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CHAPTER I

On a brilliant day in May, in the year 1868, a gentleman was reclining at his ease on the great circular divan which at that period occupied the centre of the Salon Carré, in the Museum of the Louvre. This commodious ottoman has since been removed, to the extreme regret of all weak-kneed lovers of the fine arts, but the gentleman in question had taken serene possession of its softest spot, and, with his head thrown back and his legs outstretched, was staring at Murillo's beautiful moon-borne Madonna in profound enjoyment of his posture. He had removed his hat, and flung down beside him a little red guide-book and an opera-glass. The day was warm; he was heated with walking, and he repeatedly passed his handkerchief over his forehead, with a somewhat wearied gesture. And yet he was evidently not a man to whom fatigue was familiar; long, lean, and muscular, he suggested the sort of vigor that is commonly known as "toughness." But his exertions on this particular day had been of an unwonted sort, and he had performed great physical feats which left him less jaded than his tranquil stroll through the Louvre. He had looked out all the pictures to which an asterisk was affixed in those formidable pages of fine print in his Bädeker; his attention had been strained and his eyes dazzled, and he had sat down with an æsthetic headache. He had looked, moreover, not only at all the pictures, but at all the copies that were going forward around them, in the hands of those innumerable young women in irreproachable toilets who devote themselves, in France, to the propagation of masterpieces, and if the truth must be told, he had often admired the copy much more than the original. His physiognomy would have sufficiently indicated that he was a shrewd and capable fellow, and in truth he had often sat

up all night over a bristling bundle of accounts, and heard the cock crow without a yawn. But Raphael and Titian and Rubens were a new kind of arithmetic, and they inspired our friend, for the first time in his life, with a vague self-mistrust.

An observer with anything of an eye for national types would have had no difficulty in determining the local origin of this undeveloped connoisseur, and indeed such an observer might have felt a certain humorous relish of the almost ideal completeness with which he filled out the national mould. The gentleman on the divan was a powerful specimen of an American. But he was not only a fine American; he was in the first place, physically, a fine man. He appeared to possess that kind of health and strength which, when found in perfection, are the most impressive—the physical capital which the owner does nothing to "keep up." If he was a muscular Christian, it was quite without knowing it. If it was necessary to walk to a remote spot, he walked, but he had never known himself to "exercise." He had no theory with regard to cold bathing or the use of Indian clubs; he was neither an oarsman, a rifleman, nor a fencer—he had never had time for these amusements—and he was quite unaware that the saddle is recommended for certain forms of indigestion. He was by inclination a temperate man; but he had supped the night before his visit to the Louvre at the Café Anglais—someone had told him it was an experience not to be omitted—and he had slept none the less the sleep of the just. His usual attitude and carriage were of a rather relaxed and lounging kind, but when under a special inspiration, he straightened himself, he looked like a grenadier on parade. He never smoked. He had been assured—such things are said—that cigars were excellent for the health, and he was quite capable of believing it; but he knew as little about tobacco as about homœopathy. He had a very well-formed head, with a shapely, symmetrical balance of the frontal and the

occipital development, and a good deal of straight, rather dry brown hair. His complexion was brown, and his nose had a bold well-marked arch. His eye was of a clear, cold gray, and save for a rather abundant moustache he was clean-shaved. He had the flat jaw and sinewy neck which are frequent in the American type; but the traces of national origin are a matter of expression even more than of feature, and it was in this respect that our friend's countenance was supremely eloquent. The discriminating observer we have been supposing might, however, perfectly have measured its expressiveness, and yet have been at a loss to describe it. It had that typical vagueness which is not vacuity, that blankness which is not simplicity, that look of being committed to nothing in particular, of standing in an attitude of general hospitality to the chances of life, of being very much at one's own disposal so characteristic of many American faces. It was our friend's eye that chiefly told his story; an eye in which innocence and experience were singularly blended. It was full of contradictory suggestions, and though it was by no means the glowing orb of a hero of romance, you could find in it almost anything you looked for. Frigid and yet friendly, frank yet cautious, shrewd yet credulous, positive yet sceptical, confident yet shy, extremely intelligent and extremely good-humored, there was something vaguely defiant in its concessions, and something profoundly reassuring in its reserve. The cut of this gentleman's moustache, with the two premature wrinkles in the cheek above it, and the fashion of his garments, in which an exposed shirt-front and a cerulean cravat played perhaps an obtrusive part, completed the conditions of his identity. We have approached him, perhaps, at a not especially favorable moment; he is by no means sitting for his portrait. But listless as he lounges there, rather baffled on the æsthetic question, and guilty of the damning fault (as we have lately discovered it to be) of confounding the merit of the artist

