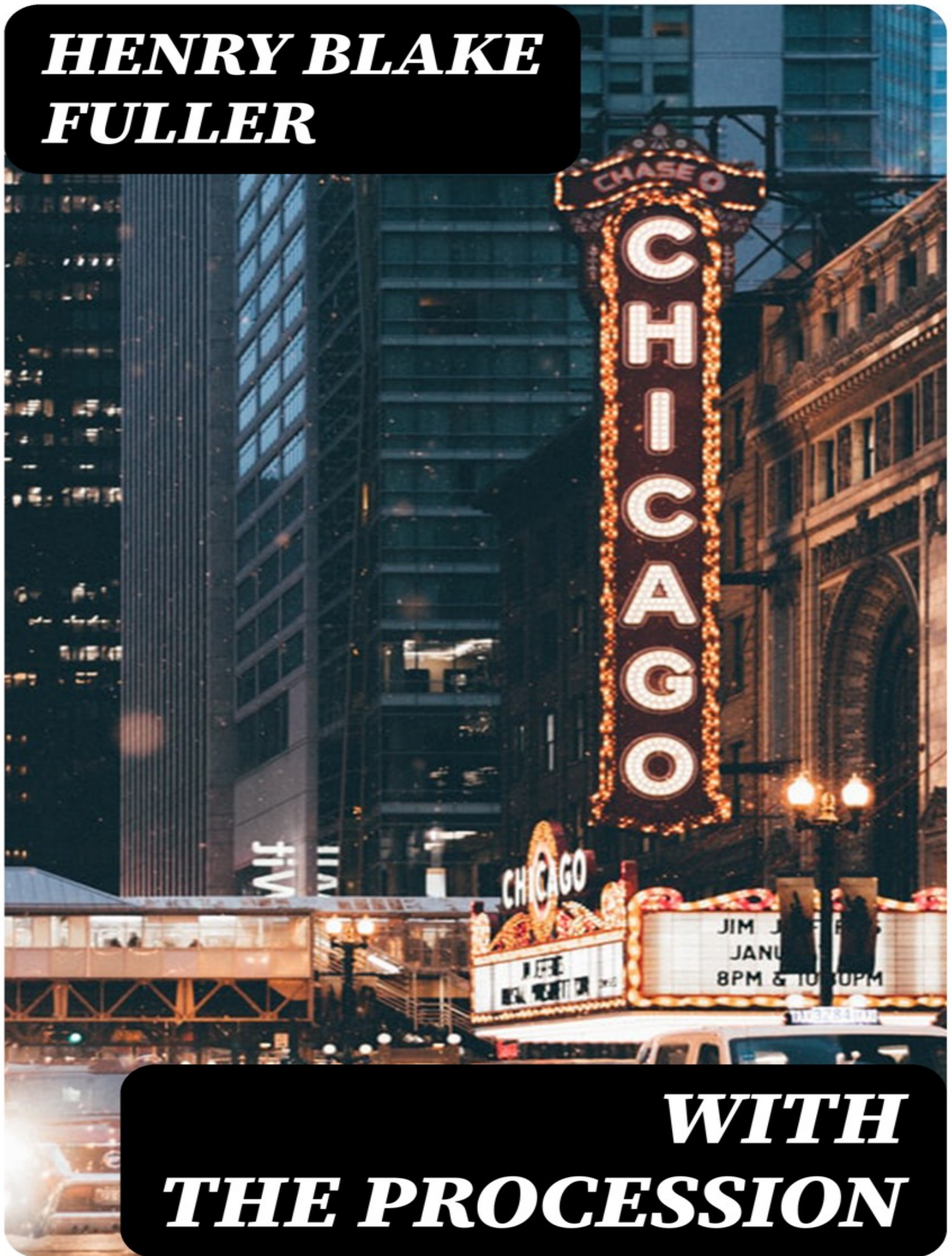


***HENRY BLAKE
FULLER***



***WITH
THE PROCESSION***

Henry Blake Fuller

With the Procession

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I

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When old Mr. Marshall finally took to his bed, the household viewed this action with more surprise than sympathy, and with more impatience than surprise. It seemed like the breaking down of a machine whose trustworthiness had been hitherto infallible; his family were almost forced to the acknowledgement that he was but a mere human being after all. They had enjoyed a certain intimacy with him, in lengths varying with their respective ages, but they had never made a full avowal that his being rested on any tangible physical basis. Rather had they fallen into the way of considering him as a disembodied intelligence, whose sole function was to direct the transmutation of values and credits and resources and opportunities into the creature comforts demanded by the state of life unto which it had please Providence to call them; and their dismay was now such as might occur at the Mint if the great stamp were suddenly and of its own accord to cease its coinage of double-eagles and to sink into a silence of supine idleness. His wife and children acknowledged, indeed, his head and his hands—those it were impossible to overlook; but his head stopped with the rim of his collar, while his hands—those long, lean hands, freckled, tufted goldishly between joints and knuckles—they

never followed beyond the plain gilt sleeve-buttons (marked with a Roman M) which secured the overlapping of his cuffs. No, poor old David Marshall was like one of the early Tuscan archangels, whose scattered members are connected by draperies merely, with no acknowledged organism within; nor were his shining qualities fully recognized until the resolutions passed by the Association of Wholesale Grocers reached the hands of his bereaved——

But this is no way to begin.

