

Over rough speaking in private, Janet did not believe her sister would grieve much; but she knew that she would bitterly resent being treated discourteously in public.

"What is that gentleman's name? The one who has just gone out."

Looking round, Janet saw that she was being addressed by Mrs. Saunders.

"He is my brother-in-law, William Darton."

"Darton?" repeated Mrs. Saunders rather incredulously. "And was that your sister with him?"

Janet replied in the affirmative.

"Why, he looks old enough to be her father!—Whatever could have induced her to marry him?"

"He is very well off," said Janet, who was too much taken off her guard either to resent Mrs. Saunders' cross-questioning or to frame a reply which should reflect more credit on Adelaide.

"Well off, did you say?" asked Mrs. Saunders, in evident surprise. "This is a funny world to live in, and no mistake," she added; and then, as she moved away, she murmured to herself, "If I don't get to the bottom of this, my name's not Charlotte Saunders."

Notwithstanding her efforts to devote the whole of her attention to entertaining the factory-girls, Janet could not succeed in throwing off the unpleasant impression left on her mind by William Darton's strange behaviour.

Even when the evening was over, and she was walking home with her father, her thoughts were still with her sister's husband.

"My dear Janet, I thought this would have been so pleasant a surprise for you," remarked Mr. Slade, in a tone of deep resentment.

"What would be a pleasant surprise, father?" asked Janet, trying to rouse herself from her abstraction.

"Why, I have just been telling you that my efforts have been crowned with success, and that I have found a tenant for Willow Cottage. Now guess who it is."

"Please tell me. I am afraid I am too tired to guess."

"Mrs. Saunders and her niece, Miss Burnside."

"Indeed! I am very glad it is some one whom I know."

"Yes, I thought you would be gratified. I must confess that I hardly hoped to be successful, for Mrs. Saunders refused point-blank to entertain the idea when I first suggested it to her. But later on in the evening, after I had had an opportunity of explaining matters more fully to her, and of telling her that the house belonged to my son-in-law, who was prepared to be very generous in the matter of repairs, &c., to a suitable tenant, she quite snapped at the offer. It always answers to meet a shrewd business woman like Mrs. Saunders on her own ground."

All the way home Mr. Slade sounded a note of triumph, dwelling much on the satisfaction Mr. Darton would experience when he was informed of the proposed arrangement.

But the next day, as Janet was returning from the factory, she met her father coming out of Meadowlands, looking terribly crest-fallen.

"What does Mr. Darton say about Willow Cottage?" she asked.

"I think the man is mad," replied Mr. Slade, melodramatically. "I have no time to enter into an explanation now, as I must hurry away to keep an engagement for which I am already half an hour late. But I really do fear that my poor daughter's husband is going out of his mind. I can account for his extraordinary conduct on no other hypothesis."

END OF CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

SOME THINGS WE SAY, AND DO, IN AMERICA.



I HAD been absent from my native land many years that hot September morning upon which I returned, feeling half a pensive exile, half a homesick stranger, to New York.

Everything was strange to me; the very madness and riot of business signs upon Broadway, the novelty of the elevated railway on mighty stilts, even the breathless rush of people in the streets, seemed to me

something I had never seen before, so many and many a long year was it since I had seen them. Nothing came back to me as half-forgotten things do come back by something like the slow develop-

ment of the old-fashioned daguerreotype, and for a time I felt appalled that I had remained away from it so long that I no longer had a fatherland.

This nightmare impression of absolute estrangement from my own land lingered with me for months. In time it slowly wore off, and now I look back to the foreignness of America to me as upon a dream.

I never shall forget, however, various curious things that in those foreign days made an impression upon me. They are things that neither American nor stranger has ever, to my knowledge, related in print, notwithstanding the volumes of impressions concerning us that have been given to the world.

As we walked from one of the Sixth Avenue stations to the restaurant where I was to have my first "square American meal," I noticed how different the letter-boxes are from the purple-red pillars of England, re-

minding one of Tommy Atkins on guard at street-corners. They are dark green and small, and are fastened to street lamp-posts. They are so insignificant that I probably should not have noticed them but for the marvellous ornaments they each and all wore. These were ornaments in a true sense of the word, being proofs of the trustworthiness of the community those boxes served. They were bundles of papers, pamphlets, and even books, too bulky to be forced into the aperture for letters, therefore left there on the top of the box, in full view and open exposure to every passer-by, till the postman should make his next round.

