love and sympathy can fully detect. So, under my eyes, the restless ghost of the dead fresco returned to its mortal abode. From the beautiful central image of Christ I perceived its radiation right and left along the sadly broken line of the disciples. One by one, out of the depths of their grim dismemberment, the figures trembled into meaning and life, and the vast, serious beauty of the work stood revealed. What is the ruling force of this magnificent design? Is it art? is it science? is it sentiment? is it knowl-

edge? I am sure I can't say; but in moments of doubt and depression I find it of excellent use to recall the great picture with all possible distinctness. Of all the works of man's hands it is the least superficial.

The young lady's companion finished his survey of the copyist's work and came and stood behind his chair. The reader will remember that a door had been rudely cut in the wall, a part of it entering the fresco.

"He has n't got in that door," said the old gentleman, speaking apparently of the copyist.

The young lady was silent. "Well, my dear," he continued. "What do you think of it?"

The young girl gave a sigh. "I see it," she said.

"You see it, eh? Well, I suppose there is nothing more to be done."

The young lady rose slowly, drawing on her glove. As her eyes were still on the fresco, I was able to observe her. Beyond doubt she was American. Her age I fancied to be twenty-two. She was of middle stature, with a charming slender figure. Her hair was brown, her complexion fresh and clear. She wore a white piqué dress and a black lace shawl, and on her thick dark braids a hat with a purple feather. She was largely characterized by that physical delicacy and that personal elegance (each of them sometimes excessive) which seldom fail to betray my young countrywomen in Europe. The gentleman, who was obviously her father, bore the national stamp as plainly as she. A shrewd, firm, generous face, which told of many dealings with many men, of stocks and shares and current prices, — a face, moreover, in which there lingered the mellow afterglow of a sense of excellent claret. He was bald and grizzled, this perfect American, and he wore a short-bristled white moustache between the two hard wrinkles forming the sides of a triangle of which his mouth was the base and the ridge of his nose, where his eyeglass sat, the apex. In deference perhaps to this exotic growth, he was

better dressed than is common with the typical American citizen, in a blue necktie, a white waistcoat, and a pair of gray trousers. As his daughter still lingered, he looked at me with an eye of sagacious conjecture.

"Ah, that beautiful, beautiful, beautiful Christ," said the young lady, in a tone which betrayed her words in spite of its softness. "O father, what a picture!"

"Hum!" said her father, "I don't see it."

"I must get a photograph," the young girl rejoined. She turned away and walked to the farther end of the hall, where the custodian presides at a table of photographs and prints. Meanwhile her father had perceived my Murray.

"English, sir?" he demanded.

"No, I'm an American, like yourself, I fancy."

"Glad to make your acquaintance, sir. From New York?"

"From New York. I have been absent from home, however, for a number of years."

"Residing in this part of the world?"

"No. I have been living in Germany. I have only just come into Italy."

"Ah, so have we. The young lady is my daughter. She is crazy about Italy. We were very nicely fixed at Interlaken, when suddenly she read in some confounded book or other that Italy should be seen in summer. So she dragged me over the mountains into this fiery furnace. I'm actually melting away. I have lost five pounds in three days."

I replied that the heat was indeed intense, but that I agreed with his daughter that Italy should be seen in summer. What could be pleasanter than the temperature of that vast cool hall?

"Ah, yes," said my friend; "I suppose we shall have plenty of this kind of thing. It makes no odds to me, so long as my poor girl has a good time."

"She seems," I remarked, "to be

having a pretty good time with the photographs." In fact, she was comparing photographs with a great deal of apparent energy, while the salesman lauded his wares in the Italian manner. We strolled over to the table. The young girl was seemingly in treaty for a large photograph of the head of Christ, in which the blurred and fragmentary character of the original was largely intensified, though much of its exquisite pathetic beauty was also preserved. "They'll not think much of that at home," said the old gentleman.

"So much the worse for them," said his daughter, with an accent of delicate pity. With the photograph in her hand, she walked back to the fresco. Her father engaged in an English dialogue with the custodian. In the course of five minutes, wishing likewise to compare the copy and the original, I returned to the great picture. As I drew near it the young lady turned away. Her eyes then for the first time met my own. They were deep and dark and luminous,—I fancied streaming with tears. I watched her as she returned to the table. Her walk seemed to me peculiarly graceful; light, and rapid, and yet full of decision and dignity. A thrill of delight passed through my heart as I guessed at her moistened lids.

"Sweet fellow - countrywoman," I cried in silence, "you have the divine gift of feeling." And I returned to the fresco with a deepened sense of its virtue. When I turned around, my companions had left the room.

In spite of the great heat, I was prepared thoroughly to "do" Milan. In fact, I rather enjoyed the heat; it seemed to my Northern senses to deepen the Italian, the Southern, the local character of things. On that blazing afternoon, I have not forgotten, I went to the church of St. Ambrose, to the Ambrosian Library, to a dozen minor churches. Every step distilled a richer drop into the wholesome cup of pleasure. From my earliest manhood, beneath a German sky, I had dreamed

of this Italian pilgrimage, and, after much waiting and working and planning, I had at last undertaken it in a spirit of fervent devotion. There had been moments in Germany when I fancied myself a clever man; but it now seemed to me that for the first time I really *felt* my intellect. Imagination, panting and exhausted, withdrew from the game; and Observation stepped into her place, trembling and glowing with open-eyed desire.

I had already been twice to the Cathedral, and had wandered through the clustering inner darkness of the high arcades which support those light-defying pinnacles and spires. Towards the close of the afternoon I found myself strolling once more over the great column-planted, altar-studded pavement, with the view of ascending to the roof. On presenting myself at the little door in the right transept, through which you gain admission to the upper regions, I perceived my late fellow-visitors of the fresco preparing apparently for an upward movement, but not without some reluctance on the paternal side. The poor gentleman had been accommodated with a chair, on which he sat fanning himself with his hat and looking painfully apoplectic. The sacristan meanwhile held open the door with an air of invitation. But my corpulent friend, with his thumb in his Murray, balked at the ascent. Recognizing me, his face expressed a sudden sense of vague relief.

"Have you been up, sir?" he inquired, groaningly.

I answered that I was about to ascend; and recalling then the fact, which I possessed rather as information than experience, that young American ladies may not improperly detach themselves on occasion from the parental side, I ventured to declare that, if my friend was unwilling to encounter the fatigue of mounting to the roof in person, I should be most happy, as a fellow-countryman, qualified already perhaps to claim a traveller's acquaintance, to accompany and assist his daughter.

"You're very good, sir," said the

poor man; "I confess that I'm about played out. I'd far rather sit here and watch these pretty Italian ladies saying their prayers. Charlotte, what do you say?"

"Of course if you're tired I should be sorry to have you make the effort," said Charlotte. "But I believe the great thing is to see the view from the roof. I'm much obliged to the gentleman."

It was arranged accordingly that we should ascend together. "Good luck to you," cried my friend, "and mind you take good care of her."

Those who have rambled among the marble immensities of the summit of Milan Cathedral will hardly expect me to describe them. It is only when they have been seen as a complete concentric whole that they can be properly appreciated. It was not as a whole that I saw them; a week in Italy had assured me that I have not the architectural *coup d'œil*. In looking back on the scene into which we emerged from the stifling spiral of the ascent, I have chiefly a confused sense of an immense skyward elevation and a fierce blinding efflorescence of fantastic forms of marble. There, reared for the action of the sun, you find a vast marble world. The solid whiteness lies in mighty slabs along the iridescent slopes of nave and transept, like the lonely snow-fields of the higher Alps. It leaps and climbs and shoots and attacks the unsheltered blue with a keen and joyous incision. It meets the pitiless sun with a more than equal glow; the day falters, declines, expires, but the marble shines forever, unmelted and unintermittent. You will know what I mean if you have looked upward from the Piazza at midnight. With confounding frequency too, on some uttermost point of a pinnacle, its plastic force explodes into satisfied rest in some perfect flower of a figure. A myriad carven statues, known only to the circling air, are poised and niched beyond reach of human vision, the loss of which to mortal eyes is, I suppose, the gain of the Church and the

Lord. Among all the jewelled shrines and overwrought tabernacles of Italy, I have seen no such magnificent waste of labor, no such glorious synthesis of cunning secrets. As you wander, sweating and blinking, over the changing levels of the edifice, your eye catches at a hundred points the little profile of a little saint, looking out into the dizzy air, a pair of folded hands praying to the bright immediate heavens, a sandalled monkish foot planted on the edge of the white abyss. And then, besides this mighty world of the great Cathedral itself, you possess the view of all green Lombardy, — vast, lazy Lombardy, resting from its Alpine upheavals.

My companion carried a little white umbrella, with a violet lining. Thus protected from the sun, she climbed and gazed with abundant courage and spirit. Her movements, her glance, her voice, were full of intelligent pleasure. Now that I could observe her closely, I saw that, though perhaps without regular beauty, she was yet, for youth, summer, and Italy, more than pretty enough. Owing to my residence in Germany, among Germans, in a small university town, Americans had come to have for me, in a large degree, the interest of novelty and remoteness. Of the charm of American women, in especial, I had formed a very high estimate, and I was more than ready to be led captive by the far-famed graces of their frankness and freedom. I already felt that in the young girl beside me there was a different quality of womanhood from any that I had recently known; a keenness, a maturity, a conscience, which deeply stirred my curiosity. It was positive, not negative maidenhood.

"You're an American," I said, as we stepped to look at the distance.

"Yes; and you?" In her voice alone the charm faltered. It was high, thin, and nervous.

"O, happily, I'm also one."

"I should n't have thought so. I should have taken you for a German."

"By education I am a German. I

knew you were an American the moment I looked at you."

"I suppose so. It seems that American women are easily recognized. But don't talk about America." She paused and swept her dark eye over the whole immensity of prospect. "This is Italy," she cried, "Italy, Italy!"

"Italy indeed. What do you think of the Leonardo?"

"I fancy there can be only one feeling about it. It must be the saddest and finest of all pictures. But I know nothing of art. I have seen nothing yet but that lovely Raphael in the Brera."

"You have a vast deal before you. You're going southward, I suppose."

"Yes, we are going directly to Venice. There I shall see Titian."

"Titian and Paul Veronese."

"Yes, I can hardly believe it. Have you ever been in a gondola?"

"No; this is my first visit to Italy."

"Ah, this is all new, then, to you as well."

"Divinely new," said I, with fervor.

She glanced at me, with a smile, — a ray of friendly pleasure in my pleasure. "And you are not disappointed!"

"Not a jot. I'm too good a German."

"I'm too good an American. I live at Araminta, New Jersey!"