* * * * *

The grimy lattice-work of the drawbridge swung to slowly, the steam-tug blackened the dull air and roiled the turbid water as it dragged its schooner on towards the lumber-yards of the South Branch, and a long line of waiting vehicles took up their interrupted course through the smoke and the stench as they filed across the stream into the thick of business beyond: first a yellow street-car; then a robust truck laden with rattling sheet-iron, or piled high with fresh wooden pails and willow baskets; then a junk-cart bearing a pair of dwarfed and bearded Poles, who bumped in unison with the jars of its clattering springs; then, perhaps, a bespattered buggy, with reins jerked by a pair of sinewy and impatient hands. Then more street-cars; then a butcher's cart loaded with the carcasses of calves—red, black, piebald—or an express wagon with a yellow cur yelping from its rear; then, it may be, an insolently venturesome landau, with crested panel and top-booted coachman. Then drays and omnibuses and more street-cars; then, presently, somewhere in the line, between the tail end of one truck and the menacing tongue of another, a family carry-all—a

carry-all loaded with its family, driven by a man of all work, drawn by a slight and amiable old mare, and encumbered with luggage which shows the labels of half the hotels of Europe.

It is a very capable and comprehensive vehicle, as conveyances of that kind go. It is not new, it is not precisely in the mode; but it shows material and workmanship of the best grade, and it is washed, oiled, polished with scrupulous care. It advances with some deliberation, and one might fancy hearing in the rattle of its tires, or in the suppressed flapping of its rear curtain, a word of plaintive protest. "I am not of the great world," it seems to say; "I make no pretence to fashion. We are steady and solid, but we are not precisely in society, and we are far, very far indeed, from any attempt to cut a great figure. However, do not misunderstand our position; it is not that we are under, nor that we are exactly aside; perhaps we have been left just a little behind. Yes, that might express it—just a little behind."

How are they to catch up again—how rejoin the great caravan whose fast and furious pace never ceases, never slackens? Not, assuredly, by the help of the little sorrel mare, whose white mane swings so mildly, and whose pale eyelashes droop so diffidently when some official hand at a crowded crossing brings her to a temporary stand-still. Not by the help of the coachman, who wears a sack-coat and a derby hat, and whose frank, good-natured face turns about occasionally for a friendly participation in the talk that is going on behind. Can it be, then, that any hopes for an accelerated movement are packed away in the bulging portmanteau which rests squeezed in between the

coachman's legs? Two stout straps keep it from bursting, and the crinkled brown leather of its sides is completely pasted over with the mementoes used by the hosts of the Old World to speed the parting guest. "London" and "Paris" shine in the lustre of the last fortnight; "Tangier" is distinctly visible; "Buda-Pest" may be readily inferred despite the overlapping labels of "Wien" and "Bâle"; while away off to one corner a crumpled and lingering shred points back, though uncertainly, to the Parthenon and the Acropolis. And in the midst of this flowery field is planted a large M after the best style of the White Star Line.

Who has come home bearing all these sheaves?

Is it, to begin with, the young girl who shares the front seat with the driver, and who faces with an innocent unconcern all the clamor and evil of a great city? There is a half-smile on her red lips, and her black eyes sparkle with a girlish gayety—for she does not know how bad the world is. At the same time her chin advances confidently, and her dark eyebrows contract with a certain soft imperiousness—for she does not know how hard the world is nor how unyielding. Sometimes she withdraws her glance from the jostling throng to study the untidy and overlapping labels on the big portmanteau; she betrays a certain curiosity, but she shows at the same time a full determination not to seem over-impressed. No, the returned traveller is not Rosy Marshall; all that *she* knows of life she has learned from the broadcast cheapness of English story-tellers and from a short year's schooling in New York.

Is it, then, the older girl who fills half of the rear seat and who, as the cruel phrase goes, will never see thirty again?

She seems to be tall and lean, and one divines, somehow, that her back is narrow and of a slab-like flatness. Her forehead is high and full, and its bulging outlines are but slightly softened by a thin and dishevelled bang. Her eyes are of a light and faded blue, and have the peculiar stare which results from over-full eyeballs when completely bordered by white. Her long fingers show knotted joints and nails that seem hopelessly plebeian; sometimes she draws on open-work lace mitts, and then her hands appear to be embroiling each other in a mutual tragedy. No, poor Jane is thoroughly, incorruptibly indigenous; she is the best and dearest girl in half the world, as you shall see; but all her experiences have lain between Sandusky and Omaha.

