CHARLES JAMES LEVER

A RENT IN A CLOUD

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EAN 8596547213680

DigiCat, 2022
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CHAPTER I. THE WHITE HORSE AT COBLENTZ

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OUT of a window of the Weissen Ross, at Coblentz, looking upon the rapid Rhine, over whose circling eddies a rich sunset shed a golden tint, two young Englishmen lounged and smoked their cigars; rarely speaking, and, to all seeming, wearing that air of boredom which, strangely enough, would appear peculiar to a very enjoyable time of life. They were acquaintances of only a few days. They had met on an Antwerp steamer—rejoined each other in a picture-gallery—chanced to be side by side at a table d'hôte at Brussels, and, at last, drifted into one of those intimacies which, to very young men, represents friendship. They agreed they would travel together, all the more readily that neither cared very much in what direction. "As for me," said Calvert, "it doesn't much signify where I pass the interval; but, in October, I must return to India and join my regiment."

"And I," said Loyd, "about the same time must be in England. I have just been called to the bar."

"Slow work that must be, I take it."

"Do you like soldiering?" asked Loyd, in a low quiet voice.

"Hate it! abhor it! It's all very well when you join first You are so glad to be free of Woolwich or Sandhurst, or wherever it is. You are eager to be treated like a man, and so full of Cox and Greenwood, and the army tailor, and your camp furniture, and then comes the dépôt and the mess. One's first three months at mess seemed to be the cream of existence."

"Is it really so jolly? Are the fellows good talkers?"

“About the worst in the universe; but to a young hand, they are enchantment All their discourse is of something to be enjoyed. It is that foot-race, that game of billiards, that match at cricket, that stunning fine girl to ride out with, those excellent cigars Watkins is sending us; and so on. All is action, and very pleasant action too. Then duty, though it’s the habit to revile and curse it, duty is associated with a sense of manhood; a sort of goosestep chivalry to be sure, but still chivalry. One likes to see the sergeant with his orderly book, and to read, ‘Ensign Calvert for the main guard.’”

“And how long does all this last?”

“I gave it three months, some have been able to prolong it to six. Much depends upon where the dépôt is, and what sort of corps you’re in.”

“Now for the reaction! Tell me of that.”

“I cannot; it’s too dreadful. It’s a general detestation of all things military, from the Horse Guards to the mess waiter. You hate drill—parade—inspection—the adjutant—the wine committee—the paymaster—the field-officer of the day—and the major’s wife. You are chafed about everything—you want leave, you want to exchange, you want to be with the dépôt, you want to go to Corfu, and you are sent to Canada. Your brother officers are the slowest fellows in the service; you are quizzed about them at the mess of the Nine Hundred and Ninth—“Yours” neither give balls nor private theatricals. You wish you were in the Cape Coast Fencibles—in fact, you feel that destiny has placed you in the exact position you are least fitted for.”

“So far as I can see, however, all the faults are in yourself.”

“Not altogether. If you have plenty of money, your soldier life is simply a barrier to the enjoyment of it. You are chained to one spot, to one set of associates, and to one

mode of existence. If you're poor, it's fifty times worse, and all your time is spent in making five-and-sixpence a day equal to a guinea."

Loyd made no answer, but smoked on.

"I know," resumed the other, "that this is not what many will tell you, or what, perhaps, would suggest itself to your own mind from a chance intercourse with us. To the civilian the mess is not without a certain attraction, and there is, I own, something very taking in the aspect of that little democracy where the fair-cheeked boy is on an equality with the old bronzed soldier, and the freshness of Rugby or Eton is confronted with the stern experiences of the veteran campaigner; but this wears off very soon, and it is a day to be marked with white chalk when one can escape his mess dinner, with all its good cookery, good wine, and good attendance, and eat a mutton-chop at the Green Man with Simpkins, just because Simpkins wears a black coat, lives down in the country, and never was in a Gazette in his life. And now for *your* side of the medal—what is it like?"

"Nothing very gorgeous or brilliant, I assure you," said Loyd, gently; for he spoke with a low quiet tone, and had a student-like submissive manner, in strong contrast to the other's easy and assured air. "With great abilities, great industry, and great connexion, the career is a splendid one, and the rewards the highest. But between such golden fortunes and mine there is a whole realm of space. However, with time and hard work, and ordinary luck, I don't despair of securing a fair livelihood."