This is a common practice all over America; that is, in cities. Every Christmas time since then I have been amazed to see how thoroughly the American public is trusted. Every Christmas, often at other times, the letter-boxes are filled high with packages of all sizes and shapes, awaiting the postman. Every one of them had a Christmas look, and even the postage stamps on them would tempt dozens of street-arabs, one would think. If any are stolen, I never heard of it, and the practice is so general as to receive no attention. Once at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Twentieth Street I saw a sudden gust of wind send half a dozen of these packages flying. Every passer-by put himself in pursuit, but he who caught the most of them was the pea-nut vendor whose stand is at that corner.

That opportunity is not lacking to steal is proved by the number of times I have paused at midnight, returning from some entertainment, to expatiate upon the honesty of a people that could see a stamped newspaper or two lie all night long upon the top of a post-box without running away with it.

The English postman, the French, Italian, German, are forbidden to receive packages and letters *for* the mail, but the American knows no such restriction. Hence, in the University town where I live one may see at all hours of the day stamped letters stuck under the keyhole-protector of doors, till the "letter man," as he is called here, shall in passing take them away. More than once I have seen a letter fastened down with a stone upon gate-posts, remaining there for hours in perfect security, till carried away by a knapsacked man in grey.

Ours is a very rural town, buried in foliage, with wide streets, gardens, and letter-boxes somewhat far apart. As a University town, lovingly inhabited by literary people, it sends and receives countless letters; these letters are left lying about, confided to public honesty in a perfectly startling way.

Upon that day of my return we stopped at a news-stand to buy a paper. The owner was nowhere to be seen, but upon the stand was perhaps twenty cents, perhaps more, in silver and copper. My companion selected a paper, laid down ten cents, took seven from the silver and copper collection, and we walked away.

I looked timorously over my shoulder, expecting to be grabbed by a policeman, although I had not yet seen one in America, they being few and far between.

Since then I have found exactly this a frequent practice, and once in New York, for three days in succession, I helped myself to both my paper and my change without once encountering the owner.

Yet there are New York aldermen in Sing-Sing prison, and Canada riots with our defaulters!

The simplicity which characterises literary and University circles here is in striking contrast to the extravagant flutter and pretentious flop of American fashionable life. Brains are the circulating medium, not money; ideas, not jewellery, are personal ornaments. The simplicity of daily life would remind one of that of quiet University towns in Germany, only that nothing really American *can* be sluggish, and that grotesque economies and pinching needs are not to our manner born. Many of the professors who have lived much abroad have brought foreign wives home with them; few of the American wives have not lived much abroad, and nothing provincial marks social intercourse in which many languages are spoken. The simplicity is not intellectual where men are in close communion and *rapport* with the most searching, complex, and abstruse minds of the age, and of all nations and races. Neither can it be said to be spiritual where the doctrine of evolution stands higher than that of special creation, and knowledge, not faith, is the mainspring of religion. It is merely a simplicity of outward habit, of homes, dress, manners, and conversation. That simplicity would be accounted eccentricity in the University cloisters of England, if it were not considered actual homespun rusticity. A prominent and still youthful professor makes an evening call. He is one who writes articles for American and European journals, that set the intellects of both countries agog. His mind is both massive and subtle, his speech trenchant, his dress and manner beyond reproach, and he sits all the evening with the package of eggs on his knees that he is taking home for to-morrow's breakfast! *We* make an evening call upon the wife of a professor and savant, of many tongues. We approach the house with reverence, humbled with consciousness that our tongues are so few, our own knowledge so shivering and mean a thing. Nevertheless, we are not in the least surprised when the wise professor himself answers the bell.

The baby-perambulator is a feature of American rural, even of University towns. Whether the young American father is fonder of his offspring than other men are, I am not fully prepared to say, although I have my "bias of opinion." Certainly he devotes himself more to its service than any man of equal social position in the world. The Frenchman adores his children, and appears continually with them in public, yet nowhere but in America would the college professor trundle his baby-cart through the streets with all the pride of a Roman emperor in triumphal procession. No slave is there to whisper, "Remember thou art mortal," and he evidently does not remember it, as he chirrups and "goo-goo's" to the drooling tyrant he fancies he governs—but don't.