Perhaps, then, the returned traveller is the elderly woman seated by her side. Perhaps—and perhaps not. For she seems a bit too dry and sapless and self-contained—as little susceptible, in fact, to the gentle dews of travel as an umbrella in a waterproof case. Moreover, it is doubtful if her bonnet would pass current beyond the national confines. One surmises that she became years ago the victim of arrested development; that she is a kind of antiquated villager—a geologic survival from an earlier age; that she is a house-keeper cumbered and encompassed by minute cares largely of her own making. It is an easy guess that, for Eliza Marshall, London is in another world, that Tangier is but a remote and impracticable abstraction, and that all her strength and fortitude might be necessary merely to make the trip to Peoria.

There is but one other occupant of the carriage remaining—the only one, after all, who can or could be the

owner of the baggage. He is a young man of twenty-three, and he sits with his back to the horse on a little seat which has been let down for the occasion between the usual two; his knees crowd one of the girls and his elbows the other. He seems uncommonly alert and genial; he focusses brilliantly the entire attention of the party. His little black mustache flaunts with a picturesque upward flourish, and it is supplemented by a small tuft at the edge of his underlip—an embellishment which overlays any slight trace of lingering juvenility with an effect which is most knowing, experienced, caprine, if you like, and which makes fair amends for the blanched cheeks, wrinkled brows and haggard eyes that the years have yet to accomplish for him. A navy-blue tie sprinkled with white interlacing circles spreads loosely and carelessly over the lapels of his coat; and while his clever eyes dart intelligently from one side to the other of the crowded thoroughfare, his admiring family make their own shy observations upon his altered physiognomy and his novel apparel—upon his shoes and his hat particularly; they become acquainted thus with the Florentine ideal of foot-wear, and the latest thing evolved by Paris in the way of head-gear.

This young man has passed back through London quite unscathed. Deduce from his costume the independence of his character and the precise slant of his propensities.

The carriage moves on, with a halt here, a spurt there, and many a jar and jolt between; and Truesdale Marshall throws over the shifting and resounding panorama an eye freshened by a four years' absence and informed by the contemplation of many strange and diverse spectacles.

Presently a hundred yards of unimpeded travel ends in a blockade of trucks and street-cars and a smart fusillade of invective. During this enforced stoppage the young man becomes conscious of a vast unfinished structure that towers gauntly overhead through the darkening and thickening air, and for which a litter of iron beams in the roadway itself seems to promise an indefinite continuation skyward.

"Two, three, four—six, seven—nine," he says, craning his neck and casting up his eye. Then, turning with a jocular air to the elder lady opposite, "I don't suppose that Marshall & Belden, for instance, have got up to nine stories yet!"

"Marshall & Belden!" she repeated. Her enunciation was strikingly ejaculatory, and she laid an impatient and unforgiving emphasis upon the latter name. "I don't know what will happen if your father doesn't assert himself pretty soon."

"I should think as much!" observed the elder girl, explosively; "or they will never get up even to seven. The idea of Mr. Belden's proposing to enlarge by taking that ground adjoining! But of course poor pa didn't put up the building himself, nor anything; oh no! So *he* doesn't know whether the walls will stand a couple of extra stories or not. Upon my word," she went on with increased warmth, "I don't feel quite sure whether pa was the one to start the business in the first place and to keep it going along ever since, or whether he's just a new errand-boy, who began there a week ago! August, are we stuck here to stay forever?"

The little sorrel mare started up again and entered upon another stage of her journey. The first lights began to

appear in the store-fronts; the newsboys were shrieking the last editions of the evening papers; the frenzied comedy of belated shopping commenced to manifest itself upon the pavements.

The throng of jostling women was especially thick and eager before a vast and vulgar front whose base was heaped with cheap truck cheaply ticketed, and whose long row of third-story windows was obscured by a great reach of cotton cloth tacked to a flimsy wooden frame. Unprecedented bargains were offered in gigantic letters by the new proprietors, "Eisendrath & Heide..."—the rest of the name flapped loosely in the wind.

"Alas, poor Wethersby, I knew him well," observed Marshall, absently. He cast a pensive eye upon the still-remaining name of the former proprietor, and took off his hat to weigh it in his hands with a pretence of deep speculation. "Well, the Philistines haven't got hold of *us* yet, have they?" he remarked, genially; he had not spent six months in Vienna for nothing. "I suppose we are still worth twenty sous in the franc, eh?"

"I suppose," replied his mother, with a grim brevity. She rather groped for his meaning, but she was perfectly certain of her own.

"I guess pa's all right," declared his sister, "as long as he is left alone and not interfered with."