We thoroughly "did" the high places of the church, concluding with an ascent into the little gallery of the central spire. The view from this spot is beyond all words, especially the view toward the long mountain line which shuts out the North. The sun was sinking: clear and serene upon their blue foundations, the snow-peaks sat clustered and scattered, and shrouded in silence and light. To the south the long shadows fused and multiplied, and the bosky Lombard flats melted away into perfect Italy. This prospect offers a great emotion to the Northern traveller. A vague, delicious impulse of conquest stirs in his heart. From his dizzy vantage-point, as he looks down at her, beautiful, historic, exposed, he embraces the whole land in the far-reach-

ing range of his desire. "That is Monte Rosa," I said; "that is the Simplon pass; there is the triple glitter of those lovely lakes."

"Poor Monte Rosa," said my companion.

"I'm sure I never thought of Monte Rosa as an object of pity."

"You don't know what she represents. She represents the genius of the North. There she stands, frozen and fixed, resting her head upon that mountain wall, looking over at this lovely southern world and yearning towards it forever in vain."

"It is very well she can't come over. She would melt."

"Very true. She is beautiful, too, in her own way. I mean to fancy that I am her chosen envoy, and that I have come up here to receive her blessing."

I made an attempt to point out a few localities. "Yonder lies Venice, out of sight. In the interval are a dozen divine little towns. I hope to visit them all. I shall ramble all day in their streets and churches, their little museums, and their great palaces. In the evening I shall sit at the door of a café in the little piazza, scanning some lovely civic edifice in the moonlight, and saying, 'Ah! this is Italy!'"

"You gentlemen are certainly very happy. I'm afraid we must go straight to Venice."

"Your father insists upon it?"

"He wishes it. Poor father! in early life he formed the habit of being in a hurry, and he can't break it even now, when, being out of business, he has nothing on earth to do."

"But in America I thought daughters insisted as well as fathers."

The young girl looked at me, half serious, half smiling. "Have you a mother?" she asked; and then, blushing the least bit at her directness and without waiting for an answer, "This is not America," she said. "I should like to think I might become for a while a creature of Italy."

Somehow I felt a certain contagion in her momentary flash of frankness.

"I strongly suspect," I said, "that you are American to the depths of your soul, and that you 'll never be anything else; I hope not."

In this hope of mine there was perhaps a little impertinence; but my companion looked at me with a gentle smile, which seemed to hint that she forgave it. "You, on the other hand," she said, "are a perfect German, I fancy; and you 'll never be anything else."

"I am sure I wish with all my heart," I answered, "to be a good American. I'm open to conversion. Try me."

"Thank you; I have n't the ardor; I'll make you over to my father. We must n't forget, by the way, that he is waiting for us."

We did forget it, however, awhile longer. We came down from the tower and made our way to the balustrade which edges the front of the edifice, and looked down on the city and the piazza below. Milan had, to my sense, a peculiar charm of temperate gayety,—the softness of the South without its laxity; and I felt as if I could gladly spend a month there. The common life of the streets was beginning to stir and murmur again, with the subsiding heat and the approaching night. There came up into our faces a delicious emanation as from the sweetness of Transalpine life. At the little balconies of the windows, beneath the sloping awnings, with their feet among the crowded flower-pots and their plump bare arms on the iron rails, lazy, drowsy Italian beauties would appear, still drowsy with the broken *siesta*. Beautiful, slim young officers had begun to dot the pavement, glorious with their clanking swords, their brown moustaches, and their legs of azure. In gentle harmony with these, various ladies of Milan were issuing forth to enjoy the cool; elegant, romantic, provoking, in short black dresses and lace mantillas depending from their *chignons*, with a little cloud of powder artfully enhancing the darkness of their hair and eyes. How it all was n't Germany! how it could n't have been *Araminta*, *New Jersey*! "It's the South, the South," I

kept repeating,— "the South in nature, in man, in manners." It was a brighter world. "It's the South," I said to my companion. "Don't you feel it in all your nerves?"

"O, it's very pleasant," she said.

"We must forget all our cares and duties and sorrows. We must go in for the beautiful. Think of this great trap for the sunbeams, in this city of yellows and russets and crimsons, of liquid vowels and glancing smiles being, like one of our Northern cathedrals, a temple to Morality and Conscience. It does n't belong to heaven, but to earth,—to love and light and pleasure."

My friend was silent a moment. "I'm glad I'm not a Catholic," she said at last. "Come, we must go down."

We found the interior of the Cathedral delightfully cool and shadowy. The young lady's father was not at our place of ingress, and we began to walk through the church in search of him. We met a number of Milanese ladies, who charmed us with their sombre elegance and the Spanish romance of their veils. With these pale penitents and postulants my companion had a lingering sisterly sympathy.

"Don't you wish you were a Catholic now?" I asked. "It would be so pleasant to wear one of those lovely mantillas."

"The mantillas are certainly becoming," she said. "But who knows what horrible old-world sorrows and fears and remorse they cover? Look at this person." We were standing near the great altar. As she spoke, a woman rose from her knees, and as she drew the folds of her lace mantle across her bosom, fixed her large dark eyes on us with a peculiar significant intensity. She was of less than middle age, with a pale, haggard face, a certain tarnished elegance of dress, and a remarkable nobleness of gesture and carriage. She came towards us, with an odd mixture, in her whole expression, of decency and defiance. "Are you English?" she said in Italian. "You are very pretty. Is he a brother or a lover?"

"He is neither," said I, affecting a tone of rebuke.

"Neither? only a friend! You are very happy to have a friend, Signorina. Ah, you are pretty! You were watching me at my prayers just now; you thought me very curious, apparently. I don't care. You may see me here any day. But I devoutly hope you may never have to pray such bitter, bitter prayers as mine. A thousand excuses." And she went her way.

"What in the world does she mean?" said my companion.

"Monte Rosa," said I, "was the genius of the North. This poor woman is the genius of the Picturesque. She shows us the essential misery that lies behind it. It's not an unwholesome lesson to receive at the outset. Look at her sweeping down the aisle. What a poise of the head! The picturesque is handsome, all the same."

"I do wonder what is her trouble," murmured the young girl. "She has swept away an illusion in the folds of those black garments."

"Well," said I, "here is a solid fact to replace it." My eyes had just lighted upon the object of our search. He sat in a chair, half tilted back against a pillar. His chin rested on his shirt-bosom, and his hands were folded together over his waistcoat, where it most protruded. Shirt and waistcoat rose and fell with visible, audible regularity. I wandered apart and left his daughter to deal with him. When she had fairly aroused him, he thanked me heartily for my care of the young lady, and expressed the wish that we might meet again. "We start to-morrow for Venice," he said. "I want awfully to get a whiff of the sea-breeze and to see if there is anything to be got out of a gondola."

As I expected also to be in Venice before many days, I had little doubt of our meeting. In consideration of this circumstance, my friend proposed that we should exchange cards; which we accordingly did, then and there, before the high altar, above the gorgeous chapel which enshrines the relics of

St. Charles Borromeus. It was thus that I learned his name to be Mr. Mark Evans.

"Take a few notes for us!" said Miss Evans, as I shook her hand in farewell.

I spent the evening, after dinner, strolling among the crowded streets of the city, tasting of Milanese humanity. At the door of a café I perceived Mr. Evans seated at a little round table. He seemed to have discovered the merits of absinthe. I wondered where he had left his daughter. She was in her room, I fancied, writing her journal.

The fortnight which followed my departure from Milan was in all respects memorable and delightful. With an interest that hourly deepened as I read, I turned the early pages of the enchanting romance of Italy. I carried out in detail the programme which I had sketched for Miss Evans. Those few brief days, as I look back on them, seem to me the sweetest, fullest, calmest of my life. All personal passions, all restless egotism, all worldly hopes, regrets, and fears were stilled and absorbed in the steady perception of the material present. It exhaled the pure essence of romance. What words can reproduce the picture which these Northern Italian towns project upon a sympathetic retina? They are shabby, deserted, dreary, decayed, unclean. In those August days the southern sun poured into them with a fierceness which might have seemed fatal to any lurking shadow of picturesque mystery. But taking them as cruel time had made them and left them, I found in them an immeasurable instruction and charm. My perception seemed for the first time to live a sturdy creative life of its own. How it fed upon the mouldy crumbs of the festal past! I have always thought the observant faculty a windy impostor, so long as it refuses to pocket pride and doff its bravery and crawl on all-fours, if need be, into the unillumined corners and crannies of life. In these dead cities of Verona, Mantua, Padua, how life had revelled and postured in its strength! How

sentiment and passion had blossomed and flowered! How much of history had been performed! What a wealth of mortality had ripened and decayed! I have never elsewhere got so deep an impression of the social secrets of mankind. In England, even, in those verdure-stifed haunts of domestic peace which muffle the sounding chords of British civilization, one has a fainter sense of the possible movement and fruition of individual character. Beyond a certain point you fancy it merged in the general medium of duty, business, and politics. In Italy, in spite of your knowledge of the strenuous public conscience which once inflamed these compact little states, the unapplied, spontaneous moral life of society seems to have been more active and more subtle. I walked about with a volume of Stendahl in my pocket; at every step I gathered some lingering testimony to the exquisite vanity of ambition.

But the great emotion, after all, was to feel myself among scenes in which art had ranged so freely. It had often enough been bad, but it had never ceased to be art. An invincible instinct of beauty had presided at life, — an instinct often ludicrously crude and primitive. Wherever I turned I found a vital principle of grace, — from the smile of a chambermaid to the curve of an arch. My memory reverts with an especial tenderness to certain hours in the dusky, faded saloons of those vacant, ruinous palaces which boast of "collections." The pictures are frequently poor, but the visitor's impression is generally rich. The brick-tiled floors are bare; the doors lack paint; the great windows, curtains; the chairs and tables have lost their gilding and their damask drapery; but the ghost of a graceful aristocracy treads at your side and does the melancholy honors of the abode with a dignity that brooks no sarcasm. You feel that art and piety here have been blind, generous instincts. You are reminded in persuasive accents of the old personal regimen in human affairs. Certain pictures are veiled and curtained *virginibus puerisque*.