with that of his work (for he admires the squinting Madonna of the young lady with the boyish coiffure, because he thinks the young lady herself uncommonly taking), he is a sufficiently promising acquaintance. Decision, salubrity, jocosity, prosperity, seem to hover within his call; he is evidently a practical man, but the idea in his case, has undefined and mysterious boundaries, which invite the imagination to bestir itself on his behalf.
As the little copyist proceeded with her work, she sent every now and then a responsive glance toward her admirer. The cultivation of the fine arts appeared to necessitate, to her mind, a great deal of by-play, a great standing off with folded arms and head drooping from side to side, stroking of a dimpled chin with a dimpled hand, sighing and frowning and patting of the foot, fumbling in disordered tresses for wandering hair-pins. These performances were accompanied by a restless glance, which lingered longer than elsewhere upon the gentleman we have described. At last he rose abruptly, put on his hat, and approached the young lady. He placed himself before her picture and looked at it for some moments, during which she pretended to be quite unconscious of his inspection. Then, addressing her with the single word which constituted the strength of his French vocabulary, and holding up one finger in a manner which appeared to him to illuminate his meaning, “ *Combien?* ” he abruptly demanded.
The artist stared a moment, gave a little pout, shrugged her shoulders, put down her palette and brushes, and stood rubbing her hands.
“ How much?” said our friend, in English. “ *Combien?* ”
“ Monsieur wishes to buy it?” asked the young lady in French.
“ Very pretty, *splendide. Combien?* ” repeated the American.
“ It pleases monsieur, my little picture? It’s a very beautiful

subject," said the young lady.
" The Madonna, yes; I am not a Catholic, but I want to buy it. *Combien?* Write it here." And he took a pencil from his pocket and showed her the fly-leaf of his guide-book. She stood looking at him and scratching her chin with the pencil. "Is it not for sale?" he asked. And as she still stood reflecting, and looking at him with an eye which, in spite of her desire to treat this avidity of patronage as a very old story, betrayed an almost touching incredulity, he was afraid he had offended her. She was simply trying to look indifferent, and wondering how far she might go. "I haven't made a mistake— *pas insulté* , no?" her interlocutor continued. "Don't you understand a little English?"
The young lady's aptitude for playing a part at short notice was remarkable. She fixed him with her conscious, perceptive eye and asked him if he spoke no French. Then, " *Donnez!* " she said briefly, and took the open guide-book. In the upper corner of the fly-leaf she traced a number, in a minute and extremely neat hand. Then she handed back the book and took up her palette again.
Our friend read the number: "2,000 francs." He said nothing for a time, but stood looking at the picture, while the copyist began actively to dabble with her paint. "For a copy, isn't that a good deal?" he asked at last. " *Pas beaucoup?* "
The young lady raised her eyes from her palette, scanned him from head to foot, and alighted with admirable sagacity upon exactly the right answer. "Yes, it's a good deal. But my copy has remarkable qualities, it is worth nothing less."
The gentleman in whom we are interested understood no French, but I have said he was intelligent, and here is a good chance to prove it. He apprehended, by a natural instinct, the meaning of the young woman's phrase, and it gratified him to think that she was so honest. Beauty, talent, virtue; she combined everything! "But you must finish it," he said. " *finish* , you know;" and he pointed to

the unpainted hand of the figure.
“ Oh, it shall be finished in perfection; in the perfection of perfections!” cried mademoiselle; and to confirm her promise, she deposited a rosy blotch in the middle of the Madonna’s cheek.
But the American frowned. “Ah, too red, too red!” he rejoined. “Her complexion,” pointing to the Murillo, “is—more delicate.”
“ Delicate? Oh, it shall be delicate, monsieur; delicate as Sèvres *biscuit* . I am going to tone that down; I know all the secrets of my art. And where will you allow us to send it to you? Your address?”
“ My address? Oh yes!” And the gentleman drew a card from his pocket-book and wrote something upon it. Then hesitating a moment he said, “If I don’t like it when it it’s finished, you know, I shall not be obliged to take it.”
The young lady seemed as good a guesser as himself. “Oh, I am very sure that monsieur is not capricious,” she said with a roguish smile.
“ Capricious?” And at this monsieur began to laugh. “Oh no, I’m not capricious. I am very faithful. I am very constant. *Comprenez?* ”
“ Monsieur is constant; I understand perfectly. It’s a rare virtue. To recompense you, you shall have your picture on the first possible day; next week—as soon as it is dry. I will take the card of monsieur.” And she took it and read his name: “Christopher Newman.” Then she tried to repeat it aloud, and laughed at her bad accent. “Your English names are so droll!”
“ Droll?” said Mr. Newman, laughing too. “Did you ever hear of Christopher Columbus?”
“ *Bien sûr!* He invented America; a very great man. And is he your patron?”
“ My patron?”
“ Your patron-saint, in the calendar.”
“ Oh, exactly; my parents named me for him.”

“ Monsieur is American?”
“ Don’t you see it?” monsieur inquired.
“ And you mean to carry my little picture away over there?” and she explained her phrase with a gesture.
“ Oh, I mean to buy a great many pictures— *beaucoup, beaucoup* ,” said Christopher Newman.
“ The honor is not less for me,” the young lady answered, “for I am sure monsieur has a great deal of taste.”
“ But you must give me your card,” Newman said; “your card, you know.”
The young lady looked severe for an instant, and then said, “My father will wait upon you.”
But this time Mr. Newman’s powers of divination were at fault. “Your card, your address,” he simply repeated.
“ My address?” said mademoiselle. Then with a little shrug, “Happily for you, you are an American! It is the first time I ever gave my card to a gentleman.” And, taking from her pocket a rather greasy portemonnaie, she extracted from it a small glazed visiting card, and presented the latter to her patron. It was neatly inscribed in pencil, with a great many flourishes, “Mlle. Noémie Nioche.” But Mr. Newman, unlike his companion, read the name with perfect gravity; all French names to him were equally droll.
“ And precisely, here is my father, who has come to escort me home,” said Mademoiselle Noémie. “He speaks English. He will arrange with you.” And she turned to welcome a little old gentleman who came shuffling up, peering over his spectacles at Newman.
M. Nioche wore a glossy wig, of an unnatural color which overhung his little meek, white, vacant face, and left it hardly more expressive than the unfeatured block upon which these articles are displayed in the barber’s window. He was an exquisite image of shabby gentility. His scant ill-made coat, desperately brushed, his darned gloves, his highly polished boots, his rusty, shapely hat, told the story of a person who had “had losses” and who clung to the