The evening lights doubled and trebled—long rows of them appeared overhead at incalculable altitudes. The gongs of the cable cars clanged more and more imperiously as the crowds surged in great numbers round grip and trailer. The night life of the town began to bestir itself, and

little Rosy, from her conspicuous place, beamed with a bright intentness upon its motley spectacle, careless of where her smiles might fall. For her the immodest theatrical poster drooped in the windows of saloons, or caught a transient hold upon the hoardings of uncompleted buildings; brazen blare and gaudy placards (disgusting rather than indecent) invited the passer-by into cheap museums and music-halls; all the unclassifiable riff-raff that is spawned by a great city leered from corners, or slouched along the edge of the gutters, or stood in dark doorways, or sold impossible rubbish in impossible dialects wherever the public indulgence permitted a foothold.

To Rosy's mother all this involved no impropriety. Eliza Marshall's Chicago was the Chicago of 1860, an Arcadia which, in some dim and inexplicable way, had remained for her an Arcadia still—bigger, noisier, richer, yet different only in degree, and not essentially in kind. She herself had traversed these same streets in the days when they were the streets of a mere town, Fane, accompanying her mother's courses as a child, had seen the town develop into a city. And now Rosy followed in her turn, though the *urbs in horto* of the earlier time existed only in the memory of "old settlers" and in the device of the municipal seal, while the great Black City stood out as a threatening and evil actuality. Mild old Mabel had drawn them all in turn or together, and had philosophized upon the facts as little as any of them; but Rosy's brother (who had been about, and who knew more than he was ever likely to tell) looked round at her now and then with a vague discomfort.

"There!" called their mother, suddenly; "did you see that?" A big lumpish figure on the crossing had loomed up at the mare's head, a rough hand had seized her bridle, and a raw voice with a rawer brogue had vented a piece of impassioned profanity on both beast and driver. "Well, I don't thank that policeman for hitting Mabel on the nose, I can tell him. August, did you get his number?"

"No'm," answered the coachman. He turned round familiarly. "I got his breath."

"I should think so," said Truesdale. "And such shoes as they have, and such hands, and such linen! Didn't that fellow see what we were? Couldn't he realize that we pay for the buttons on his coat? Mightn't he have tried to apprehend that we were people of position here long before he had scraped his wretched steerage-money together? And what was it he had working in his cheek?"

"I think I know," responded August mumbling.

"Like enough," rejoined Truesdale, with his eye upon the coachman's own jaw.

His mother's sputter of indignation died rapidly away. It was, indeed, her notion that the guardians of the public peace should show some degree of sobriety, respect, neatness, and self-control, as well as a reasonable familiarity with the accents of the country; but her Arcadia was full of painful discrepancies, and she did not add to her own pain by too serious an attempt to reconcile them. Besides, what is a policeman compared with a detective?

Mabel, released from the arm of the law, jarred over another line of car tracks, whereon a long row of monsters glared at one another's slow advances with a single great

red eye, and then she struck a freer gait on the succeeding stretch of Belgian blocks. Presently she passed a lofty building which rose in colonnades one above another, but whose walls were stained with smoke, whose windows were half full of shattered panes, and whose fraudulent metallic cornice curled over limply and jarred and jangled in the evening breeze—one more of the vicissitudes of mercantile life.

"Well, I'm glad the fire-fiend hasn't got Marshall & Co. yet," said the young man, restored to good-humor by the sight of another's misfortune. He used unconsciously the old firm name.

"But he'd get us fast enough if the insurance was taken off," declared Jane. "Do you know, Dicky," she went on, "how much that item costs us a year? Or have you any idea how much it has amounted to in the last twenty, without our ever getting one cent back? Well, there's ten thousand in the Hartford and eight in the Monongahela and eleven in—"

"Dear me, Jane!" exclaimed her brother, in some surprise; "where do you pick up all this?"

Rosy turned her head half round. "Mr. Brower tells her," she said, with a disdainful brevity.

Her face was indistinct in the twilight, but if its expression corresponded with the inflection of her voice, her nostrils were inflated and her lips were curled in disparagement. To Jane, in her dark corner of the carriage, this was patent enough. Indeed, it was sufficiently obvious to all that Jane's years availed little to save her from the searching criticism of her younger sister, and that Miss

Rosamund Marshall bestowed but slight esteem—or, at least, but slight approval—upon Mr. Theodore Brower.

"Supposing he *does* tell me!" called Jane, absurdly allowing herself to be put on the defensive. "It's a mighty good thing, I take it. If there's anybody else in the family but me who knows or cares anything about poor pa's business, I should like to be told who it is!"

"That will do, Jane," sounded her mother's voice in cold correction. "There's no need for you to talk so. Your father has run his own business now for thirty-five years, with every year better than the year before, and I imagine he knows how to look out for himself. Thank goodness, we are on a respectable pavement once more."