"After—say—thirty years, eh?"

"Perhaps so."

"By the time that I drop out of the army a retired lieutenant-colonel, with three hundred a year, you'll be in fair practice at Westminster, with, let us take it, fifteen hundred, or two thousand—perhaps five."

“I shall be quite satisfied if I confirm the prediction in the middle of it.”

“Ah,” continued the soldier. “There’s only one road to success—to marry a charming girl with money. Ashley of ours, who has done the thing himself, says that you can get money—any man can, if he will; that, in fact, if you will only take a little trouble you may have all the attractions you seek for in a wife, plus fortune.”

“Pleasant theory, but still not unlikely to involve a self-deception, since, even without knowing it, a man may be far more interested by the pecuniary circumstance.”

“Don’t begin with it; first fall in love—I mean to yourself, without betraying it—and then look after the settlement. If it be beneath your expectation, trip your anchor, and get out of the reach of fire.”

“And you may pass your best years in that unprofitable fashion, not to say what you may find yourself become in the meanwhile.” The soldier looked at the other askance, and there was in his sidelong glance a sort of irony that seemed to say, “Oh! you’re an enthusiast, are you?”

“There you have me, Loyd,” said he, hurriedly: “that is the weak point of my whole system; but remember, after all, do what one will, he can’t be as fresh at five-and-thirty as five-and-twenty—he will have added ten years of distrusts, doubts, and dodges to his nature in spite of himself.”

“If they must come in spite of himself, there is no help for it; but let him at least not deliberately lay a plan to acquire them.”

“One thing is quite clear,” said the other, boldly: “the change will come, whether we like it or not, and the wisest philosophy is to plan our lives so that we may conform to the alterations time will make in us. I don’t want to be dissatisfied with my condition at five-and-forty, just for the sake of some caprice that I indulged in at five-and-twenty,

and if I find a very charming creature with an angelic temper, deep blue eyes, the prettiest foot in Christendom, and a neat sum in Consols, I'll promise you there will soon be a step in the promotion of her Majesty's service, vice Lieutenant Harry Calvert, sold out."

The reply of the other was lost in the hoarse noise of the steam which now rushed from the escape-pipe of a vessel that had just arrived beneath the window. She was bound for Mayence, but stopped to permit some few passengers to land at that place. The scene exhibited all that bustle and confusion so perplexing to the actors, but so amusing to those who are mere spectators; for while some were eagerly pressing forward to gain the gangway with their luggage, the massive machinery of the bridge of boats was already in motion to open a space for the vessel to move up the stream. The young Englishmen were both interested in watching a very tall, thin old lady, whose efforts to gather together the members of her party, her luggage, and her followers, seemed to have overcome all the ordinary canons of politeness, for she pushed here and drove there, totally regardless of the inconvenience she was occasioning. She was followed by two young ladies, from whose courteous gestures it could be inferred how deeply their companion's insistence pained them, and how ashamed they felt at their position.

"I am afraid she is English," said Loyd.

"Can there be a doubt of it? Where did you ever see that reckless indifference to all others, that selfish disregard of decency, save in a certain class of our people? Look, she nearly pushed that fat man down, the hatchway; and see, she will not show the steward her tickets, and she will have her change. Poor girls! what misery and exposure all this is for you!"

"But the steamer is beginning to move on. They will be carried off! See, they are hauling at the gangway already."

“She’s on it; she doesn’t care; she’s over now. Well done, old lady! That back-hander was neatly given; and see, she has marshalled her forces cleverly: sent the light division in front, and brings up the rear herself with the luggage and the maids. Now, I call that as clever a landing on an enemy’s shore as ever was done.”

“I must say I pity the girls, and they look as if they felt all the mortification of their position. And yet, they’ll come to the same sort of thing themselves one of these days, as naturally as one of us will to wearing very easy boots and loose-fitting waistcoats.”

As he said this, the new arrivals had passed up from the landing-place, and entered the hotel.

“Let us at least be merciful in our criticisms on foreigners, while we exhibit to their eyes such national specimens as these!” said Calvert “For my own-part, I believe, that from no one source have we as a people derived so much of sneer and shame, as from that which includes within it what is called the unprotected female.”

“What if we were to find out that they were Belgians, or Dutch, or Americans? or better still, what if they should chance to be remarkably good sort of English? I conclude we shall meet them at supper.”