Through these tarnished halls lean and patient abbés led their youthful virginal pupils. Have you read Stendahl's *Chartreuse de Parme*? There was such a gallery in the palace of the Duchess of San Severino. After a long day of strolling, lounging, and staring, I found a singularly perfect pleasure in sitting at the door of a café in the warm starlight, eating an ice and making an occasional experiment in the way of talk with my neighbors. I recall with peculiar fondness and delight three sweet sessions in the delicious Piazza die Signori at Verona. The Piazza is small, compact, private almost, accessible only to pedestrians, paved with great slabs which have known none but a gentle human tread. On one side of it rises in elaborate elegance and grace, above its light arched *loggia*, the image-bordered mass of the ancient palace of the Council; facing this stand two sterner, heavier buildings, dedicated to municipal offices and to the lodgement of soldiers. Step through the archway which leads out of the Piazza and you will find a vast quadrangle with a staircase climbing sunward, along the wall, a row of gendarmes sitting in the shade, a group of soldiers cleaning their muskets, a dozen persons of either sex leaning downward from the open windows. At one end of the little square rose into the pale darkness the high slender shaft of a brick campanile; in the centre glittered steadily a colossal white statue of Dante. Behind this statue was the Caffè Dante, where on three successive days I sat till midnight, feeling the scene, learning its sovereign "distinction." But of Verona I shall not pretend to speak. As I drew near Venice I began to feel a soft impatience, an expectant tremor of the heart. The day before reaching it I spent at Vicenza. I wandered all day through the streets, of course, looking at Palladio's palaces and enjoying them in defiance of reason and Ruskin. They seemed to me essentially rich and palatial. In the evening I resorted, as usual, to the city's generous heart, the decayed glorious Piazza. This spot at Vicenza

affords you a really soul-stirring premonition of Venice. There is no Byzantine Basilica and no Ducal Palace; but there is an immense impressive hall of council, and a soaring campanile, and there are two discrowned columns telling of defeated Venetian dominion. Here I seated myself before a café door, in a group of gossiping votaries of the Southern night. The tables being mostly occupied, I had some difficulty in finding one. In a short time I perceived a young man walking through the crowd, seeking where he might bestow himself. Passing near me, he stopped and asked me with irresistible grace if he might share my table. I cordially assented: he sat down and ordered a glass of sugar and water. He was of about my own age, apparently, and full of the opulent beauty of the greater number of young Italians. His dress was simple even to shabbiness: he might have been a young prince in disguise, a Haroun-al-Raschid. With small delay we engaged in conversation. My companion was boyish, modest, and gracious; he nevertheless discoursed freely on the things of Vicenza. He was so good as to regret that we had not met earlier in the day; it would have given him such pleasure to accompany me on my tour of the city. He was passionately fond of art: he was in fact an artist. Was I fond of pictures? Was I inclined to purchase? I answered that I had no desire to purchase modern pictures, that in fact I had small means to purchase any. He informed me that he had a beautiful ancient work which, to his great regret, he found himself compelled to sell; a most divine little Correggio. Would I do him the favor to look at it? I had small belief in the value of this unrenowned masterpiece; but I felt a kindness for the young painter. I consented to have him call for me the next morning and take me to his house, where for two hundred years, he assured me, the work had been jealously preserved.

He came punctually, beautiful, smiling, shabby, as before. After a ten minutes' walk we stopped before a

gaudy half-palazzo which rejoiced in a vague Palladian air. In the basement, looking on the court, lived my friend; with his mother, he informed me, and his sister. He ushered me in, through a dark antechamber, into which, through a gaping kitchen door, there gushed a sudden aroma of onions. I found myself in a high, half-darkened saloon. One of the windows was open into the court, from which the light entered verdantly through a row of flowering plants. In an arm-chair near the window sat a young girl in a dressing-gown, empty-handed, pale, with wonderful eyes, apparently an invalid. At her side stood a large elderly woman in a rusty black silk gown, with an agreeable face, flushed a little, apparently with the expectation of seeing me. The young man introduced them as his mother and his sister. On a table near the window, propped upright in such a way as to catch the light, was a small picture in a heavy frame. I proceeded to examine it. It represented in simple composition a Madonna and Child; the mother facing you, pressing the infant to her bosom, faintly smiling, and looking out of the picture with a solemn sweetness. It was pretty, it was good; but it was not Correggio. There was indeed a certain suggestion of his exquisite touch; but it was a likeness merely, and not the precious reality. One fact, however, struck swiftly home to my consciousness: the face of the Madonna bore a singular resemblance to that of Miss Evans. The lines, the character, the expression, were the same; the faint half-thoughtful smile was hers, the feminine frankness and gentle confidence of the brow, from which the dark hair waved back with the same even abundance. All this, in the Madonna's face, was meant for heaven; and on Miss Evans's in a fair degree, probably, for earth. But the mutual likeness was, nevertheless, perfect, and it quickened my interest in the picture to a point which the intrinsic merit of the work would doubtless have failed to justify; al-

though I confess that I was now not slow to discover a great deal of agreeable painting in it.

"But I doubt of its being a Correggio," said I.

"A Correggio, I give you my word of honor, sir!" cried my young man.

"*Ecco!* my son's word of honor," cried his mother.

"I don't deny," I said, "that it is a very pretty work. It is perhaps Parmigianino."

"O no, sir," the elder insisted, "a true Correggio! We have had it two hundred years! Try another light; you will see. A true Correggio! Isn't it so, my daughter?"

The young man put his arm in mine, played his fingers airily over the picture, and whispered of a dozen beauties.

"O, I grant you," said I, "it's a very pretty picture." As I looked at it I felt the dark eyes of the young girl in the arm-chair fixed upon me with almost unpleasant intensity. I met her gaze for a moment: I found in it a strange union of defiant pride and sad despondent urgency.

"What do you ask for the picture?" I said.

There was a silence.

"Speak, *madre mia*," said the young man.

"*La senta!*" and the lady played with her broken fan. "We should like you to name a price."

"O, if I named a price, it would not be as for a Correggio. I can't afford to buy Correggios. If this were a real Correggio, you would be rich. You should go to a duke, a prince, not to me."

"We would be rich! Do you hear, my children? We are very poor, sir. You have only to look at us. Look at my poor daughter. She was once beautiful, fresh, gay. A year ago she fell ill: a long story, sir, and a sad one. We have had doctors; they have ordered five thousand things. My daughter gets no better. There it is, sir. We are very poor."

The young girl's look confirmed her mother's story. That she had been beautiful I could easily believe; that

she was ill was equally apparent. She was still remarkable indeed for a touching, hungry, unsatisfied grace. She remained silent and motionless, with her eyes fastened upon my face. I again examined the pretended Correggio. It was wonderfully like Miss Evans. The young American rose up in my mind with irresistible vividness and grace. How she seemed to glow with strength, freedom, and joy, beside this sombre, fading, Southern sister! It was a happy thought that, under the benediction of her image, I might cause a ray of healing sunshine to fall at this poor girl's feet.

"Have you ever tried to sell the picture before?"

"Never!" said the old lady, proudly. "My husband had it from his father. If we have made up our minds to part with it now, — most blessed little Madonna! — it is because we have had an intimation from heaven."

"From heaven?"

"From heaven, Signore. My daughter had a dream. She dreamed that a young stranger came to Vicenza, and that he wandered about the streets saying, 'Where, ah where, is my blessed Lady?' Some told him in one church, and some told him in another. He went into all the churches and lifted all the curtains, giving great fees to the sacristans! But he always came out shaking his head and repeating his question, 'Where is my blessed Lady? I have come from over the sea, I have come to Italy to find her!'" The woman delivered herself of this recital with a noble florid unctious and a vast redundancy, to my Northern ear, of delightful liquid sounds. As she paused momentarily, her daughter spoke for the first time.

"And then I fancied," said the young girl, "that I heard his voice pausing under my window at night. 'His blessed Lady is here,' I said, 'we must not let him lose her.' So I called my brother and bade him go forth in search of you. I dreamed that he brought you back. We made an altar with candles and lace and

flowers, and on it we placed the little picture. The stranger had light hair, light eyes, a flowing beard like you. He kneeled down before the little Madonna and worshipped her. We left him at his devotions and went away. When we came back the candles on the altar were out: the Madonna was gone, too; but in its place there burned a bright pure light. It was a purse of gold!"

"What a very pretty story!" said I. "How many pieces were there in the purse?"

The young man burst into a laugh. "Twenty thousand!" he said.

I made my offer for the picture. It was esteemed generous apparently; I was cordially thanked. As it was inconvenient, however, to take possession of the work at that moment, I agreed to pay down but half the sum, reserving the other half to the time of delivery. When I prepared to take my departure the young girl rose from her chair and enabled me to measure at once her weakness and her beauty. "Will you come back for the picture yourself?" she asked.

"Possibly. I should like to see you again. You must get better."

"O, I shall never get better."

"I can't believe that. I shall perhaps have a dream to tell you!"

"I shall soon be in heaven. I shall send you one."

"Listen to her!" cried the mother. "But she is already an angel."

With a farewell glance at my pictured Madonna I departed. My visit to this little Vicenza household had filled me with a painful, indefinable sadness. So beautiful they all were, so civil, so charming, and yet so mendacious and miserable! As I hurried along in the train toward the briny cincture of Venice, my heart was heavy with the image of that sombre, dying Italian maiden. Her face haunted me. What fatal wrong had she suffered? What hidden sorrow had blasted the freshness of her youth? As I began to smell the nearing Adriatic, my fancy bounded forward to claim asylum in

the calmer presence of my bright American friend. I have no space to tell the story of my arrival in Venice and my first impressions. Mr. Evans had not mentioned his hotel. He was not at the Hotel de l'Europe, whither I myself repaired. If he was still in Venice, however, I foresaw that we should not fail to meet. The day succeeding my arrival I spent in a restless fever of curiosity and delight, now lost in the sensuous ease of my gondola, now lingering in charmed devotion before a canvas of Tintoretto or Paul Veronese. I exhausted three gondoliers and saw all Venice in a passionate fury and haste. I wished to probe its fulness and learn at once the best — or the worst. Late in the afternoon I disembarked at the Piazzetta and took my way haltingly and gazingly to the many-domed Basilica, — that shell of silver with a lining of marble. It was that enchanting Venetian hour when the ocean-touching sun sits melting to death, and the whole still air seems to glow with the soft effusion of his golden substance. Within the church, the deep brown shadow-masses, the heavy thick-tinted air, the gorgeous composite-darkness, reigned in richer, quainter, more fantastic gloom than my feeble pen can reproduce the likeness of. From those rude concavities of dome and semi-dome, where the multitudinous facets of pictorial mosaic shimmer and twinkle in their own dull brightness; from the vast antiquity of innumerable marbles, incrusting the walls in roughly mated slabs, cracked and polished and triple-tinted with eternal service; from the wavy carpet of compacted stone, where a thousand once-bright fragments glimmer through the long attrition of idle feet and devoted knees; from sombre gold and mellow alabaster, from porphyry and malachite, from long dead crystal and the sparkle of undying lamps, — there proceeds a dense rich atmosphere of splendor and sanctity which transports the half-stupefied traveller to the age of a simpler and more awful faith. I wandered for half an hour beneath those

reverted cups of scintillating darkness, stumbling on the great stony swells of the pavement as I gazed upward at the long mosaic saints who curve gigantically with the curves of dome and ceiling. I had left Europe; I was in the East. An overwhelming sense of the sadness of man's spiritual history took possession of my heart. The clustering picturesque shadows about me seemed to represent the darkness of a past from which he had slowly and painfully struggled. The great mosaic images, hideous, grotesque, inhuman, glimmered like the cruel spectres of early superstitions and terrors. There came over me, too, a poignant conviction of the ludicrous folly of the idle spirit of travel. How with Murray and an opera-glass it strolls and stares where omniscient angels stand diffident and sad! How blunted and stupid are its senses! How trivial and superficial its imaginings! To this builded sepulchre of trembling hope and dread, this monument of mighty passions, I had wandered in search of pictorial effects. O vulgarity! Of course I remained, nevertheless, still curious of effects. Suddenly I perceived a very agreeable one. Kneeling on a low *prie-dieu*, with her hands clasped, a lady was gazing upward at the great mosaic Christ in the dome of the choir. She wore a black lace shawl and a purple hat. She was Miss Evans. Her attitude slightly puzzled me. Was she really at her devotions, or was she only playing at prayer? I walked to a distance, so that she might have time to move before I addressed her. Five minutes afterwards, however, she was in the same position. I walked slowly towards her, and as I approached her attracted her attention. She immediately recognized me and smiled and bowed, without moving from her place.