When I arrived on that of September day, we went directly to a restaurant, that I might eat of green

corn, of egg-plant, summer squash, and monstrous water-melon, before the waning of their season.

It was not an aristocratic restaurant by any means; merely one of the *bourgeois* order, where food and cooking are strictly indigenous to the country, and French cooking and viands despised as "kickshaws" and "stuff." The patrons were well-to-do business men of the neighbourhood, mingled with clerks, book-keepers, and a preponderance of ladies from out of town on shopping excursions. Scarcely had we entered than I had a feeling that this is indeed a republic, where there is no servile class, and where even the restaurant *garçons* carry themselves jauntily, as if consciously in possession of a vote.

A little child with us knew no English, and chattered to us in her native French. The *garçon* who served us looked at her with smiling interest. Presently, he deliberately laid down his napkin, and with deliberation chucked her under the chin.

"That's a funny way to talk," he said; "better learn the American language; it's lots easier!"

"The land of the Free!" I murmured.

One day I was reading in a public library. Near me sat a young woman, neatly, even elegantly dressed, and attentively reading a file of periodicals devoted to housekeeping. I wished to see one of them, and

asked her for it. She gave it to me with easy good manners, and we entered into conversation. She told me, with a pretty foreign accent, how she cooked certain things, of which things her family were most fond, and of her intention, some time, to send some of her own recipes to this housekeeping journal. We parted with mutual politeness, and I did not see her again for some time. One week discrepancies arose between our linen list and articles returned from the laundress. I insisted to the youth who brought them that the laundress should come herself. She came. It was my friend of the public library.

We have an excellent table-girl, neat, light-handed, but not "light-fingered," and the colour of gingerbread. Serving breakfast and lunch, she waits upon us in a gay *foulard* over her woolly tresses, thus immensely adding to the picturesqueness of our somewhat foreign *ménage*. At dinner she appears in the *bonnet blanc* of a French *bonne*, and no persuasion can induce her to leave it off. As is the habit in America, our two servants eat exactly what we do, serving the kitchen table by de-serving the dining-room. One day our matron was about to send away the fried oysters. "You may have 'em all," said our black-and-tan Phyllis, replacing the dish; "we jest dispise 'em in the kitchen."

DELIVERANCE DINGLE.



TRIUMPHS OF TRADE.—II.

THE OLD TRADING COMPANIES.



ASSOCIATIONS of masterfulness still cling about the picture of the Doge of Venice wedding the Adriatic by casting his ring into its pale green waters. But the English monarchs of the seventeenth century arrogated to themselves a greater puissance when, by means of patents and charters, they handed over the unknown world to their adventurers, or claimed it for themselves. "I will find you a cluster of new islands," said a tawny navigator, grown hoarse with bawling to mariners in wind-smitten waters. "I will plant you a new colony," whispered a courtier, on bended knee, when a pause in lute or lyric gave a chance for diplomacy. "I will singe your enemy's beard!" exclaimed a confident warrior, to relax a curved lip or a wrinkled brow. The same answer came from the sovereign in each case. A pointed finger and a piece of parchment added islands and miles of new country to Britain, and much cruelty and privateering to its history. Neither Spain nor Holland nor Carthage wielded such a sceptre of sovereignty.

The sly courtiers, clever traders, and wrinkled sea-

dogs who formed the staple of the old companies, always gauged an English monarch's weakness. Glory and power were, in nearly every case, promised the sovereign, with the occasional addition of a percentage. John Cabot's patent of 1496 empowered him and his colleagues to go "to all parts, countries, and seas of the east, of the west, and of the north," and to set up the royal banner "in every village, town, castle, isle, or mainland, by them newly found." This was a pretty extensive commission, qualified by one-fifth of the trading profit to the monarch who claimed so much beforehand. Sir John Hawkins, when he obtained Elizabeth's permission "to lade negroes in Genoya and sell them in the West Indies," bringing home gold, pearls, and emeralds, was effusive enough to describe such a work as tending "to the contentation of her Highness, and the benefit of the whole realme." The East India Company was declared to have been founded "for the honour and profit of the nation." In granting a charter to Prince Rupert and others to form the Hudson Bay Company, in 1669, Charles II. set forth that prior discoveries, bearing on "a new passage into the South Sea"—one of the principal reasons for granting the patent—encouraged the hope that "by means thereof there may probably arise great advantage to us, and to our