Mabel, turning a sudden corner, had given them a quick transition from the rattle and jar of granite to the gentle palpitation that is possible on well-packed macadam. The carriage passed in review a series of towering and glittering hotels, told off a score or more of residences of the elder day, and presently drew up before the gate of an antiquated homestead in the neighborhood of the Panoramas.

"Just the same old place," murmured Truesdale, as he writhed out of his cramped quarters and stood on the carriage-block in the dusk to stretch his legs. "Wonderful how we contrive to stand stock-still in the midst of all this stir and change!"

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It was at Vevey, one morning late in August, that Truesdale Marshall received the letter which turned his face homeward—the summons which made it seem obligatory for him to report at headquarters, as he phrased it, without too great a delay. He was pacing along the terrace which bounded the pension garden lakeward, and his eye wandered back and forth between the superscription of the envelope and the distant mountain-shore of Savoy, as it appeared through the tantalizing line of clipped acacias which bordered the roadway that ran below him.

"'Richard T. Marshall, Esq.,'" he read, slowly, with his eye on the accumulation of post-marks and renewed addresses. "They keep it up right along, don't they? I can't make them feel that initials on an envelope are not the best form. I can't bring them to see that 'Esq.' on foreign letters is worse than a superfluity." He referred once more to the mountains of Savoy; they seemed to offer no loophole of escape. "Well, I've got to do it, I suppose."

He made some brief calculations, and found that he could put himself in marching order within a month or so. There was the trunk stored at Geneva; there was that roomful of furniture at Freiburg—Freiburg-im-Breisgau; there was that brace of paintings boxed up in Florence; and there were the frayed and loosely flying ends of many miscellaneous friendships.

"I should think the end of October might do for them," he droned, reflectively. "They can't mean to cut me off any shorter than that."

He saw the steamer taking on passengers between the two rotund chestnut-trees that adorned the end of the stubby little stone pier. Voices of shrieking gladness came across from the coffee-tables on the terrace of the Three Crowns, his nearest neighbor to the right.

"Well, America is meeting me half way," he said; "I don't want to seem reluctant myself. Suppose we make it Southampton, about October 15th?"

Truesdale Marshall had been away from home and friends for about the length of time ordinarily required by a course through college, but it was not at college that most of this period had been passed. He had left Yale at the end of his sophomore year, and had taken passage, not for Chicago, but for Liverpool, compromising thus his full claims on nurture from an alma mater for the more alluring prospect of culture and adventure on the Continent. This supplementary course of self-improvement and self-entertainment had now continued for three years.

He had written back to his family at discreet intervals, his communications not being altogether untinctured, it is true, by considerations of a financial nature; and his sister Jane, who charged herself with the preservation of this correspondence, would have undertaken to reconstruct his route and to make a full report of his movements up to date on ten minutes' notice. She kept his letters in a large box-file that she had teased from her father at the store; and two or three times a year she overhauled her previous entries, so to speak, and added whatever new ones were necessary to bring her books down to the present day.

She pleased herself, on the occasion of such reviews, with the thought that her brother's long absence was so largely and so laboriously educational. There, for example, was his winter and spring at Heidelberg, which she figured as given over to Kant and Hegel. This sojourn was attested by a photograph which showed her brother in a preposterous little round cap, as well as with a bar of sticking-plaster (not markedly philosophical, it must be confessed) upon one cheek.

Again, there was his six months' stay in Paris, during which time he had dabbled in pigments at one of the studios affected by Americans. Her vouchers for this period consisted of several water-colors; they were done in a violent and slap-dash fashion, and had been inspired, apparently, by scenes in the environs of the capital. They were marked "Meudon" and "St. Cloud" and "Suresnes," with the dates; both names and dates were put where they showed up very prominently. Jane was rather overcome by these sketches on a first view, and after she had pinned them up on the walls of her bedroom (she had made no scruple over an immediate individual appropriation) she was obliged to acknowledge that you had to step back some little distance in order to "get them."

Then there was his year at Milan, during which he was engaged in the cultivation of his voice at the Conservatory. "A whole year," said innocent Jane to herself; "think of Dick's staying in one place as long as that!" She made no account of the easily accessible joys of Monte Carlo, but figured him, instead, as running interminable scales at all hours of day and night, and as participating, now and then, in the chorus

at the Scala, for which purpose, as he wrote her, he had had a pair of tights made to order. In another letter he sent her a pen-and-ink sketch of himself as he appeared while studying the last act of "Favorita." He explained that the large looking-glasses surrounding him were designed to give the disillusioned Fernando opportunity to see whether his facial expression was corresponding to the nature of the music he was interpreting.

