

'You will, you will, we both will!' Olive Chancellor cried, in rapture. But after a little she went on: 'I wonder if you know what it means, young and lovely as you are—giving your life!'

Verena looked down for a moment in meditation.

'Well,' she replied, 'I guess I have thought more than I appear.'

'Do you understand German? Do you know "Faust"?' said Olive. "'*Entsagen sollst du, sollst entsagen!*'"

'I don't know German; I should like so to study it; I want to know everything.'

'We will work at it together—we will study everything,' Olive almost panted; and while she spoke the peaceful picture hung before her of still winter evenings under the lamp, with falling snow outside, and tea on a little table, and successful renderings, with a chosen companion, of Goethe, almost the only foreign author she cared about; for she hated the writing of the French, in spite of the importance they have given to women. Such a vision as this was the highest indulgence she could offer herself; she had it only at considerable intervals. It seemed as if Verena caught a glimpse of it too, for her face kindled still more, and she said she should like that ever so much. At the same time she asked the meaning of the German words.

'"Thou shalt renounce, refrain, abstain!" That's the way Bayard Taylor has translated them,' Olive answered.

'Oh, well, I guess I can abstain!' Verena exclaimed, with a laugh. And she got up rather quickly, as if by taking leave she might give a proof of what she meant. Olive put out her hands to hold her, and at this moment one of the *portières* of the room was pushed aside, while a gentleman was ushered in by Miss Chancellor's little parlour-maid.

XII.

VERENA recognised him; she had seen him the night before at Miss Birdseye's, and she said to her hostess, 'Now I must go—you have got another caller!' It was Verena's belief that in the fashionable world (like Mrs. Farrinder, she thought Miss Chancellor belonged to it)—thought that, in standing there, she herself was in it)—in the highest social walks it was the custom of a prior guest to depart when another friend arrived. She had been told at people's doors that she could not be received because the lady of the house had a visitor, and she had retired on these occasions with a feeling of awe much more than a sense of injury. They had not been the portals of fashion, but in this respect, she deemed, they had emulated such bulwarks. Olive Chancellor offered Basil Ransom a greeting which she believed to be consummately lady-like, and which the young man, narrating the scene several months later to Mrs. Luna, whose susceptibilities he did not feel himself obliged to consider (she considered his so little), described by saying that she glared at him. Olive had thought it very possible he would come that day if he was to leave Boston; though she was perfectly mindful that she had given him no encouragement at the moment they separated. If he should not come she should be annoyed, and if he should come she should be furious; she was also sufficiently mindful of that. But she had a foreboding that, of the two grievances, fortune would confer upon her only the less; the only one she had as yet was that he had responded to her letter—a complaint rather wanting in richness. If he came, at any rate, he would be likely to come shortly before dinner, at the same hour as yesterday. He had now anticipated this period considerably, and it seemed to Miss Chancellor that he had taken a base advantage of her,

stolen a march upon her privacy. She was startled, disconcerted, but as I have said, she was rigorously lady-like. She was determined not again to be fantastic, as she had been about his coming to Miss Birdseye's. The strange dread associating itself with that was something which, she devoutly trusted, she had felt once for all. She didn't know what he could do to her; he hadn't prevented, on the spot though he was, one of the happiest things that had befallen her for so long—this quick, confident visit of Verena Tarrant. It was only just at the last that he had come in, and Verena must go now; Olive's detaining hand immediately relaxed itself.

It is to be feared there was no disguise of Ransom's satisfaction at finding himself once more face to face with the charming creature with whom he had exchanged that final speechless smile the evening before. He was more glad to see her than if she had been an old friend, for it seemed to him that she had suddenly become a new one. 'The delightful girl,' he said to himself; 'she smiles at me as if she liked me!' He could not know that this was fatuous, that she smiled so at every one; the first time she saw people she treated them as if she recognised them. Moreover, she did not seat herself again in his honour; she let it be seen that she was still going. The three stood there together in the middle of the long, characteristic room, and, for the first time in her life, Olive Chancellor chose not to introduce two persons who met under her roof. She hated Europe, but she could be European if it were necessary. Neither of her companions had an idea that in leaving them simply planted face to face (the terror of the American heart) she had so high a warrant; and presently Basil Ransom felt that he didn't care whether he were introduced or not, for the greatness of an evil didn't matter if the remedy were equally great.

'Miss Tarrant won't be surprised if I recognise her—if I take the liberty to speak to her. She is a public character; she must pay the penalty of her distinction.' These words he boldly addressed to the girl, with his most gallant Southern manner, saying to himself meanwhile that she was prettier still by daylight.

'Oh, a great many gentlemen have spoken to me,' Verena said. 'There were quite a number at Topeka—' And her phrase lost itself in her look at Olive, as if she were wondering what was the matter with her.