spirit of nice habits even though the letter had been hopelessly effaced. Among other things M. Nioche had lost courage. Adversity had not only ruined him, it had frightened him, and he was evidently going through his remnant of life on tiptoe, for fear of waking up the hostile fates. If this strange gentleman was saying anything improper to his daughter, M. Nioche would entreat him huskily, as a particular favor, to forbear; but he would admit at the same time that he was very presumptuous to ask for particular favors.

“ Monsieur has bought my picture,” said Mademoiselle Noémie. “When it’s finished you’ll carry it to him in a cab.”

“ In a cab!” cried M. Nioche; and he stared, in a bewildered way, as if he had seen the sun rising at midnight.

“ Are you the young lady’s father?” said Newman. “I think she said you speak English.”

“ Speak English—yes,” said the old man slowly rubbing his hands. “I will bring it in a cab.”

“ Say something, then,” cried his daughter. “Thank him a little—not too much.”

“ A little, my daughter, a little?” said M. Nioche perplexed. “How much?”

“ Two thousand!” said Mademoiselle Noémie. “Don’t make a fuss or he’ll take back his word.”

“ Two thousand!” cried the old man, and he began to fumble for his snuff-box. He looked at Newman from head to foot; he looked at his daughter and then at the picture. “Take care you don’t spoil it!” he cried almost sublimely.

“ We must go home,” said Mademoiselle Noémie. “This is a good day’s work. Take care how you carry it!” And she began to put up her utensils.

“ How can I thank you?” said M. Nioche. “My English does not suffice.”

“ I wish I spoke French as well,” said Newman, good-naturedly. “Your daughter is very clever.”

“ Oh, sir!” and M. Nioche looked over his spectacles with

tearful eyes and nodded several times with a world of sadness. “She has had an education— *très-supérieure!* Nothing was spared. Lessons in pastel at ten francs the lesson, lessons in oil at twelve francs. I didn’t look at the francs then. She’s an *artiste* , eh?”
“ Do I understand you to say that you have had reverses?” asked Newman.
“ Reverses? Oh, sir, misfortunes—terrible.”
“ Unsuccessful in business, eh?”
“ Very unsuccessful, sir.”
“ Oh, never fear, you’ll get on your legs again,” said Newman cheerily.
The old man drooped his head on one side and looked at him with an expression of pain, as if this were an unfeeling jest.
“ What does he say?” demanded Mademoiselle Noémie.
M. Nioche took a pinch of snuff. “He says I will make my fortune again.”
“ Perhaps he will help you. And what else?”
“ He says thou art very clever.”
“ It is very possible. You believe it yourself, my father?”
“ Believe it, my daughter? With this evidence!” And the old man turned afresh, with a staring, wondering homage, to the audacious daub on the easel.
“ Ask him, then, if he would not like to learn French.”
“ To learn French?”
“ To take lessons.”
“ To take lessons, my daughter? From thee?”
“ From you!”
“ From me, my child? How should I give lessons?”
“ *Pas de raisons!* Ask him immediately!” said Mademoiselle Noémie, with soft brevity.
M. Nioche stood aghast, but under his daughter’s eye he collected his wits, and, doing his best to assume an agreeable smile, he executed her commands. “Would it please you to receive instruction in our beautiful

language?” he inquired, with an appealing quaver.
“ To study French?” asked Newman, staring.
M. Nioche pressed his finger-tips together and slowly raised his shoulders. “A little conversation!”
“ Conversation—that’s it!” murmured Mademoiselle Noémie, who had caught the word. “The conversation of the best society.”
“ Our French conversation is famous, you know,” M. Nioche ventured to continue. “It’s a great talent.”
“ But isn’t it awfully difficult?” asked Newman, very simply.
“ Not to a man of *esprit* , like monsieur, an admirer of beauty in every form!” and M. Nioche cast a significant glance at his daughter’s Madonna.
“ I can’t fancy myself chattering French!” said Newman with a laugh. “And yet, I suppose that the more a man knows the better.”
“ Monsieur expresses that very happily. *Hélas, oui!* ”
“ I suppose it would help me a great deal, knocking about Paris, to know the language.”
“ Ah, there are so many things monsieur must want to say: difficult things!”
“ Everything I want to say is difficult. But you give lessons?”
Poor M. Nioche was embarrassed; he smiled more appealingly. “I am not a regular professor,” he admitted. “I can’t nevertheless tell him that I’m a professor,” he said to his daughter.
“ Tell him it’s a very exceptional chance,” answered Mademoiselle Noémie; “an *homme du monde* —one gentleman conversing with another! Remember what you are—what you have been!”
“ A teacher of languages in neither case! Much more formerly and much less to-day! And if he asks the price of the lessons?”
“ He won’t ask it,” said Mademoiselle Noémie.
“ What he pleases, I may say?”