All this completely overpowered poor Jane; it enveloped her brother's head in a roseate halo; it wrapped him in the sweet and voluminous folds of a never-failing incense; it imparted a warm glow to his coolish summer in the Engadine, and it illumined his archaeological prowlings through the Peloponnesus; it opened up a dozen diverging vistas to the enthusiastic girl herself, and advanced her rapidly in long courses of expansion and improvement. Above all, it filled her with a raging impatience for his return. "Between him and me," she would say to herself, "something *may* be done. Pa'll never do anything to get us out of this rut; nor ma. Neither will Roger nor Alice. And Rosy—well, Rosy's too young to count on, yet. But Richard Truesdale Marshall, the younger son of the well-known David Marshall, of Lake Street, recently returned from a long course of travel and study abroad"—she seemed to be quoting from the printed column—"can. Especially when assisted by his sister, the clever and intellectual Miss Jane Marshall, who—"

"Oh, bother this bang!" exclaimed Miss Jane Marshall, pettishly. She threw her comb down between pin-cushion and cologne bottle, and flattened a frowning and protesting

glance against her mirror. "I guess I'll give up trying to be beautiful, and just be quaint."

David Marshall received his son with less exaltation. He had a vivid recollection of the liberal letter of credit which had started the young man on his way, and this recollection had subsequently been touched up and heightened by the payment of many drafts for varying but considerable amounts; and he was now concerning himself with the practical question, What have I got for my money? He felt his own share in the evolution of this brilliant and cultured youth, whose corona of accomplishments might well dazzle and even abash a plain business person; and he awaited with interest a response to the reasonable interrogation, to what end shall all these means be turned? He received his son with a dry and cautious kindness, determined not to be too precipitate in ascertaining the young man's ideas as to the future—a week more or less could make no great difference now.

David Marshall was a tall, spare man whose slow composure of carriage invested him with a sort of homely dignity. He wore a reddish beard, now largely touched with white—a mixture whose effect prompted the suggestion that his grandfather might have been a Scotchman; and the look from his blue eyes (though now no longer at their brightest) convinced you that his sight was competent to cover the field of vision to which he had elected to restrict himself. He seemed completely serious, to have been so always, to have been born half grown up, to have been dowered at the start with too keen a consciousness of the burdens and responsibilities of life. Coltishness, even by a

retrospect of fifty years, it was impossible to attribute to him. You imagined him as having been caught early, broken to harness at once, and kept between the shafts ever since. It was easy to figure him as backing into position with a sweet and reasonable docility—a docility which saw no other course or career for a properly minded young horse, and which looked upon the juvenile antics of others in the herd as an unintelligible and rather reprehensible procedure. He knew what he was for, and his way was before him.

He had acted on his knowledge, and now, at sixty, he seemed still to be travelling over the same long straight road, blinders at his eyes, a high wall on either side, no particular goal in the dusty distance, and an air of patient, self-approving resignation all about him. His burden, too, had increased with the years—just as his rut had grown deeper. Counting his family and his poor relations, and his employés and *their* families and poor relations, five or six hundred people were dependent on him. Many of these, of course, had seats so low that they were almost choked by the dust of the roadway; but others, more pleasantly situated, were able to overlook the enclosing walls and to enjoy the prospect beyond. Among these last was his younger son, who sat in the highest place of all, and thence surveyed the universe.

The Marshall house had been built at the time of the opening of the War, and as far "out" as seemed advisable for a residence of the better sort. In those days no definite building-line had been established, so that it was quite a walk from the front gate to the foot of the front steps. Neither, at that time, was ground too valuable to make a

good bit of yard impracticable—so that the house had plenty of space on all sides. It was a low, plain, roomy building with a sort of belvedere and a porch or two. The belvedere was lingeringly reminiscent of the vanishing classic, and the decorative woodwork of the porches showed some faint traces of the romantico-lackadaisical style which filled up the years between the ebb of the Greek and the vulgar flood-tide of Second-empire renaissance. Taken altogether, a sedate, stable, decorous old homestead, fit for the family within it.

In the back yard, behind a latticed screen-work, some shrubs and bushes survived from a garden once luxuriant, but now almost vanished. There had been a cherry-tree, too—a valiant little grower, which put forth a cloud of white blossoms late in every May, and filled a small pail with fruit early in every July. It was thus that Jane was enabled to celebrate her birthday (which fell about this time of year) with a fair-sized cherry pie; and in especially favorable seasons enough cherries were left over to make a small tart for Rosy.

But the atmosphere had years ago become too urban for the poor cherry-tree, which had long since disappeared from mortal ken; and the last of the currant-bushes, too, were holding their own but poorly against the smoke and cinders of metropolitan life. One of Jane's earliest recollections was that of putting on her flat and taking her tin pan and accompanying her mother out to pick currants for the annual jelly-making. Her mother wore a flat, too, and carried a tin pan—both of proportionate size. The flats had long since been cast aside, and the pans had become less

necessary with the dwindling of the currant-bushes; but the jelly-making returned with every recurring July. A great many quarts of alien currants and a great many pounds of white sugar were fused in that hot and sticky kitchen, and then the red-stained cloths were hung to dry upon the last remaining bushes. Jane would sometimes reproach her parent with such a proceeding—which seemed to her hardly less reprehensible than the seething of a kid in its mother's milk; but Eliza Marshall had scant receptivity for any such poetical analogies. The cloths, as seen through the lattice-work, had a somewhat sensational aspect; they spoke of battle and murder and sudden death, and sometimes the policeman passing by, if he was a new one, thought for a second that he had stumbled on a "clew."