“Yes, and there goes the bell for that gathering, which on the present occasion will be a thin one. They’re all gone off to that fair at Lahnech.” And so saying, Calvert drew nigh a glass, and made one of those extempore toilets which young men with smart moustaches are accustomed to perform before presenting themselves to strangers. Loyd merely took his hat and walked to the door.

“There! that ought to be enough, surely, for all reasonable captivation!” said he, laughingly.

“Perhaps you are right; besides, I suspect in the present case it is a mere waste of ammunition;” and, with a self-

approving smile, he nodded to his image in the glass, and followed his friend.

One line at this place will serve to record that Calvert was very good looking; blue-eyed, blond-whiskered, Saxon-looking withal; erect carriage and stately air, which are always taken as favourable types of our English blood. Perhaps a certain over-consciousness of these personal advantages, perhaps a certain conviction of the success that had attended these gifts, gave him what in slang phrase, is called a “tigerish” air: but it was plain to see that he had acquired his ease of manner in good company, and that his pretension was rather the stamp of a class than of an individual.

Loyd was a pale, delicate-looking youth, with dark eyes set in the deepest of orbits, that imparted sadness to features in themselves sufficiently grave. He seemed what he was, an overworked student, a man who had sacrificed health to toil, and was only aware of the bad bargain when he felt unequal to continue the contest. His doctors had sent him abroad for rest, for that “distraction” which as often sustain its English as its French acceptance, and is only a source of worry and anxiety where rest and peace are required. His means were of the smallest—he was the only son of a country vicar, who was sorely pinched to afford him a very narrow support—and who had to raise by a loan the hundred pounds that were to give him this last chance of regaining strength and vigour. If travel therefore had its pleasures, it had also its pains for him. He felt, and very bitterly, the heavy load that his present enjoyment was laying upon those he loved best in the world, and this it was that, at his happiest moments, threw a gloom over an already moody and depressed temperament.

The sad thought of those at home, whose privations were the price of his pleasures, tracked him at every step; and pictures of that humble fireside where sat his father and his

mother, rose before him as he gazed at the noble cathedral, or stood amazed before the greatest triumphs of art. This sensitive feeling, preying upon one naturally susceptible, certainly tended little to his recovery, and even at times so overbore every other sentiment, that he regretted he had ever come abroad. Scarcely a day passed that he did not hesitate whether he should not turn his steps homeward to England.

CHAPTER II. THE PASSENGERS ON THE STEAMBOAT.

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THE table d’hôte room was empty as the two Englishmen entered it at supper-time, and they took their places, moodily enough, at one end of a table laid for nigh thirty guests. “All gone to Lahnech, Franz?” asked Calvert of the waiter.

“Yes, Sir, but they’ll be sorry for it, for there’s thunder in the air, and we are sure to have a deluge before nightfall.”

“And the new arrivals, are they gone too?”

“No, Sir. They are up stairs. The old lady would seem to have forgotten a box, or a desk, on board the steamer, and she has been in such a state about it that she couldn’t think of supping; and the young ones appear to sympathise in her anxieties, for they, too, said, ‘Oh, we can’t think of eating just now.’”

“But of course, she needn’t fuss herself. It will be detained at Mayence, and given up to her when she demands it.”

A very expressive shrug of the shoulders was the only answer Franz made, and Calvert added, “You don’t quite agree with me, perhaps?”

“It is an almost daily event, the loss of luggage on those Rhine steamers; so much so, that one is tempted to believe that stealing luggage is a regular livelihood here.”

Just at this moment the Englishwoman in question entered the room, and in French of a very home manufacture asked the waiter how she could manage, by means of the telegraph, to reclaim her missing property.

A most involved and intricate game of cross purposes ensued; for the waiter's knowledge of French was scarcely more extensive, and embarrassed, besides, by some specialities in accent, so that though *she* questioned and *he* replied, the discussion gave little hope of an intelligible solution.

"May I venture to offer my services, Madam?" said Calvert, rising and bowing politely. "If I can be of the least use on this occasion——"

"None whatever, Sir. I am perfectly competent to express my own wishes, and have no need of an interpreter;" and then turning to the waiter, added: "Montrez moi le telegraph, garçon."

The semi-tragic air in which she spoke, not to add the strange accent of her very peculiar French, was almost too much for Calvert's gravity, while Loyd, half pained by the ridicule thus attached to a countrywoman, held down his head and never uttered a word. Meanwhile the old lady had retired with a haughty toss of her towering bonnet, followed by Franz.