“ Never! That’s bad style.”
“ If he asks, then?”
Mademoiselle Noémie had put on her bonnet and was tying the ribbons. She smoothed them out, with her soft little chin thrust forward. “Ten francs,” she said quickly.
“ Oh, my daughter! I shall never dare.”
“ Don’t dare, then! He won’t ask till the end of the lessons, and then I will make out the bill.”
M. Nioche turned to the confiding foreigner again, and stood rubbing his hands, with an air of seeming to plead guilty which was not intenser only because it was habitually so striking. It never occurred to Newman to ask him for a guarantee of his skill in imparting instruction; he supposed of course M. Nioche knew his own language, and his appealing forlornness was quite the perfection of what the American, for vague reasons, had always associated with all elderly foreigners of the lesson-giving class. Newman had never reflected upon philological processes. His chief impression with regard to ascertaining those mysterious correlatives of his familiar English vocables which were current in this extraordinary city of Paris was, that it was simply a matter of a good deal of unwonted and rather ridiculous muscular effort on his own part. “How did you learn English?” he asked of the old man.
“ When I was young, before my miseries. Oh, I was wide awake, then. My father was a great *commerçant* ; he placed me for a year in a counting-house in England. Some of it stuck to me; but much I have forgotten!”
“ How much French can I learn in a month?”
“ What does he say?” asked Mademoiselle Noémie.
M. Nioche explained.
“ He will speak like an angel!” said his daughter.
But the native integrity which had been vainly exerted to secure M. Nioche’s commercial prosperity flickered up again. “ *Dame* , monsieur!” he answered. “All I can teach you!” And then, recovering himself at a sign from his

daughter, “I will wait upon you at your hotel.”
“ Oh yes, I should like to learn French,” Newman went on, with democratic confidingness. “Hang me if I should ever have thought of it! I took for granted it was impossible. But if you learned my language, why shouldn’t I learn yours?” and his frank, friendly laugh drew the sting from the jest. “Only, if we are going to converse, you know, you must think of something cheerful to converse about.”
“ You are very good, sir; I am overcome!” said M. Nioche, throwing out his hands. “But you have cheerfulness and happiness for two!”
“ Oh no,” said Newman more seriously. “You must be bright and lively; that’s part of the bargain.”
M. Nioche bowed, with his hand on his heart. “Very well, sir; you have already made me lively.”
“ Come and bring me my picture then; I will pay you for it, and we will talk about that. That will be a cheerful subject!”
Mademoiselle Noémie had collected her accessories, and she gave the precious Madonna in charge to her father, who retreated backwards out of sight, holding it at arm’s-length and reiterating his obeisance. The young lady gathered her shawl about her like a perfect Parisienne, and it was with the smile of a Parisienne that she took leave of her patron.

CHAPTER II

He wandered back to the divan and seated himself on the other side, in view of the great canvas on which Paul Veronese had depicted the marriage-feast of Cana. Wearied as he was he found the picture entertaining; it had an illusion for him; it satisfied his conception, which was ambitious, of what a splendid banquet should be. In the left-hand corner of the picture is a young woman with yellow tresses confined in a golden head-dress; she is bending forward and listening, with the smile of a charming woman at a dinner-party, to her neighbor. Newman detected her in the crowd, admired her, and perceived that she too had her votive copyist—a young man with his hair standing on end. Suddenly he became conscious of the germ of the mania of the “collector;” he had taken the first step; why should he not go on? It was only twenty minutes before that he had bought the first picture of his life, and now he was already thinking of art-patronage as a fascinating pursuit. His reflections quickened his good-humor, and he was on the point of approaching the young man with another “ Combien? ” Two or three facts in this relation are noticeable, although the logical chain which connects them may seem imperfect. He knew Mademoiselle Nioche had asked too much; he bore her no grudge for doing so, and he was determined to pay the young man exactly the proper sum. At this moment, however, his attention was attracted by a gentleman who had come from another part of the room and whose manner was that of a stranger to the gallery, although he was equipped with neither guide-book nor opera-glass. He carried a white sun-umbrella, lined with blue silk, and he strolled in front of the Paul Veronese, vaguely looking at it, but much too near to see anything but the grain of the

canvas. Opposite to Christopher Newman he paused and turned, and then our friend, who had been observing him, had a chance to verify a suspicion aroused by an imperfect view of his face. The result of this larger scrutiny was that he presently sprang to his feet, strode across the room, and, with an outstretched hand, arrested the gentleman with the blue-lined umbrella. The latter stared, but put out his hand at a venture. He was corpulent and rosy, and though his countenance, which was ornamented with a beautiful flaxen beard, carefully divided in the middle and brushed outward at the sides, was not remarkable for intensity of expression, he looked like a person who would willingly shake hands with anyone. I know not what Newman thought of his face, but he found a want of response in his grasp.