"I saw you five minutes ago," I said, "but I was afraid of interrupting your prayers."

"O, they were only half-prayers," she said.

"Half-prayers are pretty well for one

who only the other day was thanking Heaven that she was not a Catholic."

"Half-prayers are no prayers. I'm not a Catholic yet."

Her father, she told me, had brought her to the church, but had returned on foot to the hotel for his pocket-book. They were to dine at one of the restaurants in the Piazza. Mr. Evans was vastly contented with Venice, and spent his days and nights in gondolas. Awaiting his return, we wandered over the church. Yes, incontestably, Miss Evans resembled my little Vicenza picture. She looked a little pale with the heat and the constant nervous tension of sight-seeing; but she pleased me now as effectually as she had pleased me before. There was an even deeper sweetness in the freedom and breadth of her utterance and carriage. I felt more even than before that she was an example of woman active, not of woman passive. We strolled through the great Basilica in serious, charmed silence. Miss Evans told me that she had been there much: she seemed to know it well. We went into the dark Baptistery and sat down on a bench against the wall, trying to discriminate in the vaulted dimness the harsh mediæval reliefs behind the altar and the mosaic Crucifixion above it.

"Well," said I, "what has Venice done for you?"

"Many things. Tired me a little, saddened me, charmed me."

"How have you spent your time?"

"As people spend it. After breakfast we get into our gondola and remain in it pretty well till bedtime. I believe I know every canal, every canaletto, in Venice. You must have learned already how sweet it is to lean back under the awning, to feel beneath you that steady, liquid lapse, to look out at all this bright, sad elegance of ruin. I have been reading two or three of George Sand's novels. Do you know *La Dernière Aldini*? I fancy a romance in every palace."

"The reality of Venice seems to me to exceed all romance. It's romance enough simply to be here."

"Yes; but how brief and transient a romance!"

"Well," said I, "we shall certainly cease to be here, but we shall never cease to have been here. You are not to leave directly, I hope."

"In the course of ten days or a fortnight we go to Florence."

"And then to Rome?"

"To Rome and Naples, and then by sea, probably, to Genoa, and thence to Nice and Paris. We must be at home by the new year. And you?"

"I hope to spend the winter in Italy."

"Are you never coming home again?"

"By no means. I shall probably return in the spring. But I wish you, too, were going to remain."

"You are very good. My father pronounces it impossible. I have only to make the most of it while I'm here."

"Are you going back to Araminta?"

Miss Evans was silent a moment. "O, don't ask!" she said.

"What kind of a place is Araminta?" I asked, maliciously.

Again she was silent. "That is John the Baptist on the cover of the basin," she said, at last, rising to her feet, with a light laugh.

On emerging from the Baptistery we found Mr. Evans, who greeted me cordially and insisted on my coming to dine with them. I think most fondly of our little dinner. We went to the Caffé Quadri and occupied a table beside an open window, looking out into the Piazza, which was beginning to fill with evening loungers and listeners to the great band of music in the centre. Miss Evans took off her hat and sat facing me in friendly silence. Her father sustained the larger burden of conversation. He seemed to feel its weight, however, as the dinner proceeded and when he had attacked his second bottle of wine. Miss Evans then questioned me about my journey from Milan. I told her the whole story, and felt that I infused into it a great deal of color and heat. She sat charming me forward with her steady, listening smile. For the first time in my

life I felt the magic of sympathy. After dinner we went down into the Piazza and established ourselves at one of Florian's tables. Night had become perfect; the music was magnificent. At a neighboring table was a group of young Venetian gentlemen, splendid in dress, after the manner of their kind, and glorious with the wondrous physical glory of the Italian race.

"They only need velvet and satin and plumes," I said, "to be subjects for Titian and Paul Veronese."

They sat rolling their dark eyes and kissing their white hands at passing friends, with smiles that were like the moon-flashes on the Adriatic.

"They are beautiful exceedingly," said Miss Evans; "the most beautiful creatures in the world, except—"

"Except, you mean, this other gentleman."

She assented. The person of whom I had spoken was a young man who was just preparing to seat himself at a vacant table. A lady and gentleman, elderly persons, had passed near him and recognized him, and he had uncovered himself and now stood smiling and talking. They were all genuine Anglo-Saxons. The young man was rather short of stature, but firm and compact. His hair was light and crisp, his eye a clear blue, his face and neck violently tanned by exposure to the sun. He wore a pair of small blond whiskers.

"Do you call him beautiful?" demanded Mr. Evans. "He reminds me of myself when I was his age. Indeed, he looks like you, sir."

"He's not beautiful," said Miss Evans, "but he is handsome."

The young man's face was full of decision and spirit; his whole figure had been moulded by action, tempered by effort. He looked simple and keen, upright, downright.

"Is he English?" asked Miss Evans, "or American?"

"He is both," I said, "or either. He is made of that precious clay that is common to the whole English-speaking race."

"He's American."

"Very possibly," said I; and indeed we never learned. I repeat the incident because I think it has a certain value in my recital. Before we separated I expressed the hope that we might meet again on the morrow.

"It's very kind of you to propose it," said Miss Evans; "but you'll thank us for refusing. Take my advice, as for an old Venetian, and spend the coming three days alone. How can you enjoy Tintoretto and Bellini, when you are racking your brains for small talk for me?"

"With you, Miss Evans, I should n't talk small. But you shape my programme with a liberal hand. At the end of three days, pray, where will you be?"

They would still be in Venice, Mr. Evans declared. It was a capital hotel, and then those jolly gondolas! I was unable to impeach the wisdom of the young girl's proposition. To be so wise, it seemed to me, was to be extremely charming.

For three days, accordingly, I wandered about alone. I often thought of Miss Evans and I often fancied I should enjoy certain great pictures none the less for that deep associated contemplation and those fine emanations of assent and dissent which I should have known in her society. I wandered far; I penetrated deep, it seemed to me, into the heart of Venetian power. I shook myself free of the sad and sordid present, and embarked on that silent contemplative sea whose irresistible tides expire at the base of the mighty canvases in the Scuola di San Rocco. But on my return to the hither shore, I always found my sweet young countrywoman waiting to receive me. If Miss Evans had been an immense coquette, she could not have proceeded more cunningly than by this injunction of a three days' absence. During this period, in my imagination, she increased tenfold in value. I don't mean to say that there were not hours together when I quite forgot her, and when I had no heart but for Venice and the lessons of Venice, for the sea and sky

and the great painters and builders. But when my mind had executed one of these great passages of appreciation, it turned with a sudden sense of solitude and lassitude to those gentle hopes, those fragrant hints of intimacy, which clustered about the person of my friend. She remained modestly unclipped by the women of Titian. She was as deeply a woman as they, and yet so much more of a person; as fit as the broadest and blondest to be loved for herself, yet full of serene superiority as an active friend. To the old, old sentiment what an exquisite modern turn she might give! I so far overruled her advice as that, with her father, we made a trio every evening, after the day's labors, at one of Florian's tables. Mr. Evans drank absinthe and discoursed upon the glories of our common country, of which he declared it was high time I should make the acquaintance. He was not the least of a bore: I relished him vastly. He was in many ways an excellent representative American. Without taste, without culture or polish, he nevertheless produced an impression of substance in character, keenness in perception, and intensity in will, which effectually redeemed him from vulgarity. It often seemed to me, in fact, that his good-humored tolerance and easy morality, his rank self-confidence, his nervous decision and vivacity, his fearlessness of either gods or men, combined in proportions of which the union might have been very fairly termed aristocratic. His voice, I admit, was of the nose, nasal; but possibly, in the matter of utterance, one eccentricity is as good as another. At all events, with his clear, cold gray eye, with that just faintly impudent, more than level poise of his ample chin, with those two hard lines which flanked the bristling wings of his gray moustache, with his general expression of unchallenged security and practical aptitude and incurious scorn of tradition, he impressed the sensitive beholder as a man of incontestable force. He was entertaining, too, partly

by wit and partly by position. He was weak only in his love of absinthe. After his first glass he left his chair and strolled about the piazza, looking for possible friends and superbly unconscious of possible enemies. His daughter sat back in her chair, her arms folded, her ungloved hands sustaining them, her prettiness half defined, her voice enhanced and subdued by the

gas-tempered starlight. We had infinite talk. Without question, she had an admirable feminine taste: she was worthy to know Venice. I remember telling her so in a sudden explosion of homage. "You are really worthy to know Venice, Miss Evans. We must learn to know it together. Who knows what hidden treasures we may help each other to find?"

H. James, Jr.

THE INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCE OF MUSIC.

WHATEVER doubt exists concerning the intellectual influence of music is chiefly due either to its alleged vagueness in comparison with speech, or to its emotional and sensuous qualities so seemingly opposed to the calm temper and "pale hue" of thought.

What does it mean? (*Sonata, que veux-tu?*) is asked after a fine sonata, symphony, or song without words, commonly by some one who has not enjoyed it, and who is not musical. It would be hard to tell him, and the interpretations of a dozen really sincere enthusiasts, stirred by it to the bottom of their hearts and fed as with heavenly manna, would be widely apart. The truth is, the meaning of music lies hidden in those deep, mysterious springs of every-day experience, which it were as vain to ignore as it is impossible to render into words. Music is finer than speech, and makes its appeal to a deeper somewhat in us underlying all thoughts of the understanding. Music expresses that part of our best and inmost consciousness, which needs such sympathetic, fluid, one might almost say electric, language as its tones alone afford. For it begins where speech leaves off; through it the inmost spirit — all that is inexpressible and yet of most account in us — can give sign of itself. Hence the loftiest poetry, the most inspired and subtle charm of conversation, in short, that magical some-

thing which distinguishes the utterances of genius in its high hour, in whatsoever form, is analogous to music and sets the fine chords vibrating in somewhat the same way. The higher ranges of Coleridge's conversation are described by his nephew, in the Preface to the "Table-Talk," in terms which one might use who had been sitting under the spell of Mendelssohn or Chopin: "I have seen him at times when you could not incarnate him, — when he shook aside your petty questions or doubts, and burst with some impatience through the obstacles of common conversation. Then, escaped from the flesh, he would soar upwards into an atmosphere almost too rare to breathe, but which seemed proper to *him*, and there he would float at ease. Like enough, what Coleridge then said his subtlest listener would not understand as a man understands a newspaper; but upon such a listener there would steal an influence, and an impression, and a sympathy; there would be a gradual attempering of his body and spirit, till his total being vibrated with one pulse alone, and thought became merged in contemplation: —

"And so, his senses gradually wrapt
In a half-sleep, he'd dream of better worlds,
And dreaming hear thee still, O singing lark,
That sangest like an angel in the clouds!"