Eliza Marshall took this risk quite willingly; the idea of buying her jelly ready-made never crossed her mind. No; she made her own year after year, and poured it out into her little glass tumblers, and sealed each tumbler with a half-sheet of notepaper, and marked each sheet according to the sort of jelly it protected—sometimes she made grape or crab-apple, too. She doled out her products very economically during the winter and spring. Then she would discover, about the first of June, that she had a three months' supply still on hand. Then, during the summer, the family would live on jelly and little else.

But she remained, year after year, the same firm, determined, peremptory person in her kitchen; she never spared herself there, and she never spared anybody else.

She gave no more quarter at the front of the house than at the back. To get fresh air into her dim and time-worn

parlor and to keep sun and dust and smoke out—this was her one besetting problem. There were those windy days at the end of autumn, after the sprinkling-carts had been withdrawn from the boulevard; there were the days (about three hundred and sixty-five in the year) when the smoke and cinders from the suburban trains made her house as untidy as a switch-yard; and there was her husband's unconquerable propensity for smoking—a pleasure which she compelled him to take outside on the foot pavement. Here, on pleasant evenings, he would walk up and down alone, in a slow, meditative fashion—having little to say and nobody to say it to—until bedtime came.

This came early—from a habit early formed. The Chicago of his young married life had given him little reason for being abroad after half-past nine at night, and he appeared to find little more reason now than then. It would not, indeed, have been impossible to make him see that, in the interval, balls, concerts, spectacles, and such-like urban doings had come on with increasing number and brilliancy, and that there were now more interests to justify a man in remaining up until half-past ten, or even until eleven. But you could not have convinced him that all these opportunities were his.

Yet the consciousness of festivities sometimes obtruded upon his indifference. Now and then on summer evenings, when the wind was from the west, certain brazen discords originating a street or two behind the house would come to advise him that the Circassian girl was on view, or that a convention of lady snake-charmers was in session. Then there would be weeks of winter nights when the frozen

macadam in front of the house would ring with a thousand prancing hoofs and rumble for an hour with a steady flow of carriages, and the walls of the great temple of music a few hundred yards to the north would throw back all this clamor, with the added notes of slamming doors and shouted numbers and epic struggles between angry drivers and determined policemen; sometimes he would extend his smoking stroll far enough to skirt the edge of all this Babel. Then, towards midnight, long after all staid and sensible people were abed, the flood would roll back, faster yet under the quiet moon, louder yet through the frosty air. But he never met the Circassian beauty, and he would have found "l'Africaine," for example, both tedious and unreasonable. To him each of these publics was new, and no less new than alien. Besides, it would have seemed an uncanny thing to be abroad and stirring at midnight.

Why did he go to bed at half-past nine? In order that he might be at the store by half-past seven. Why must he be at the store by half-past seven? Because a very large area to the west and northwest of the town looked to him for supplies of teas, coffees, spices, flour, sugar, baking-powder; because he had always been accustomed to furnish these supplies; because it was the only thing he wanted to do; because it was the only thing he could do; because it was the only thing he was pleased and proud to do; because it was the sole thing which enabled him to look upon himself as a useful, stable, honored member of society.

But it need not be supposed that the Marshalls in their young married days had lived totally bereft of social diversion. Quite the contrary. They had had tea-parties and

card-parties now and then, and more than once they had thrown their house open for a church sociable. But the day came when the church jumped from its old site three blocks away to a new site three miles away. And by that time most of their old neighbors and fellow church-members had gone too—some southward, some northward, some heavenward. Then business, in the guise of big hotels, began marching down the street upon them, and business in all manner of guise ran up towering walls behind them that shut off the summer sun hours before it was due to sink; and traffic rang incessant gongs at their back door, and drew lengthening lines of freight-cars across the lake view from their front one; and Sunday crowds strolled and sprawled over the wide green between the roadway and the waterway, and tramps and beggars and peddlers advanced daily in a steady and disconcerting phalanx, and bolts and bars and chains and gratings and eternal vigilance were all required to keep mine from becoming thine; until, in the year of grace 1893, the Marshalls had almost come to realize that they were living solitary and in a state of siege. But they had never yet thought of capitulation nor of retreat; they were the Old Guard; they were not going to surrender, nor to die either.