“ Oh, come, come,” he said, laughing; “don’t say, now, you don’t know me—if I have not got a white parasol!”

The sound of his voice quickened the other’s memory, his face expanded to its fullest capacity, and he also broke into a laugh. “Why, Newman—I’ll be blowed! Where in the world—I declare—who would have thought? You know you have changed.”

“ You haven’t!” said Newman.

“ Not for the better, no doubt. When did you get here?”

“ Three days ago.”

“ Why didn’t you let me know?”

“ I had no idea you were here.”

“ I have been here these six years.”

“ It must be eight or nine since we met.”

“ Something of that sort. We were very young.”

“ It was in St. Louis, during the war. You were in the army.”

“ Oh no, not I! But you were.”

“ I believe I was.”

“ You came out all right?”

“ I came out with my legs and arms—and with satisfaction. All that seems very far away.”

“ And how long have you been in Europe?”
“ Seventeen days.”
“ First time?”
“ Yes, very much so.”
“ Made your everlasting fortune?”
Christopher Newman was silent a moment, and then with a tranquil smile he answered, “Yes.”
“ And come to Paris to spend it, eh?”
“ Well, we shall see. So they carry those parasols here—the men-folk?”
“ Of course they do. They’re great things. They understand comfort out here.”
“ Where do you buy them?”
“ Anywhere, everywhere.”
“ Well, Tristram, I’m glad to get hold of you. You can show me the ropes. I suppose you know Paris inside out.”
Mr. Tristram gave a mellow smile of self-gratulation. “Well, I guess there are not many men that can show me much. I’ll take care of you.”
“ It’s a pity you were not here a few minutes ago. I have just bought a picture. You might have put the thing through for me.”
“ Bought a picture?” said Mr. Tristram, looking vaguely round at the walls. “Why, do they sell them?”
“ I mean a copy.”
“ Oh, I see. These,” said Mr. Tristram, nodding at the Titians and Vandykes, “these, I suppose, are originals.”
“ I hope so,” cried Newman. “I don’t want a copy of a copy.”
“ Ah,” said Mr. Tristram, mysteriously, “you can never tell. They imitate, you know, so deucedly well. It’s like the jewellers, with their false stones. Go into the Palais Royal, there; you see ‘Imitation’ on half the windows. The law obliges them to stick it on, you know; but you can’t tell the things apart. To tell the truth,” Mr. Tristram continued, with a wry face, “I don’t do much in pictures. I leave that to my wife.”

“ Ah, you have got a wife?”
“ Didn’t I mention it? She’s a very nice woman; you must know her. She’s up there in the Avenue d’Iéna.”
“ So you are regularly fixed—house and children and all.”
“ Yes, a tip-top house and a couple of youngsters.”
“ Well,” said Christopher Newman, stretching his arms a little, with a sigh, “I envy you.”
“ Oh no! you don’t!” answered Mr. Tristram, giving him a little poke with his parasol.
“ I beg your pardon; I do!”
“ Well, you won’t, then, when—when—”
“ You don’t certainly mean when I have seen your establishment?”
“ When you have seen Paris, my boy. You want to be your own master here.”
“ Oh, I have been my own master all my life, and I’m tired of it.”
“ Well, try Paris. How old are you?”
“ Thirty-six.”
“ C’est le bel âge , as they say here.”
“ What does that mean?”
“ It means that a man shouldn’t send away his plate till he has eaten his fill.”
“ All that? I have just made arrangements to take French lessons.”
“ Oh, you don’t want any lessons. You’ll pick it up. I never took any.”
“ I suppose you speak French as well as English?”
“ Better!” said Mr. Tristram, roundly. “It’s a splendid language. You can say all sorts of bright things in it.”
“ But I suppose,” said Christopher Newman, with an earnest desire for information, “that you must be bright to begin with.”
“ Not a bit; that’s just the beauty of it.”
The two friends, as they exchanged these remarks, had remained standing where they met, and leaning against the

rail which protected the pictures. Mr. Tristram at last declared that he was overcome with fatigue and should be happy to sit down. Newman recommended in the highest terms the great divan on which he had been lounging, and they prepared to seat themselves. “This is a great place; isn’t it?” said Newman, with ardor.

“ Great place, great place. Finest thing in the world.” And then, suddenly, Mr. Tristram hesitated and looked about him. “I suppose they won’t let you smoke here.”

Newman stared. “Smoke? I’m sure I don’t know. You know the regulations better than I.”

“ I? I never was here before!”

“ Never! in six years?”

“ I believe my wife dragged me here once when we first came to Paris, but I never found my way back.”

“ But you say you know Paris so well!”

“ I don’t call this Paris!” cried Mr. Tristram, with assurance. “Come; let’s go over to the Palais Royal and have a smoke.”

“ I don’t smoke,” said Newman.

“ A drink, then.”

And Mr. Tristram led his companion away. They passed through the glorious halls of the Louvre, down the staircases, along the cool, dim galleries of sculpture, and out into the enormous court. Newman looked about him as he went, but he made no comments, and it was only when they at last emerged into the open air that he said to his friend, “It seems to me that in your place I should have come here once a week.”