Did you never step within the portal
of a vast and crowded church in the

the head Krooman to be very careful.

"O daddy," confidently spoke out Sea Breeze, "no be 'fraid. Sea have plenty sass, it be true, but I be old Krooman, sea know dat; he no fit sass old Sea Breeze." The assured tone of this modern Canute established the heart of our fearful friend, and, whether or no old Ocean acknowledged the skill of this boastful darcy, we rode safely over wave after wave, and, after being as usual carried to the beach on the shoulders of the men, walked among the scenes of the previous day. But how changed! The day of drinking and the day of recovering from drink are widely different from each other. No dancing, no procession, no shouting was there to attract us. Dix Cove was in doors to-day, as yesterday it was out. I had come, however, more with a desire to get acquainted with the place than the people; and with sketch-book in hand I sauntered up the hill to take a view, and then to seek out the stream of the sacred crocodiles, of

which I had heard. This latter, when found, I discovered to be a muddy little creek, fenced on either side with mangroves, and here and there a large tree branching over. Here I saw several of the ugly creatures lazily enjoying a nap in the sun. I wondered if there were anything on earth too repulsive for man to select as an object of worship. This West African Coast has a long list of deities that include, at one place monkeys, at another snakes, at another the insignificant little insect called *mantis*, and here the horrible crocodile. The people come to feed them, so that they are not at all shy, being well acquainted with the human countenance; but what they thought of a white face I do not know. One of our fellow-travellers, fond of sport, proposed shooting one of them, but the outcry was so fierce at the mention of such a thing, that for the safety of his own life he spared that of the crocodile.

We returned again to the vessel, and the next day we saw only sea and sky.

TRAVELLING COMPANIONS.

II.

AT the end of my three days' probation, I spent a week constantly with my friends. Our mornings were, of course, devoted to churches and galleries, and in the late afternoon we passed and repassed along the Grand Canal or betook ourselves to the Lido. By this time Miss Evans and I had become thoroughly intimate; we had learned to know Venice together, and the knowledge had helped us to know each other. In my own mind, Charlotte Evans and Venice had played the game most effectively into each other's hands. If my fancy had been called upon to paint her portrait, my fancy would have sketched her with a background of sunset-flushed palace wall, with a faint

reflected light from the green lagoon playing up into her face. And if I had wished to sketch a Venetian scene, I should have painted it from an open window, with a woman leaning against the casement,—as I had often seen her lean from a window in her hotel. At the end of a week we went one afternoon to the Lido, timing our departure so as to allow us to return at sunset. We went over in silence, Mr. Evans sitting with reverted head, blowing his cigar-smoke against the dazzling sky, which told so fiercely of sea and summer; his daughter motionless and thickly veiled; I facing them, feeling the broken swerve of our gondola, and watching Venice grow level and rosy

beyond the liquid interval. Near the landing-place on the hither side of the Lido is a small *trattoria* for the refreshment of visitors. An arbor outside the door, a horizontal vine checkering still further a dirty table-cloth, a pungent odor of *frittata*, an admiring circle of gondoliers and beggars, are the chief attractions of this suburban house of entertainment, — attractions sufficient, however, to have arrested the inquisitive steps of an elderly American gentleman, in whom Mr. Evans speedily recognized a friend of early years, a comrade in affairs. A hearty greeting ensued. This worthy man had ordered dinner: he besought Mr. Evans at least to sit down and partake of a bottle of wine. My friend vacillated between his duties as a father and the prospect of a rich old-boyish revival of the delectable interests of home; but his daughter graciously came to his assistance. "Sit down with Mr. Munson, talk till you are tired, and then walk over to the beach and find us. We shall not wander beyond call."

She and I accordingly started slowly for a stroll along the barren strand which averts its shining side from Venice and takes the tides of the Adriatic. The Lido has for me a peculiar melancholy charm, and I have often wondered that I should have felt the presence of beauty in a spot so destitute of any exceptional elements of beauty. For beyond the fact that it knows the changing moods and hues of the Adriatic, this narrow strip of sand-stifed verdure has no very rare distinction. In my own country I know many a sandy beach, and many a stunted copse, and many a tremulous ocean line of little less purity and breadth of composition, with far less magical interest. The secret of the Lido is simply your sense of adjacent Venice. It is the salt-sown garden of the city of the sea. Hither came short-paced Venetians for a meagre taste of *terra firma*, or for a wider glimpse of their parent ocean. Along a narrow line in the middle of the island are

market-gardens and breeze-twisted orchards, and a hint of hedges and lanes and inland greenery. At one end is a series of low fortifications duly embanked and moated and sentinelled. Still beyond these, half over-drifted with sand and over-clambered with rank grasses and coarse thick shrubbery, are certain quaintly lettered funereal slabs, tombs of former Jews of Venice. Toward these we slowly wandered and sat down in the grass. Between the sand-heaps, which shut out the beach, we saw in a dozen places the blue agitation of the sea. Over all the scene there brooded the deep bright sadness of early autumn. I lay at my companion's feet and wondered whether I was in love. It seemed to me that I had never been so happy in my life. They say, I know, that to be in love is not pure happiness; that in the mood of the unconfessed, unaccepted lover there is an element of poignant doubt and pain. Should I at once confess myself and taste of the perfection of bliss? It seemed to me that I cared very little for the meaning of her reply. I only wanted to talk of love; I wanted in some manner to enjoy in that atmosphere of romance the woman who was so blessedly fair and wise. It seemed to me that all the agitation of fancy, the excited sense of beauty, the fervor and joy and sadness begotten by my Italian wanderings, had suddenly resolved themselves into a potent demand for expression. Miss Evans was sitting on one of the Hebrew tombs, her chin on her hand, her elbow on her knee, watching the broken horizon. I was stretched on the grass on my side, leaning on my elbow and on my hand, with my eyes on her face. She bent her own eyes and encountered mine; we neither of us spoke or moved, but exchanged a long steady regard; after which her eyes returned to the distance. What was her feeling toward me? Had she any sense of my emotion or of any answering trouble in her own wonderful heart? Suppose she should deny me: should I suffer, would I persist? At any rate, I should have struck

a blow for love. Suppose she were to accept me; would my joy be any greater than in the mere translation of my heart-beats? Did I in truth long merely for a bliss which should be of that hour and that hour alone? I was conscious of an immense respect for the woman beside me. I was unconscious of the least desire even to touch the hem of her garment as it lay on the grass, touching my own. After all, it was but ten days that I had known her. How little I really knew of her! how little else than her beauty and her wit! How little she knew of me, of my vast out-lying, unsentimental, spiritual self! We knew hardly more of each other than had appeared in this narrow circle of our common impressions of Venice. And yet if into such a circle Love had forced his way, let him take his way! Let him widen the circle! Transcendent Venice! I rose to my feet with a violent movement, and walked ten steps away. I came back and flung myself again on the grass.

"The other day at Vicenza," I said, "I bought a picture."

"Ah? an 'original'?"

"No, a copy."

"From whom?"

"From you!"

She blushed. "What do you mean?"

"It was a little pretended Correggio; a Madonna and Child."

"Is it good?"

"No, it's rather poor."

"Why, then, did you buy it?"

"Because the Madonna looked singularly like you."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Brooke, you had n't a better reason. I hope the picture was cheap."

"It was quite reason enough. I admire you more than any woman in the world."

She looked at me a moment, blushing again. "You don't know me."

"I have a suspicion of you. It's ground enough for admiration."

"O, don't talk about admiration. I'm tired of it all beforehand."

"Well, then," said I, "I'm in love."

"Not with me, I hope."

"With you, of course. With whom else?"

"Has it only just now occurred to you?"

"It has just occurred to me to say it."

Her blush had deepened a little; but a genuine smile came to its relief.

"Poor Mr. Brooke!" she said.

"Poor Mr. Brooke indeed, if you take it in that way."

"You must forgive me if I doubt of your love."

"Why should you doubt?"

"Love, I fancy, does n't come in just this way."

"It comes as it can. This is surely a very good way."

"I know it's a very pretty way, Mr. Brooke; Venice behind us, the Adriatic before us, these old Hebrew tombs! Its very prettiness makes me distrust it."

"Do you believe only in the love that is born in darkness and pain? Poor love! it has trouble enough, first and last. Allow it a little ease."

"Listen," said Miss Evans, after a pause. "It's not with me you're in love, but with that painted picture. All this Italian beauty and delight has thrown you into a romantic state of mind. You wish to make it perfect. I happen to be at hand, so you say, 'Go to, I'll fall in love.' And you fancy me, for the purpose, a dozen fine things that I'm not."

"I fancy you beautiful and good. I'm sorry to find you so dogmatic."

"You must n't abuse me, or we shall be getting serious."

"Well," said I, "you can't prevent me from adoring you."

"I should be very sorry to. So long as you 'adore' me, we're safe! I can tell you better things than that I'm in love with you."

I looked at her impatiently. "For instance?"

She held out her hand. "I like you immensely. As for love, I'm in love with Venice."

"Well, I like Venice immensely, but I'm in love with you."

"In that way I am willing to leave

it. Pray don't speak of it again to-day. But my poor father is probably wandering up to his knees in the sand."

I had been happy before, but I think I was still happier for the words I had spoken. I had cast them abroad at all events; my heart was richer by a sense of their possible fruition. We walked far along the beach. Mr. Evans was still with his friend.

"What is beyond that horizon?" said my companion.

"Greece, among other things."

"Greece! only think of it! Shall you never go there?"

I stopped short. "If you will believe what I say, Miss Evans, we may both go there." But for all answer she repeated her request that I should forbear. Before long, retracing our steps, we met Mr. Evans, who had parted with his friend, the latter having returned to Venice. He had arranged to start the next morning for Milan. We went back over the lagoon in the glow of the sunset, in a golden silence which suffered us to hear the far-off ripple in the wake of other gondolas, a golden clearness so perfect that the rosy flush on the marble palaces seemed as light and pure as the life-blood on the forehead of a sleeping child. There is no Venice like the Venice of that magical hour. For that brief period her ancient glory returns. The sky arches over her like a vast imperial canopy crowded with its clustering mysteries of light. Her whole aspect is one of unspotted splendor. No other city takes the crimson evanescence of day with such magnificent effect. The lagoon is sheeted with a carpet of fire. All torpid, pallid hues of marble are transmuted to a golden glow. The dead Venetian tone brightens and quickens into life and lustre, and the spectator's enchanted vision seems to rest on an embodied dream of the great painter who wrought his immortal reveries into the ceilings of the Ducal Palace.