"The old party is fierce," said Calvert, as he began his supper, "and would not have me at any price."

"I suspect that this mistrust of each other is very common with us English: not so much from any doubt of our integrity, as from a fear lest we should not be equal in social rank."

"Well; but really, don't you think that our externals might have satisfied that old lady she had nothing to apprehend on that score?"

"I can't say how she may have regarded that point," was the cautious answer.

Calvert pushed his glass impatiently from him, and said, petulantly, "The woman is evidently a governess, or a companion, or a housekeeper. She writes her name in the book Miss Grainger, and the others are called Walter. Now,

after all, a Miss Grainger might, without derogating too far, condescend to know a Fusilier, eh? Oh, here she comes again.”

The lady thus criticised had now re-entered the room, and was busily engaged in studying the announcement of steamboat departures and arrivals, over the chimney.

“It is too absurd,” said she, pettishly, in French, “to close the telegraph-office at eight, that the clerks may go to a ball.”

“Not to a ball, Madam, to the fair at Lahnech,” interposed Franz.

“I don’t care, Sir, whether it be a dance or a junketing. It is the same inconvenience to the public; and the landlord, and the secretary, as you call him, of this hotel, are all gone, and nothing left here but you.”

Whether it was the shameless effrontery of the contempt she evinced in these words, or the lamentable look of abasement of the waiter, that overcame Calvert, certain is it he made no effort to restrain himself, but, leaning back in his chair, laughed heartily and openly.

“Well, Sir,” said she, turning fiercely on him, “you force me to say, that I never witnessed a more gross display of ill breeding and bad manners.”

“Had you only added, Madam, ‘after a very long experience of life,’ the remark would have been perfect,” said he, still laughing.

“Oh, Calvert!” broke in Loyd, in a tone of deprecation; but the old lady, white with passion, retired without waiting for that apology which, certainly, there was little prospect of her receiving.

“I am sorry you should have said that,” said Loyd, “or though she was scarcely measured in her remark, our laughter was a gross provocation.”

“How the cant of your profession sticks to you!” said the other. “There was the lawyer in every word of that speech. There was the ‘case’ and the ‘set off.’”

Loyd could not help smiling, though scarcely pleased at this rejoinder.

“Take my word for it,” said Calvert, as he helped himself to the dish before him, “there is nothing in life so aggressive as one of our elderly countrywomen when travelling in an independent condition. The theory is attack—attack—attack! They have a sort of vague impression that the passive are always imposed on, and certainly they rarely place themselves in that category. As I live, here she comes once more.”

The old lady had now entered the room with a slip of paper in her hand, to which she called the waiter’s attention, saying,

“You will despatch this message to Mayence, when the office opens in the morning. See that there is no mistake about it.”

“It must be in German, Madam,” said Franz. “They’ll not take it in in any foreign language.”

“Tell her you’ll translate it, Loyd. Go in, man, and get your knock-down as I did,” whispered Calvert.

Loyd blushed slightly; but not heeding the sarcasm of his companion, he arose, and, approaching the stranger, said, “It will give me much pleasure to put your message into German, Madam, if it will at all convenience you.”

It was not till after a very searching look into his face, and an apparently satisfactory examination of his features, that she replied, “Well, Sir, I make no objection; there can be no great secrecy in what passes through a telegraph-office. You can do it, if you please.”

Now, though the speech was not a very gracious acknowledgment of a proffered service, Loyd took the paper

and proceeded to read it. It was not without an effort, however, that he could constrain himself so far as not to laugh aloud at the contents, which began by an explanation that the present inconvenience was entirely owing to the very shameful arrangements made by the steam packet company for the landing of passengers at intermediate stations, and through which the complainant, travelling with her nieces, Millicent and Florence Walter, and her maids, Susannah Tucker and Mary Briggs, and having for luggage the following articles——

“May I observe, Madam,” said Loyd, in a mild tone of remonstrance, “that these explanations are too lengthy for the telegraph, not to say very costly, and as your object is simply to reclaim a missing article of your baggage—”

“I trust, Sir, that having fully satisfied your curiosity as to who we are, and of what grievance we complain, that you will spare me your comments as to the mode in which we prefer our demand for redress; but I ought to have known better, and I deserve it!” and, snatching the paper rudely from his hand, she dashed out of the room in passion.