“ Oh, no you wouldn’t!” said Mr. Tristram. “You think so, but you wouldn’t. You wouldn’t have had time. You would always mean to go, but you never would go. There’s better fun than that, here in Paris. Italy’s the place to see pictures; wait till you get there. There you have to go; you can’t do anything else. It’s an awful country; you can’t get a decent cigar. I don’t know why I went in there, to-day; I was strolling along, rather hard up for amusement. I sort of

noticed the Louvre as I passed, and I thought I would go in and see what was going on. But if I hadn’t found you there I should have felt rather sold. Hang it, I don’t care for pictures; I prefer the reality!” And Mr. Tristram tossed off this happy formula with an assurance which the numerous class of persons suffering from an overdose of “culture” might have envied him.

The two gentlemen proceeded along the Rue de Rivoli and into the Palais Royal, where they seated themselves at one of the little tables stationed at the door of the café which projects into the great open quadrangle. The place was filled with people, the fountains were spouting, a band was playing, clusters of chairs were gathered beneath all the lime-trees, and buxom, white-capped nurses, seated along the benches, were offering to their infant charges the amplest facilities for nutrition. There was an easy, homely gaiety in the whole scene, and Christopher Newman felt that it was most characteristically Parisian.

“ And now,” began Mr. Tristram, when they had tested the decoction which he had caused to be served to them, “now just give an account of yourself. What are your ideas, what are your plans, where have you come from and where are you going? In the first place, where are you staying?”

“ At the Grand Hotel,” said Newman.

Mr. Tristram puckered his plump visage. “That won’t do! You must change.”

“ Change?” demanded Newman. “Why, it’s the finest hotel I ever was in.”

“ You don’t want a ‘fine’ hotel; you want something small and quiet and elegant, where your bell is answered and you —your person is recognized.”

“ They keep running to see if I have rung before I have touched the bell,” said Newman “and as for my person they are always bowing and scraping to it.”

“ I suppose you are always tipping them. That’s very bad style.”

“ Always? By no means. A man brought me something yesterday, and then stood loafing in a beggarly manner. I offered him a chair and asked him if he wouldn’t sit down. Was that bad style?”
“ Very!”
“ But he bolted, instantly. At any rate, the place amuses me. Hang your elegance, if it bores me. I sat in the court of the Grand Hotel last night until two o’clock in the morning, watching the coming and going, and the people knocking about.”
“ You’re easily pleased. But you can do as you choose—a man in your shoes. You have made a pile of money, eh?”
“ I have made enough.”
“ Happy the man who can say that? Enough for what?”
“ Enough to rest awhile, to forget the confounded thing, to look about me, to see the world, to have a good time, to improve my mind, and, if the fancy takes me, to marry a wife.” Newman spoke slowly, with a certain dryness of accent and with frequent pauses. This was his habitual mode of utterance, but it was especially marked in the words I have just quoted.
“ Jupiter! There’s a programme!” cried Mr. Tristram. “Certainly, all that takes money, especially the wife; unless indeed she gives it, as mine did. And what’s the story? How have you done it?”
Newman had pushed his hat back from his forehead, folded his arms, and stretched his legs. He listened to the music, he looked about him at the bustling crowd, at the plashing fountains, at the nurses and the babies. “I have worked!” he answered at last.
Tristram looked at him for some moments, and allowed his placid eyes to measure his friend’s generous longitude and rest upon his comfortably contemplative face. “What have you worked at?” he asked.
“ Oh, at several things.”
“ I suppose you’re a smart fellow, eh?”

Newman continued to look at the nurses and babies; they imparted to the scene a kind of primordial, pastoral simplicity. “Yes,” he said at last, “I suppose I am.” And then, in answer to his companion’s inquiries, he related briefly his history since their last meeting. It was an intensely Western story, and it dealt with enterprises which it will be needless to introduce to the reader in detail. Newman had come out of the war with a brevet of brigadier-general, an honor which in this case—without invidious comparisons—had lighted upon shoulders amply competent to bear it. But though he could manage a fight, when need was, Newman heartily disliked the business; his four years in the army had left him with an angry, bitter sense of the waste of precious things—life and time and money and “smartness” and the early freshness of purpose; and he had addressed himself to the pursuits of peace with passionate zest and energy. He was of course as penniless when he plucked off his shoulder-straps as when he put them on, and the only capital at his disposal was his dogged resolution and his lively perception of ends and means. Exertion and action were as natural to him as respiration; a more completely healthy mortal had never trod the elastic soil of the West. His experience, moreover, was as wide as his capacity; when he was fourteen years old, necessity had taken him by his slim young shoulders and pushed him into the street, to earn that night’s supper. He had not earned it but he had earned the next night’s, and afterwards, whenever he had had none, it was because he had gone without it to use the money for something else, a keener pleasure or a finer profit. He had turned his hand, with his brain in it, to many things; he had been enterprising, in an eminent sense of the term; he had been adventurous and even reckless, and he had known bitter failure as well as brilliant success; but he was a born experimentalist, and he had always found something to enjoy in the pressure of necessity, even when it was as irritating as the haircloth shirt of the mediæval