It was not till the second day after this that I again saw Miss Evans. I went to the little church of San Casiano, to see a famous Tintoretto, to

which I had already made several vain attempts to obtain access. At the door in the little bustling *campo* which adjoins the church I found her standing expectant. A little boy, she told me, had gone for the sacristan and his key. Her father, she proceeded to explain, had suddenly been summoned to Milan by a telegram from Mr. Munson, the friend whom he had met at the Lido, who had suddenly been taken ill.

"And so you're going about alone? Do you think that's altogether proper? Why didn't you send for me?" I stood lost in wonder and admiration at the exquisite dignity of her self-support. I had heard of American girls doing such things; but I had yet to see them done. "Do you think it less proper for me to go about alone than to send for you? Venice has seen so many worse improprieties that she'll forgive me mine."

The little boy arrived with the sacristan and his key, and we were ushered into the presence of Tintoretto's Crucifixion. This great picture is one of the greatest of the Venetian school. Tintoretto, the travelled reader will remember, has painted two masterpieces on this tremendous theme. The larger and more complex work is at the Scuola di San Rocco; the one of which I speak is small, simple, and sublime. It occupies the left side of the narrow choir of the shabby little church which we had entered, and is remarkable as being, with two or three exceptions, the best preserved work of its incomparable author. Never, in the whole range of art, I imagine, has so powerful an effect been produced by means so simple and select; never has the intelligent choice of means to an effect been pursued with such a refinement of perception. The picture offers to our sight the very central essence of the great tragedy which it depicts. There is no swooning Madonna, no consoling Magdalen, no mockery of contrast, no cruelty of an assembled host. We behold the silent summit of Calvary. To the right are the three crosses, that of the Saviour foremost. A ladder pitched against it supports a turbaned execu-

tioner, who bends downward to receive the sponge offered him by a comrade. Above the crest of the hill the helmets and spears of a line of soldiery complete the grimness of the scene. The reality of the picture is beyond all words: it is hard to say which is more impressive, the naked horror of the fact represented, or the sensible power of the artist. You breathe a silent prayer of thanks that you, for your part, are without the terrible clairvoyance of genius. We sat and looked at the picture in silence. The sacristan loitered about; but finally, weary of waiting, he retired to the *campo* without. I observed my companion: pale, motionless, oppressed, she evidently felt with poignant sympathy the commanding force of the work. At last I spoke to her; receiving no answer, I repeated my question. She rose to her feet and turned her face upon me, illumined with a vivid ecstasy of pity. Then passing me rapidly, she descended into the aisle of the church, dropped into a chair, and, burying her face in her hands, burst into an agony of sobs. Having allowed time for her feeling to expend itself, I went to her and recommended her not to let the day close on this painful emotion. "Come with me to the Ducal Palace," I said; "let us look at the Rape of Europa." But before departing we went back to our Tintoretto, and gave it another solemn half-hour. Miss Evans repeated aloud a dozen verses from St. Mark's Gospel. "What is it here," I asked, "that has moved you most, the painter or the subject?"

"I suppose it's the subject. And you?"

"I'm afraid it's the painter."

We went to the Ducal Palace, and immediately made our way to that transcendent shrine of light and grace, the room which contains the masterpiece of Paul Veronese, and the Bacchus and Ariadne of his solemn comrade. I steeped myself with unprotesting joy in the gorgeous glow and salubrity of that radiant scene, wherein, against her bosky screen of immortal

verdure, the rosy-footed, pearl-circled, nymph-flattered victim of a divine delusion rustles her lustrous satin against the ambrosial hide of bovine Jove. "It makes one think more agreeably of life," I said to my friend, "that such visions have blessed the eyes of men of mortal mould. What has been may be again. We may yet dream as brightly, and some few of us translate our dreams as freely."

"This, I think, is the brighter dream of the two," she answered, indicating the Bacchus and Ariadne. Miss Evans, on the whole, was perhaps right. In Tintoretto's picture there is no shimmer of drapery, no splendor of flowers and gems; nothing but the broad, bright glory of deep-toned sea and sky, and the shining purity and symmetry of deified human flesh. "What do you think," asked my companion, "of the painter of that tragedy at San Cassiano being also the painter of this dazzling idyl; of the great painter of darkness being also the great painter of light?"

"He was a colorist! Let us thank the great man, and be colorists too. To understand this Bacchus and Ariadne we ought to spend a long day on the lagoon, beyond sight of Venice. Will you come to-morrow to Torcello?" The proposition seemed to me audacious; I was conscious of blushing a little as I made it. Miss Evans looked at me and pondered. She then replied with great calmness that she preferred to wait for her father, the excursion being one that he would probably enjoy. "Will you come, then, — somewhere?" I asked.

Again she pondered. Suddenly her face brightened. "I should very much like to go to Padua. It would bore my poor father to go. I fancy he would thank you for taking me. I should be almost willing," she said with a smile, "to go alone."

It was easily arranged that on the morrow we should go for the day to Padua. Miss Evans was certainly an American to perfection. Nothing remained for me, as the good American which I aspired to be, but implicitly to

respect her confidence. To Padua, by an early train, we accordingly went. The day stands out in my memory delightfully curious and rich. Padua is a wonderful little city. Miss Evans was an excellent walker, and, thanks to the broad arcades which cover the footways in the streets, we rambled for hours in perpetual shade. We spent an hour at the famous church of St. Anthony, which boasts one of the richest and holiest shrines in all church-burdened Italy. The whole edifice is nobly and darkly ornate and picturesque, but the chapel of its patron saint — a wondrous combination of chiselled gold and silver and alabaster and perpetual flame — splendidly outshines and outshadows the rest. In all Italy, I think, the idea of palpable, material sanctity is nowhere more potently enforced.

"O the Church, the Church!" murmured Miss Evans, as we stood contemplating.

"What a real pity," I said, "that we are not Catholics; that that dazzling monument is not something more to us than a mere splendid show! What a different thing this visiting of churches would be for us, if we occasionally felt the prompting to fall on our knees. I begin to grow ashamed of this perpetual attitude of bald curiosity. What a pleasant thing it must be, in such a church as this, for two good friends to say their prayers together!"

"*Ecco!*" said Miss Evans. Two persons had approached the glittering shrine, — a young woman of the middle class and a man of her own rank, some ten years older, dressed with a good deal of cheap elegance. The woman dropped on her knees; her companion fell back a few steps, and stood gazing idly at the chapel. "Poor girl!" said my friend, "she believes; he doubts."

"He does n't look like a doubter. He's a vulgar fellow. They're a betrothed pair, I imagine. She is very pretty." She had turned round and flung at her companion a liquid glance of entreaty. He appeared not to observe it; but in a few moments he

slowly approached her, and bent a single knee at her side. When presently they rose to their feet, she passed her arm into his with a beautiful, unsuppressed lovingness. As they passed us, looking at us from the clear darkness of their Italian brows, I keenly envied them. "They are better off than we," I said. "Be they husband and wife, or lovers, or simply friends, we, I think, are rather vulgar beside them."

"My dear Mr. Brooke," said Miss Evans, "go by all means and say your prayers." And she walked away to the other side of the church. Whether I obeyed her injunction or not, I feel under no obligation to report. I rejoined her at the beautiful frescoed chapel in the opposite transept. She was sitting listlessly turning over the leaves of her Murray. "I suppose," she said, after a few moments, "that nothing is more vulgar than to make a noise about having been called vulgar. But really, Mr. Brooke, don't call me so again. I have been of late so fondly fancying I am not vulgar."

"My dear Miss Evans, you are —"

"Come, nothing vulgar!"

"You're divine!"

"*A la bonne heure!* Divinities need n't pray. They are prayed to."

I have no space and little power to enumerate and describe the various curiosities of Padua. I think we saw them all. We left the best, however, for the last, and repaired in the late afternoon, after dining fraternally at a restaurant, to the Chapel of Giotto. This little empty church, standing unshaded and forlorn in the homely market-garden which was once a Roman arena, offers one of the deepest lessons of Italian travel. Its four walls are covered, almost from base to ceiling, with that wonderful series of dramatic paintings which usher in the golden prime of Italian art. I had been so ill-informed as to fancy that to talk about Giotto was to make more or less of a fool of one's self, and that he was the especial property of the mere sentimentalists of criticism. But you no sooner cross the threshold of that little

ruinous temple—a mere empty shell, but coated as with the priceless substance of fine pearls and vocal with a murmured eloquence as from the infinite of art—than you perceive with whom you have to deal: a complete painter of the very strongest sort. In one respect, assuredly, Giotto has never been surpassed,—in the art of presenting a story. The amount of dramatic expression compressed into those quaint little scenic squares would equip a thousand later masters. How, beside him, they seem to fumble and grope and trifle! And he, beside them, how direct he seems, how essential, how masculine! What a solid simplicity, what an immediate purity and grace! The exhibition suggested to my friend and me more wise reflections than we had the skill to utter. “Happy, happy art,” we said, as we seemed to see it beneath Giotto’s hand tremble and thrill and sparkle, almost, with a presentiment of its immense career, “for the next two hundred years what a glorious felicity will be yours!” The chapel door stood open into the sunny corn-field, and the lazy litter of verdure enclosed by the crumbling oval of Roman masonry. A loutish boy who had come with the key lounged on a bench, awaiting tribute, and gazing at us as we gazed. The ample light flooded the inner precinct, and lay hot upon the coarse, pale surface of the painted wall. There seemed an irresistible pathos in such a combination of shabbiness and beauty. I thought of this subsequently at the beautiful Museum at Bologna, where mediocrity is so richly enshrined. Nothing that we had yet seen together had filled us with so deep a sense of enjoyment. We stared, we laughed, we wept almost, we raved with a decent delight. We went over the little compartments one by one: we lingered and returned and compared; we studied; we melted together in unanimous homage. At last the light began to fade and the little saintly figures to grow quaint and terrible in the gathering dusk. The loutish boy had transferred himself sig-

nificantly to the door-post: we lingered for a farewell glance.

“Mr. Brooke,” said my companion, “we ought to learn from all this to be *real*; real even as Giotto is real; to discriminate between genuine and factitious sentiment; between the substantial and the trivial; between the essential and the superfluous; sentiment and sentimentality.”

“You speak,” said I, “with appalling wisdom and truth. You strike a chill to my heart of hearts.”

She spoke unsmiling, with a slightly contracted brow and an apparent sense of effort. She blushed as I gazed at her.

“Well,” she said, “I’m extremely glad to have been here. Good, wise Giotto! I should have liked to know you.—Nay, let me pay the boy.” I saw the piece she put into his hand; he was stupefied by its magnitude.

“We shall not have done Padua,” I said, as we left the garden, “unless we have been to the Caffè Pedrocchi. Come to the Caffè Pedrocchi. We have more than an hour before our train,—time to eat an ice.” So we drove to the Caffè Pedrocchi, the most respectable *café* in the world; a *café* monumental, scholastic, classical.