“By Jove! you fared worse than myself,” said Calvert, as he laughed loud and long. “You got a heavier castigation for your polite interference than I did for my impertinence.”

“It is a lesson, at all events,” said Loyd, still blushing for his late defeat “I wonder is she all right up here,” and he touched his forehead significantly.

“Of course she is. Nay, more, I’ll wager a Nap. that in her own set, amidst the peculiar horrors who form her daily intimates, she is a strong-minded sensible woman, ‘that won’t stand humbug,’ and so on. These are specialities; they wear thick shoes, woollen petticoats, and brown veils, quarrel with cabmen, and live at Clapham.”

“But why do they come abroad?”

“Ah! that is the question that would puzzle nineteen out of every twenty of us. With a panorama in Leicester-square, and a guide-book in a chimney-corner, we should know more of the Tyrol than we’ll ever acquire junketing along in a hired coach, and only eager not to pay too much for one’s ‘Kalbsbraten’ or ‘Schweinfleisch,’ and yet here we come in shoals—to grumble and complain of all our self-imposed miseries, and incessantly lament the comforts of the land that we won’t live in.”

“Some of us come for health,” said Loyd, sorrowfully.

“And was there ever such a blunder? Why the very vicissitudes of a continental climate are more trying than any severity in our own. Imagine the room we are now sitting in, of a winter’s evening, with a stove heated to ninety-five, and the door opening every five minutes to a draught of air eleven degrees below zero! You pass out of this furnace to your bed-room, by a stair and corridor like the Arctic regions, to gain an uncarpeted room, with something like a knife-tray for a bed, and a poultice of feathers for a coverlet!”

“And for all that we like it, we long for it; save, pinch, screw, and sacrifice Heaven knows what of home enjoyment just for six weeks or two months of it.”

“Shall I tell you why? Just because Simpkins has done it Simpkins has been up the Rhine and dined at the Cursaal at Ems, and made his little début at roulette at Wiesbaden, and spoken his atrocious French at Frankfort, and we won’t consent to be less men of the world than Simpkins; and though Simpkins knows that it doesn’t ‘pay,’ and *I* know that it doesn’t pay, we won’t ‘peach’ either of us, just for the pleasure of seeing you, and a score like you, fall into the same blunder, experience the same disasters, and incur the same disappointments as ourselves.”

“No. I don’t agree with you; or, rather, I won’t agree with you. I am determined to enjoy this holiday of mine to the utmost my health will let me, and you shall not poison the pleasure by that false philosophy which, affecting to be deep, is only depreciatory.”

“And the honourable gentleman resumed his seat, as the newspapers say, amidst loud and vociferous cheers, which lasted for several minutes.” This Calvert said as he drummed a noisy applause upon the table, and made Loyd’s face glow with a blush of deep shame and confusion.

“I told you, the second day we travelled together, and I tell you again now, Calvert,” said he, falteringly, “that we are nowise suited to each other, and never could make good travelling companions. You know far more of life than I either do or wish to know. You see things with an acute and piercing clearness which I cannot attain to. You have no mind for the sort of humble things which give pleasure to a man simple as myself; and, lastly, I don’t like to say it, but I must, your means are so much more ample than mine, that to associate with you I must live in a style totally above my pretensions. All these are confessions more or less painful to make, but now that I have made them, let me have the result, and say, good-bye—good-bye.”

There was an emotion in the last words that more than compensated for what preceded them. It was the genuine sorrow that loneliness ever impresses on certain natures; but Calvert read the sentiment as a tribute to himself, and hastily said, “No, no, you are all wrong. The very disparities you complain of are the bonds between us. The differences in our temperament are the resources by which the sphere of our observation will be widened—my scepticism will be the corrector of your hopefulness—and, as to means, take my word for it, nobody can be harder up than I am, and if you’ll only keep the bag, and limit the outgoings, I’ll submit to any shortcomings when you tell me they are savings.”

“Are you serious—downright in earnest in all this?” asked Loyd.

“So serious, that I propose our bargain should begin from this hour. We shall each of us place ten Napoleons in that bag of yours. You shall administer all outlay, and I bind myself to follow implicitly all your behests, as though I were a ward and you my guardian.”

“I’m not very confident about the success of the scheme. I see many difficulties already, and there may be others that I cannot foresee; still, I am willing to give it a trial.”