monk. At one time failure seemed inexorably his portion; ill-luck became his bed-fellow, and whatever he touched he turned, not to gold, but to ashes. His most vivid conception of a supernatural element in the world's affairs had come to him once when this pertinacity of misfortune was at its climax; there seemed to him something stronger in life than his own will. But the mysterious something could only be the devil, and he was accordingly seized with an intense personal enmity to this impertinent force. He had known what it was to have utterly exhausted his credit, to be unable to raise a dollar, and to find himself at nightfall in a strange city, without a penny to mitigate its strangeness. It was under these circumstances that he made his entrance into San Francisco, the scene, subsequently, of his happiest strokes of fortune. If he did not, like Dr. Franklin in Philadelphia, march along the street munching a penny-loaf, it was only because he had not the penny-loaf necessary to the performance. In his darkest days he had had but one simple, practical impulse—the desire, as he would have phrased it, to see the thing through. He did so at last, buffeted his way into smooth waters, and made money largely. It must be admitted, rather nakedly, that Christopher Newman's sole aim in life had been to make money; what he had been placed in the world for was, to his own perception, simply to wrest a fortune, the bigger the better, from defiant opportunity. This idea completely filled his horizon and satisfied his imagination. Upon the uses of money, upon what one might do with a life into which one had succeeded in injecting the golden stream, he had up to his thirty-fifth year very scantily reflected. Life had been for him an open game, and he had played for high stakes. He had won at last and carried off his winnings; and now what was he to do with them? He was a man to whom, sooner or later, the question was sure to present itself, and the answer to it belongs to our story. A vague sense that more answers were possible than his philosophy had

hitherto dreamt of had already taken possession of him, and it seemed softly and agreeably to deepen as he lounged in this brilliant corner of Paris with his friend.

“ I must confess,” he presently went on, “that here I don’t feel at all smart. My remarkable talents seem of no use. I feel as simple as a little child, and a little child might take me by the hand and lead me about.”

“ Oh, I’ll be your little child,” said Tristram, jovially; “I’ll take you by the hand. Trust yourself to me.”

“ I am a good worker,” Newman continued, “but I rather think I am a poor loafer. I have come abroad to amuse myself, but I doubt whether I know how.”

“ Oh, that’s easily learned.”

“ Well, I may perhaps learn it, but I am afraid I shall never do it by rote. I have the best will in the world about it, but my genius doesn’t lie in that direction. As a loafer I shall never be original, as I take it that you are.”

“ Yes,” said Tristram, “I suppose I am original; like all those immoral pictures in the Louvre.”

“ Besides,” Newman continued, “I don’t want to work at pleasure, any more than I played at work. I want to take it easily. I feel deliciously lazy, and I should like to spend six months as I am now, sitting under a tree and listening to a band. There’s only one thing; I want to hear some good music.”

“ Music and pictures! Lord, what refined tastes! You are what my wife calls intellectual. I ain’t, a bit. But we can find something better for you to do than to sit under a tree. To begin with, you must come to the club.”

“ What club?”

“ The Occidental. You will see all the Americans there; all the best of them, at least. Of course you play poker?”

“ Oh, I say,” cried Newman, with energy, “you are not going to lock me up in a club and stick me down at a card-table! I haven’t come all this way for that.”

“ What the deuce have you come for! You were glad enough to play poker in St. Louis, I recollect, when you cleaned me out.”
“ I have come to see Europe, to get the best out of it I can. I want to see all the great things, and do what the clever people do.”
“ The clever people? Much obliged. You set me down as a blockhead, then?”
Newman was sitting sidewise in his chair, with his elbow on the back and his head leaning on his hand. Without moving he looked a while at his companion with his dry, guarded, half-inscrutable, and yet altogether good-natured smile. “Introduce me to your wife!” he said at last.
Tristram bounced about in his chair. “Upon my word, I won’t. She doesn’t want any help to turn up her nose at me, nor do you, either!”
“ I don’t turn up my nose at you, my dear fellow; nor at anyone, or anything. I’m not proud, I assure you I’m not proud. That’s why I am willing to take example by the clever people.”
“ Well, if I’m not the rose, as they say here, I have lived near it. I can show you some clever people, too. Do you know General Packard? Do you know C. P. Hatch? Do you know Miss Kitty Upjohn?”
“ I shall be happy to make their acquaintance; I want to cultivate society.”
Tristram seemed restless and suspicious; he eyed his friend askance, and then, “What are you up to, anyway?” he demanded. “Are you going to write a book?”
Christopher Newman twisted one end of his moustache a while, in silence, and at last he made answer. “One day, a couple of months ago, something very curious happened to me. I had come on to New York on some important business; it was rather a long story—a question of getting ahead of another party, in a certain particular way, in the stock-market. This other party had once played me a very

mean trick. I owed him a grudge, I felt awfully savage at the time, and I vowed that, when I got a chance, I would, figuratively speaking, put his nose out of joint. There was a matter of some sixty thousand dollars at stake. If I put it out of his way, it was a blow the fellow would feel, and he really deserved no quarter. I jumped into a hack and went about my business, and it was in this hack—this immortal, historical hack—that the curious thing I speak of occurred. It was a hack like any other, only a trifle dirtier, with a greasy line along the top of the drab cushions, as if it had been used for a great many Irish funerals. It is possible I took a nap; I had been traveling all night, and though I was excited with my errand, I felt the want of sleep. At all events I woke up suddenly, from a sleep or from a kind of a reverie, with the most extraordinary feeling in the world—a mortal disgust for the thing I was going to do. It came upon me like that! ” and he snapped his fingers—“as abruptly as an old wound that begins to ache. I couldn’t tell the meaning of it; I only felt that I loathed the whole business and wanted to wash my hands of it. The idea of losing that sixty thousand dollars, of letting it utterly slide and scuttle and never hearing of it again, seemed the sweetest thing in the world. And all this took place quite independently of my will, and I sat watching it as if it were a play at the theatre. I could feel it going on inside of me. You may depend upon it that there are things going on inside of us that we understand mighty little about.”