We sat down at one of the tables on the cheerful external platform, which is washed by the gentle tide of Paduan life. When we had finished our ices, Miss Evans graciously allowed me a cigar. How it came about I hardly remember, but, prompted by some happy accident of talk, and gently encouraged perhaps by my smoke-wreathed quietude, she lapsed, with an exquisite feminine reserve, into a delicate autobiographical strain. For a moment she became egotistical; but with a modesty, a dignity, a lightness of touch which filled my eyes with admiring tears. She spoke of her home, her family, and the few events of her life. She had lost her mother in her early years; her two sisters had married young; she and her father were equally united by affection and habit. Upon one theme she touched, in regard to

which I should be at loss to say whether her treatment told more, by its frankness, of our friendship, or, by its reticence, of her modesty. She spoke of having been engaged, and of having lost her betrothed in the Civil War. She made no story of it; but I felt from her words that she had tasted of sorrow. Having finished my cigar, I was proceeding to light another. She drew out her watch. Our train was to leave at eight o'clock. It was now a quarter past. There was no later evening train.

The reader will understand that I tell the simple truth when I say that our situation was most disagreeable and that we were deeply annoyed. "Of course," said I, "you are utterly disgusted."

She was silent. "I am extremely sorry," she said, at last, just vanquishing a slight tremor in her voice.

"Murray says the hotel is good," I suggested.

She made no answer. Then, rising to her feet, "Let us go immediately," she said. We drove to the principal inn and bespoke our rooms. Our want of luggage provoked, of course, a certain amount of visible surprise. This, however, I fancy, was speedily merged in a more flattering emotion, when my companion, having communed with the chambermaid, sent her forth with a list of purchases.

We separated early. "I hope," said I, as I bade her good night, "that you will be fairly comfortable."

She had recovered her equanimity. "I have no doubt of it."

"Good night."

"Good night." Thank God, I silently added, for the dignity of American women. Knowing to what suffering a similar accident would have subjected a young girl of the orthodox European training, I felt devoutly grateful that among my own people a woman and her reputation are more indissolubly one. And yet I was unable to detach myself from my Old-World associations effectually enough not to wonder whether, after all, Miss

Evans's calmness might not be the simple calmness of despair. The miserable words rose to my lips, "Is she Compromised?" If she were, of course, as far as I was concerned, there was but one possible sequel to our situation.

We met the next morning at breakfast. She assured me that she had slept, but I doubted it. I myself had not closed my eyes, — not from the excitement of vanity. — Owing partly, I suppose, to a natural reaction against our continuous talk on the foregoing day, our return to Venice was attended with a good deal of silence. I wondered whether it was a mere fancy that Miss Evans was pensive, appealing, sombre. As we entered the gondola to go from the railway station to the Hotel Danieli, she asked me to request the gondoliers to pass along the Canalezzo rather than through the short cuts of the smaller canals. "I feel as if I were coming home," she said, as we floated beneath the lovely façade of the Ca' Doro. Suddenly she laid her hand on my arm. "It seems to me," she said, "that I should like to stop for Mrs. L——," and she mentioned the wife of the American Consul. "I have promised to show her some jewelry. This is a particularly good time. I shall ask her to come home with me." We stopped accordingly at the American Consulate. Here we found, on inquiry, to my great regret, that the Consul and his wife had gone for a week to the Lake of Como. For a moment my companion meditated. Then, "To the hotel," she said with decision. Our arrival attracted apparently little notice. I went with Miss Evans to the door of her father's sitting-room, where we met a servant, who informed us with inscrutable gravity that Monsieur had returned the evening before, but that he had gone out after breakfast and had not reappeared.

"Poor father," she said. "It was very stupid of me not to have left a note for him." I urged that our absence for the night was not to have been foreseen, and that Mr. Evans had

in all likelihood very plausibly explained it. I withdrew with a handshake and permission to return in the evening.

I went to my hotel and slept, a long, sound, dreamless sleep. In the afternoon I called my gondola, and went over to the Lido. I crossed to the outer shore and sought the spot where a few days before I had lain at the feet of Charlotte Evans. I stretched myself on the grass and fancied her present. To say that I *thought* would be to say at once more and less than the literal truth. I was in a tremulous glow of feeling. I listened to the muffled rupture of the tide, vaguely conscious of my beating heart. Was I or was I not in love? I was able to settle nothing. I wandered musingly further and further from the point. Every now and then, with a deeper pulsation of the heart, I would return to it, but only to start afresh and follow some wire-drawn thread of fancy to a nebulous goal of doubt. That she was a most lovely woman seemed to me of all truths the truest, but it was a hard-featured fact of the senses rather than a radiant mystery of faith. I felt that I was not possessed by a passion; perhaps I was incapable of passion. At last, weary of self-bewilderment, I left the spot and wandered beside the sea. It seemed to speak more musingly than ever of the rapture of motion and freedom. Beyond the horizon was Greece, beyond and below was the wondrous Southern world which blooms about the margin of the Midland Sea. To marry, somehow, meant to abjure all this, and in the prime of youth and manhood to sink into obscurity and care. For a moment there stirred in my heart a feeling of anger and pain. Perhaps, after all, I *was* in love!

I went straight across the lagoon to the Hotel Danieli, and as I approached it I became singularly calm and collected. From below I saw Miss Evans alone on her balcony, watching the sunset. She received me with perfect friendly composure. Her

father had again gone out, but she had told him of my coming, and he was soon to return. He had not been painfully alarmed at her absence, having learned through a chambermaid, to whom she had happened to mention her intention, that she had gone for the day to Padua.

"And what have you been doing all day?" I asked.

"Writing letters, — long, tiresome, descriptive letters. I have also found a volume of Hawthorne, and have been reading 'Rappacini's Daughter.' You know the scene is laid in Padua." And what had I been doing?

Whether I was in a passion of love or not, I was enough in love to be very illogical. I was disappointed, Heaven knows why! that she should have been able to spend her time in this wholesome fashion. "I have been at the Lido, at the Hebrew tombs, where we sat the other day, thinking of what you told me there."

"What I told you?"

"That you liked me immensely."

She smiled; but now that she smiled, I fancied I saw in the movement of her face an undercurrent of pain. Had the peace of her heart been troubled? "You need n't have gone so far away to think of it."

"It's very possible," I said, "that I shall have to think of it, in days to come, farther away still."

"Other places, Mr. Brooke, will bring other thoughts."

"Possibly. This place has brought that one." At what prompting it was that I continued I hardly know; I *would* tell her that I loved her. "I value it beyond all other thoughts."

"I do like you, Mr. Brooke. Let it rest there."

"It may rest there for you. It can't for me. It begins there! Don't refuse to understand me."

She was silent. Then, bending her eyes on me, "Perhaps," she said, "I understand you too well."

"O, in Heaven's name, don't play at coldness and scepticism!"

She dropped her eyes gravely on a

bracelet which she locked and unlocked on her wrist. "I think," she said, without raising them, "you had better leave Venice." I was about to reply, but the door opened and Mr. Evans came in. From his hard, grizzled brow he looked at us in turn; then, greeting me with an extended hand, he spoke to his daughter.

"I have forgotten my cigar-case. Be so good as to fetch it from my dressing-table."

For a moment Miss Evans hesitated and cast upon him a faint protesting glance. Then she lightly left the room. He stood holding my hand, with a very sensible firmness, with his eyes on mine. Then, laying his other hand heavily on my shoulder, "Mr. Brooke," he said, "I believe you are an honest man."

"I hope so," I answered.

He paused, and I felt his steady gray eyes. "How the devil," he said, "came you to be left at Padua?"

"The explanation is a very simple one. Your daughter must have told you."

"I have thought best to talk very little to my daughter about it."

"Do you regard it, Mr. Evans," I asked, "as a very serious calamity?"

"I regard it as an infernally disagreeable thing. It seems that the whole hotel is talking about it. There is a little beast of an Italian down stairs—"

"Your daughter, I think, was not seriously discomposed."

"My daughter is a d—d proud woman!"

"I can assure you that my esteem for her is quite equal to your own."

"What does that mean, Mr. Brooke?" I was about to answer, but Miss Evans reappeared. Her father, as he took his cigar-case from her, looked at her intently, as if he were on the point of speaking, but the words remained on his lips, and, declaring that he would be back in half an hour, he left the room.

His departure was followed by a long silence.

"Miss Evans," I said, at last, "will you be my wife?"

She looked at me with a certain firm resignation. "Do you *feel* that, Mr. Brooke? Do you know what you ask?"

"Most assuredly."

"Will you rest content with my answer?"

"It depends on what your answer is."

She was silent.

"I should like to know what my father said to you in my absence."

"You had better learn from himself."

"I think I know. Poor father!"

"But you give me no answer," I rejoined, after a pause.

She frowned a little. "Mr. Brooke," she said, "you disappoint me."

"Well, I'm sorry. Don't revenge yourself by disappointing me."

"I fancied that I had answered your proposal; that I had, at least, anticipated it, the other day at the Lido."

"O, that was very good for the other day; but do give me something different now."

"I doubt of your being more in earnest to-day than then."

"It seems to suit you wonderfully well to doubt!"

"I thank you for the honor of your proposal: but I can't be your wife, Mr. Brooke."

"That's the answer with which you ask me to remain satisfied!"

"Let me repeat what I said just now. You had better leave Venice, otherwise we must leave it."

"Ah, that's easy to say!"

"You mustn't think me unkind or cynical. You have done your duty."

"My duty, — what duty?"

"Come," she said, with a beautiful blush and the least attempt at a smile, "you imagine that I have suffered an injury by my being left with you at Padua. I don't believe in such injuries."

"No more do I."

"Then there is even less wisdom than before in your proposal. But I

strongly suspect that if we had not missed the train at Padua, you would not have made it. There is an idea of reparation in it.—O Sir!” And she shook her head with a deepening smile.

“If I had flattered myself that it lay in my power to do you an injury,” I replied, “I should now be rarely disenchanted. As little almost as to do you a benefit!”

“You have loaded me with benefits. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I may be very unreasonable, but if I had doubted of my having to decline your offer three days ago, I should have quite ceased to doubt this evening.”

“You are an excessively proud woman. I can tell you that.”

“Possibly. But I’m not as proud as you think. I believe in my common sense.”

“I wish that for five minutes you had a grain of imagination!”

“If only for the same five minutes you were without it. You have too much, Mr. Brooke. You imagine you love me.”

“Poor fool that I am!”

“You imagine that I’m charming. I assure you I’m not in the least. Here in Venice I have not been myself at all. You should see me at home.”

“Upon my word, Miss Evans, you remind me of a German philosopher. I have not the least objection to seeing you at home.”

“Don’t fancy that I think lightly of your offer. But we have been living, Mr. Brooke, in poetry. Marriage is stern prose. Do let me bid you farewell!”

I took up my hat. “I shall go from here to Rome and Naples,” I said. “I must leave Florence for the last. I shall write you from Rome and of course see you there.”

“I hope not. I had rather not meet you again in Italy. It perverts our dear good old American truth!”

“Do you really propose to bid me a final farewell?”

She hesitated a moment. “When do you return home?”