“At last I realise one of my fondest anticipations which was to travel without the daily recurring miseries of money reckoning.”

“Don’t take those cigars, they are supplied by the waiter, and cost two groschen each, and they sell for three groschen a dozen in the Platz;” and, so saying, Loyd removed the plate from before him in a quiet business-like way, that promised well for the spirit is which his trust would be exercised.

Calvert laughed as he laid down the cigar, but his obedience ratified the pact between them.

“When do we go from this?” asked he, in a quiet and half-submissive tone.

“Oh, come, this is too much!” said Loyd. “I undertook to be purser, but not pilot.”

“Well, but I insist upon your assuming all the cares of legislation. It is not alone that I want not to think of the cash; but I want to have no anxieties about the road we go, where we halt, and when we move on. I want, for once in my life, to indulge the glorious enjoyment of perfect indolence—such another chance will scarcely offer itself.”

“Be it so. Whenever you like to rebel, I shall be just as ready to abdicate. I’ll go to my room now and study the map, and by the time you have finished your evening’s stroll

on the bridge, I shall have made the plan of our future wanderings."

"Agreed!" said Calvert. "I'm off to search for some of those cheap cigars you spoke of."

"Stay; you forget that you have not got any money. Here are six silver groschen; take two dozen, and see that they don't give you any of those vile Swiss ones in the number."

He took the coin with becoming gravity, and set out on his errand.

CHAPTER III. FELLOW-TRAVELLERS' LIFE

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PARTLY to suit Calvert's passion for fishing, partly to meet his own love of a quiet, unbroken, easy existence, Loyd decided for a ramble through the lakes of Northern Italy; and, in about ten days after the compact had been sealed, they found themselves at the little inn of the Trota, on the Lago d'Orta. The inn, which is little more than a cottage, is beautifully situated on a slender promontory that runs into the lake, and is itself almost hidden by the foliage of orange and oleander trees that cover it. It was very hard to believe it to be an inn with its trellised vine-walk, its little arched boat-house, and a small shrine beside the lake, where on certain saints' days, a priest said a mass, and blessed the fish and those that caught them. It was still harder, too, to credit the fact when one discovered his daily expenses to be all comprised within the limits of a few francs, and this with the services of the host, Signor Onofrio, for boatman.

To Loyd it was a perfect paradise. The glorious mountain range, all rugged and snow-capped—the deep-bosomed chestnut-woods—the mirror-like lake—the soft and balmy air, rich in orange odours—the earth teeming with violets—all united to gratify the senses, and wrap the mind in a dreamy ecstasy and enjoyment. It was equally a spot to relax in or to work, and although now more disposed for the former, he planned in himself to come back here, at some future day, and labour with all the zest that a strong resolve to succeed inspires.

What law would he not read? What mass of learned lore would he not store up! What strange and curious knowledge

would he not acquire in this calm seclusion! He parcelled out his day in imagination; and, by rising early, and by habits of uninterrupted study, he contemplated that in one long vacation here he would have amassed an amount of information that no discursive labour could ever attain. And then, to distract him from weightier cares, he would write those light and sketchy things, some of which had already found favour with editors. He had already attained some small literary successes, and was like a very young man, delighted with the sort of recognition they had procured him; and last of all, there was something of romance in this life of mysterious seclusion. He was the hero of a little story to himself, and this thought diffused itself over every spot and every occupation, as is only known to those who like to make poems of their lives, and be to their own hearts their own epic.

Calvert, too, liked the place; but scarcely with the same enthusiasm. The fishing was excellent. He had taken a “four-pounder,” and heard of some double the size. The cookery of the little inn was astonishingly good. Onofrio had once been a courier, and picked up some knowledge of the social chemistry on his travels. Beccafichi abounded, and the small wine of the Podere had a false smack of Rhenish, and then with cream, and fresh eggs, and fresh butter, and delicious figs in profusion, there were, as he phrased it, “far worse places in the hill country!”

Resides being the proprietor of the inn, Onofrio owned a little villa, a small cottage-like thing on the opposite shore of the lake, to which he made visits once or twice a week, with a trout, or a capon, or a basket of artichokes, or some fine peaches—luxuries which apparently always found ready purchasers amongst his tenants. He called them English, but his young guests, with true British phlegm, asked him no questions about them, and he rarely, if ever, alluded to them. Indeed, his experience of English people had enabled