As the advance guard of all, old David Marshall frequently occupied the most advanced bastion of all, the parlor bay-window. Here, in the half-dark, he was accustomed to sit and think; and his family let him sit and think, unconscious that it would sometimes be a kindness to break in upon the habit. He pondered on the markets and on the movements of trade; he kept one eye for the shabby

wayfarers who threw a longing look upon his basement gratings, and another for the showers of sparks and black plumes of smoke which came to remind him of corporate encroachments upon municipal rights. And here one evening he sat, some few days after his son's return, while a hubbub of female voices came to him from the next room. His sister-in-law from three miles down the street, and his married daughter from ten miles out in the suburbs, had come to show some civility to the returned traveller, and the conjunction of two such stars was not to be effected in silence. Nor was silence to be secured even by a retreat from one room to another.

"Well, pa, you *are* here, sure enough." A hand pulled aside the curtain and made the bay-window a part of the parlor again. "Poking off by yourself, and thinking—I know. When I've told you so many times not to."

It was Jane. It was her office to keep the family from disintegration.

None of them realized it—hardly she herself.

She perched on the arm of his big chair, placed her hand on his forehead, and looked in his face with a quizzical pretence of impatience. These little passages sometimes occurred in the bay-window—hardly anywhere else.

"Well, what is it this time?" she asked. Her intention was tender, but her voice issued with a kind of explosive grate—the natural product of vocal cords racked by the lake winds of thirty springs and wrecked by a thousand sudden and violent transitions from heat to cold and back again. "Not Mr. Belden, I hope?"

"No, Jennie. That will come out all right, I expect. We had a talk with the builder about it today."

He looked at her with a kind of wan and patient smile. His own voice was dry, husky, sibilant—sixty years of Lake Michigan.

She smiled back at his "Jennie"; that was always her name on such occasions. "It isn't about Oolong?" she asked, in burlesque anxiety.

"No."

"Well, then, is it the—Sisters?"

"Not the Sisters. They were in last week."

"Guess again, then," said Jane, perseveringly. "Is it—is it the Benevolent Policemen?"

"No, not the Policemen. They won't be around for a month yet."

Her hand dropped to his shoulder and her eyes searched his. To another they might have seemed staring; to him they were only intent. "Poor pa; he's like a ten-pin standing at the end of the alley, isn't he? They all take a turn at him, don't they?"

"I'm afraid that's about it, Jennie." He smiled rather wanly again and smoothed her hand with his own.

"Well, what else is there?" pondered Jane. "Is it the Afro-American bishop raising the mortgage on their chapel?"

"No. I guess the Afro-Americans have about paid things off by this time."

"How lonesome they must leave you? H'm! is it the Michigan Avenue

Property Owners assessing you again to fight the choo-choo cars?"

Her father shook his head and almost laughed.

"Is it The Wives of the Presidents'? Is it 'The Mothers of Great Men'?"

"What a girl!" he said, and laughed aloud. It seemed as if he wanted to laugh.

She eyed him narrowly. "There's only one thing more I can think of," she declared, screwing up her mouth and her eyes. "But I sha'n't ask you that—it's too silly. If I imagined for a moment that you could be thinking about old Mother Van Horn—"

She paused. Her father cast down his eyes half guiltily.

"Don't say you are, pa. That would be too absurd. You, with all the important things you have to carry in your head, to waste a minute on that frowzy old hag! It isn't worth it; it's nonsense."

"I don't know whether it is or not," responded her father, slowly. He passed a careful hand through the fringe of the chair. "That's what I'd like to find out."

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" rejoined Jane. "You sha'n't sit poking here in the dark and thinking of any such thing as that—not another minute. Come in and hear Dick tell how those students in Paris tied him to the wall and daubed him all red and green, and what he did to get even. *That's* worth while. And you haven't seen Aunt Lyddy yet, have you? So is *that*—isn't it? Then come along, do."



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"'When I was a student at Cadiz
I played on the Spanish guitar;
I used to make love to the ladies'—"

This brief snatch of song ended with the obvious and, indeed, inevitable rhyme for "Cadiz," and the singer completed the stanza by throwing an arch and rather insinuating glance at the young man who was lounging negligently on the chair beside her own. She herself leaned back rather negligently too, with her feet crossed; her elbows were crooked at varying angles, her fingers pressed imaginary frets or plucked at imaginary strings, and the spectator was supposed to be viewing an Andalusian grace and passion abandoned to the soft yet compelling power of music.

It was thus that Truesdale Marshall was welcomed home by his aunt Lydia.

His aunt Lydia—Mrs. Lydia Rhodes—was a plump and vivacious little brunette of forty, with a gloss on her black hair and a sparkle in her black eyes. She still retained a good deal of the superabundant vitality of youth; in her own house, when the curtains were down and the company not too miscellaneous, she was sometimes equal to a breakdown or a cake-walk. She was impelled by social aspirations of the highest nature, and was always lamenting, therefore, that she possessed so little dignity. She was a warm-