“Some time in the spring.”

“Very well. If a year hence, in America, you are still of your present mind, I shall not decline to see you. I feel very safe! If you are not of your present mind, of course I shall be still more happy. Farewell.” She put out her hand; I took it.

“Beautiful, wonderful woman!” I murmured.

“That’s rank poetry! Farewell!”

I raised her hand to my lips and released it in silence. At this point Mr. Evans reappeared, considering apparently that his half-hour was up. “Are you going?” he asked.

“Yes. I start to-morrow for Rome.”

“The deuce! Daughter, when are we to go?”

She moved her hand over her forehead, and a sort of nervous tremor seemed to pass through her limbs. “O, you must take me home!” she said. “I’m horribly home-sick!” She flung her arms round his neck and buried her head on his shoulder. Mr. Evans with a movement of his head dismissed me.

At the top of the staircase, however, he overtook me. “You made your offer!” And he passed his arm into mine.

“Yes!”

“And she refused you?” I nodded. He looked at me, squeezing my arm. “By Jove, sir, if she had accepted—”

“Well!” said I, stopping.

“Why, it would n’t in the least have suited me! Not that I don’t esteem you. The whole house shall see it.” With his arm in mine we passed down stairs, through the hall, to the landing-place, where he called his own gondola and requested me to use it. He bade me farewell with a kindly hand-shake, and the assurance that I was too “nice a fellow not to keep as a friend.”

I think, on the whole, that my uppermost feeling was a sense of freedom and relief. It seemed to me on my journey to Florence that I had started afresh, and was regarding things with less of nervous rapture than before, but more of sober insight. Of Miss Evans I forbade myself to think. In

my deepest heart I admitted the truth, the partial truth at least, of her assertion of the unreality of my love. The reality I believed would come. The way to hasten its approach was, meanwhile, to study, to watch, to observe, — doubtless even to enjoy. I certainly enjoyed Florence and the three days I spent there. But I shall not attempt to deal with Florence in a parenthesis. I subsequently saw that divine little city under circumstances which peculiarly colored and shaped it. In Rome, to begin with, I spent a week and went down to Naples, dragging the heavy Roman chain which she rivets about your limbs forever. In Naples I discovered the real South — the Southern South, — in art, in nature, in man, and the least bit in woman. A German lady, an old kind friend, had given me a letter to a Neapolitan lady whom she assured me she held in high esteem. The Signora B—— was at Sorrento, where I presented my letter. It seemed to me that “esteem” was not exactly the word; but the Signora B—— was charming. She assured me on my first visit that she was a “true Neapolitan,” and I think, on the whole, she was right. She told me that I was a true German, but in this she was altogether wrong. I spent four days in her house; on one of them we went to Capri, where the Signora had an infant — her only one — at nurse. We saw the Blue Grotto, the Tiberian ruins, the tarantella and the infant, and returned late in the evening by moonlight. The Signora sang on the water in a magnificent contralto. As I looked upward at Northern Italy, it seemed, in contrast, a cold, dark hyperborean clime, a land of order, conscience, and virtue. How my heart went out to that brave, rich, compact little Verona! How there Nature seemed to have mixed her colors with potent oil, instead of as here with crystalline water, drawn though it was from the Neapolitan Bay! But in Naples, too, I pursued my plan of vigilance and study. I spent long mornings at the Museum and learned to know Pompei; I wrote once to Miss

Evans, about the statues in the Museum, without a word of wooing, but received no answer. It seemed to me that I returned to Rome a wiser man. It was the middle of October when I reached it. Unless Mr. Evans had altered his programme, he would at this moment be passing down to Naples.

A fortnight elapsed without my hearing of him, during which I was in the full fever of initiation into Roman wonders. I had been introduced to an old German archæologist, with whom I spent a series of memorable days in the exploration of ruins and the study of the classical topography. I thought, I lived, I ate and drank, in Latin, and German Latin at that. But I remember with especial delight certain long lonely rides on the Campagna. The weather was perfect. Nature seemed only to slumber, ready to wake far on the hither side of wintry death. From time to time, after a passionate gallop, I would pull up my horse on the slope of some pregnant mound and embrace with the ecstasy of quickened senses the tragical beauty of the scene; strain my ear to the soft low silence, pity the dark dishonored plain, watch the heavens come rolling down in tides of light, and breaking in waves of fire against the massive stillness of temples and tombs. The aspect of all this sunny solitude and haunted vacancy used to fill me with a mingled sense of exaltation and dread. There were moments when my fancy swept that vast funereal desert with passionate curiosity and desire, moments when it felt only its potent sweetness and its high historic charm. But there were other times when the air seemed so heavy with the exhalation of unburied death, so bright with sheeted ghosts, that I turned short about and galloped back to the city. One afternoon after I had indulged in one of these super-sensitive flights on the Campagna, I betook myself to St. Peter's. It was shortly before the opening of the recent Council, and the city was filled with foreign ecclesiastics, the increase being of course especially noticeable in the

churches. At St. Peter's they were present in vast numbers; great armies encamped in prayer on the marble plains of its pavement: an inexhaustible physiognomical study. Scattered among them were squads of little tanned neophytes, clad in scarlet, marching and counter-marching, and ducking and flapping, like poor little raw recruits for the heavenly host. I had never before, I think, received an equal impression of the greatness of this church of churches, or, standing beneath the dome, beheld such a vision of erected altitude,—of the builded sublime. I lingered awhile near the brazen image of St. Peter, observing the steady procession of his devotees. Near me stood a lady in mourning, watching with a weary droop of the head the grotesque deposition of kisses. A peasant-woman advanced with the file of the faithful and lifted up her little girl to the well-worn toe. With a sudden movement of impatience the lady turned away, so that I saw her face to face. She was strikingly pale, but as her eyes met mine the blood rushed into her cheeks. This lonely mourner was Miss Evans. I advanced to her with an outstretched hand. Before she spoke I had guessed at the truth.

"You're in sorrow and trouble!"

She nodded, with a look of simple gravity.

"Why in the world haven't you written to me?"

"There was no use. I seem to have sufficed to myself."

"Indeed, you have not sufficed to yourself. You are pale and worn; you look wretchedly." She stood silent, looking about her with an air of vague unrest. "I have as yet heard nothing," I said. "Can you speak of it?"

"O Mr. Brooke!" she said with a simple sadness that went to my heart. I drew her hand through my arm and led her to the extremity of the left transept of the church. We sat down together, and she told me of her father's death. It had happened ten days before, in consequence of a severe apoplectic stroke. He had been ill but a single

day, and had remained unconscious from first to last. The American physician had been extremely kind, and had relieved her of all care and responsibility. His wife had strongly urged her to come and stay in their house, until she should have determined what to do; but she had preferred to remain at her hotel. She had immediately furnished herself with an attendant in the person of a French maid, who had come with her to the church and was now at confession. At first she had wished greatly to leave Rome, but now that the first shock of grief had passed away she found it suited her mood to linger on from day to day. "On the whole," she said, with a sober smile, "I have got through it all rather easily than otherwise. The common cares and necessities of life operate strongly to interrupt and dissipate one's grief. I shall feel my loss more when I get home again." Looking at her while she talked, I found a pitiful difference between her words and her aspect. Her pale face, her wilful smile, her spiritless gestures, spoke most forcibly of loneliness and weakness. Over this gentle weakness and dependence I secretly rejoiced; I felt in my heart an immense uprising of pity,—of the pity that goes hand in hand with love. At its bidding I hastily, vaguely sketched a magnificent scheme of devotion and protection.

"When I think of what you have been through," I said, "my heart stands still for very tenderness. Have you made any plans?" She shook her head with such a perfection of helplessness that I broke into a sort of rage of compassion: "One of the last things your father said to me was that you are a very proud woman."

She colored faintly. "I may have been! But there is not among the most abject peasants who stand kissing St. Peter's foot a creature more bowed in humility than I."

"How did you expect to make that weary journey home?"

She was silent a moment and her eyes filled with tears. "O don't cross-

question me, Mr. Brooke!" she softly cried; "I expected nothing. I was waiting for my stronger self."

"Perhaps your stronger self has come." She rose to her feet as if she had not heard me, and went forward to meet her maid. This was a decent, capable-looking person, with a great deal of apparent deference of manner. As I rejoined them, Miss Evans prepared to bid me farewell. "You have n't yet asked me to come and see you," I said.

"Come, but not too soon?"

"What do you call too soon? This evening?"

"Come to-morrow." She refused to allow me to go with her to her carriage. I followed her, however, at a short interval, and went as usual to my restaurant to dine. I remember that my dinner cost me ten francs,—it usually cost me five. Afterwards, as usual, I adjourned to the *Caffè Greco*, where I met my German archæologist. He discoursed with even more than his wonted sagacity and eloquence; but at the end of half an hour he rapped his fist on the table and asked me what the deuce was the matter; he would wager I had n't heard a word of what he said.

I went forth the next morning into the Roman streets, doubting heavily of my being able to exist until evening without seeing Miss Evans. I felt, however, that it was due to her to make the effort. To help myself through the morning, I went into the *Borghese Gallery*. The great treasure of this collection is a certain masterpiece of Titian. I entered the room in which it hangs by the door facing the picture. The room was empty, save that before the great Titian, beside the easel of an absent copyist, stood a young woman in mourning. This time, in spite of her averted head, I immediately knew her and noiselessly approached her. The picture is one of the finest of its admirable author,—rich and simple and brilliant with the true Venetian fire. It

unites the charm of an air of latent symbolism with a steadfast splendor and solid perfection of design. Beside a low sculptured well sit two young and beautiful women: one richly clad, and full of mild dignity and repose; the other with unbound hair, naked, ungirdled by a great reverted mantle of Venetian purple, and radiant with the frankest physical sweetness and grace. Between them a little winged cherub bends forward and thrusts his chubby arm into the well. The picture glows with the inscrutable chemistry of the prince of colorists.

"Does it remind you of Venice?" I said, breaking a long silence, during which she had not noticed me.

She turned and her face seemed bright with reflected color. We spoke awhile of common things; she had come alone. "What an emotion, for one who has loved Venice," she said, "to meet a Titian in other lands."

"They call it," I answered,—and as I spoke my heart was in my throat,— "a representation of Sacred and Profane Love. The name perhaps roughly expresses its meaning. The serious, stately woman is the likeness, one may say, of love as an experience,—the gracious, impudent goddess of love as a sentiment; this of the passion that fancies, the other of the passion that knows." And as I spoke I passed my arm, in its strength, around her waist. She let her head sink on my shoulders and looked up into my eyes.

"One may stand for the love I denied," she said; "and the other—"

"The other," I murmured, "for the love which, with this kiss, you accept." I drew her arm into mine, and before the envious eyes that watched us from gilded casements we passed through the gallery and left the palace. We went that afternoon to the *Pamfilio-Doria Villa*. Saying just now that my stay in Florence was peculiarly colored by circumstances, I meant that I was there with my wife.

H. James Jr.