“ Jupiter! you make my flesh creep!” cried Tristram. “And while you sat in your hack, watching the play, as you call it, the other man marched in and bagged your sixty thousand dollars?”

“ I have not the least idea. I hope so, poor devil! but I never found out. We pulled up in front of the place I was going to in Wall Street, but I sat still in the carriage, and at last the driver scrambled down off his seat to see whether his carriage had not turned into a hearse. I couldn’t have got

out, any more than if I had been a corpse. What was the matter with me? Momentary idiocy, you'll say. What I wanted to get out of was Wall Street. I told the man to drive down to the Brooklyn ferry and to cross over. When we were over, I told him to drive me out into the country. As I had told him originally to drive for dear life down town, I suppose he thought me insane. Perhaps I was, but in that case I am insane still. I spent the morning looking at the first green leaves on Long Island. I was sick of business; I wanted to throw it all up and break off short; I had money enough, or if I hadn't I ought to have. I seemed to feel a new man inside my old skin, and I longed for a new world. When you want a thing so very badly you had better treat yourself to it. I didn't understand the matter, not in the least; but I gave the old horse the bridle and let him find his way. As soon as I could get out of the game I sailed for Europe. That is how I come to be sitting here."

" You ought to have bought up that hack," said Tristram; "it isn't a safe vehicle to have about. And you have really sold out, then; you have retired from business?"

" I have made over my hand to a friend; when I feel disposed, I can take up the cards again. I dare say that a twelvemonth hence the operation will be reversed. The pendulum will swing back again. I shall be sitting in a gondola or on a dromedary, and all of a sudden I shall want to clear out. But for the present I am perfectly free. I have even bargained that I am to receive no business letters."

" Oh, it's a real caprice de prince ," said Tristram. "I back out; a poor devil like me can't help you to spend such very magnificent leisure as that. You should get introduced to the crowned heads."

Newman looked at him a moment, and then, with his easy smile, "How does one do it?" he asked.

" Come, I like that!" cried Tristram. "It shows you are in earnest."

“ Of course I am in earnest. Didn’t I say I wanted the best? I know the best can’t be had for mere money, but I rather think money will do a good deal. In addition, I am willing to take a good deal of trouble.”
“ You are not bashful, eh?”
“ I haven’t the least idea. I want the biggest kind of entertainment a man can get. People, places, art, nature, everything! I want to see the tallest mountains, and the bluest lakes, and the finest pictures and the handsomest churches, and the most celebrated men, and the most beautiful women.”
“ Settle down in Paris, then. There are no mountains that I know of, and the only lake is in the Bois du Boulogne, and not particularly blue. But there is everything else: plenty of pictures and churches, no end of celebrated men, and several beautiful women.”
“ But I can’t settle down in Paris at this season, just as summer is coming on.”
“ Oh, for the summer go up to Trouville.”
“ What is Trouville?”
“ The French Newport. Half the Americans go.”
“ Is it anywhere near the Alps?”
“ About as near as Newport is to the Rocky Mountains.”
“ Oh, I want to see Mont Blanc,” said Newman, “and Amsterdam, and the Rhine, and a lot of places. Venice in particular. I have great ideas about Venice.”
“ Ah,” said Mr. Tristram, rising, “I see I shall have to introduce you to my wife!”

CHAPTER III

He performed this ceremony on the following day, when, by appointment, Christopher Newman went to dine with him. Mr. and Mrs. Tristram lived behind one of those chalk-colored façades which decorate with their pompous sameness the broad avenues manufactured by Baron Haussmann in the neighborhood of the Arc de Triomphe. Their apartment was rich in the modern conveniences, and Tristram lost no time in calling his visitor's attention to their principal household treasures, the gas-lamps and the furnace-holes. "Whenever you feel homesick," he said, "you must come up here. We'll stick you down before a register, under a good big burner, and—"

" And you will soon get over your homesickness," said Mrs. Tristram.

Her husband stared; his wife often had a tone which he found inscrutable he could not tell for his life whether she was in jest or in earnest. The truth is that circumstances had done much to cultivate in Mrs. Tristram a marked tendency to irony. Her taste on many points differed from that of her husband, and though she made frequent concessions it must be confessed that her concessions were not always graceful. They were founded upon a vague project she had of some day doing something very positive, something a trifle passionate. What she meant to do she could by no means have told you; but meanwhile, nevertheless, she was buying a good conscience, by instalments.

It should be added, without delay, to anticipate misconception, that her little scheme of independence did not definitely involve the assistance of another person, of the opposite sex; she was not saving up virtue to cover the expenses of a flirtation. For this there were various