'Now, I am afraid you are going the very moment I appear,' Ransom went on. 'Do you know that's very cruel to me? I know what your ideas are—you expressed them last night in such beautiful language; of course you convinced me. I am ashamed of being a man; but I am, and I can't help it, and I'll do penance any way you may prescribe. *Must* she go, Miss Olive?' he asked of his cousin. 'Do you flee before the individual male?' And he turned again to Verena.

This young lady gave a laugh that resembled speech in liquid fusion. 'Oh no; I like the individual!'

As an incarnation of a 'movement,' Ransom thought her more and more singular, and he wondered how she came to be closeted so soon with his kinswoman, to whom, only a few hours before, she had been a complete stranger. These, however, were doubtless the normal proceedings of women. He begged her to sit down again; he was sure Miss Chancellor would be sorry to part with her. Verena, looking at her friend, not for permission, but for sympathy, dropped again into a chair, and Ransom waited to see Miss Chancellor do the same. She gratified him after a moment, because she could not refuse without appearing to put a hurt upon Verena; but it went hard with her, and she was altogether discomposed. She had never seen any one so free in her own drawing-room as this loud Southerner, to whom she had so rashly offered a footing; he extended invitations to her guests under her nose. That Verena should do as he asked her was a signal sign of the absence of that 'home-culture' (it was so that Miss Chancellor expressed the missing quality) which she never supposed the girl possessed: fortunately, as it would be supplied to her in abundance in Charles Street. (Olive of course held that home-culture was perfectly compatible with the widest emancipation.) It was with a perfectly good conscience that Verena complied with Basil Ransom's request; but it took her quick sensibility only a moment to discover that

her friend was not pleased. She scarcely knew what had ruffled her, but at the same instant there passed before her the vision of the anxieties (of this sudden, unexplained sort, for instance, and much worse) which intimate relations with Miss Chancellor might entail.

'Now, I want you to tell me this,' Basil Ransom said, leaning forward towards Verena, with his hands on his knees, and completely oblivious to his hostess. 'Do you really believe all that pretty moonshine you talked last night? I could have listened to you for another hour; but I never heard such monstrous sentiments. I must protest—I must, as a calumniated, misrepresented man. Confess you meant it as a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*—a satire on Mrs. Farrinder?' He spoke in a tone of the freest pleasantry, with his familiar, friendly Southern cadence.

Verena looked at him with eyes that grew large. 'Why, you don't mean to say you don't believe in our cause?'

'Oh, it won't do—it won't do!' Ransom went on, laughing. 'You are on the wrong tack altogether. Do you really take the ground that your sex has been without influence? Influence? Why, you have led us all by the nose to where we are now! Wherever we are, it's all you. You are at the bottom of everything.'

'Oh yes, and we want to be at the top,' said Verena.

'Ah, the bottom is a better place, depend on it, when from there you move the whole mass! Besides, you are on the top as well; you are everywhere, you are everything. I am of the opinion of that historical character—wasn't he some king?—who thought there was a lady behind everything. Whatever it was, he held, you have only to look for her; she is the explanation. Well, I always look for her, and I always find her; of course, I am always delighted to do so; but it proves she is the universal cause. Now, you don't mean to deny that power, the power of setting men in motion. You are at the bottom of all the wars.'

'Well, I am like Mrs. Farrinder; I like opposition,' Verena exclaimed, with a happy smile.

'That proves, as I say, how in spite of your expressions of horror you delight in the shock of battle. What do you

say to Helen of Troy and the fearful carnage she excited? It is well known that the Empress of France was at the bottom of the last war in that country. And as for our four fearful years of slaughter, of course you won't deny that there the ladies were the great motive power. The Abolitionists brought it on, and were not the Abolitionists principally females? Who was that celebrity that was mentioned last night?—Eliza P. Moseley. I regard Eliza as the cause of the biggest war of which history preserves the record.'

Basil Ransom enjoyed his humour the more because Verena appeared to enjoy it; and the look with which she replied to him, at the end of this little tirade, 'Why, sir, you ought to take the platform too; we might go round together as poison and antidote!'—this made him feel that he had convinced her, for the moment, quite as much as it was important he should. In Verena's face, however, it lasted but an instant—an instant after she had glanced at Olive Chancellor, who, with her eyes fixed intently on the ground (a look she was to learn to know so well), had a strange expression. The girl slowly got up; she felt that she must go. She guessed Miss Chancellor didn't like this handsome joker (it was so that Basil Ransom struck her); and it was impressed upon her ('in time,' as she thought) that her new friend would be more serious even than she about the woman-question, serious as she had hitherto believed herself to be.

'I should like so much to have the pleasure of seeing you again,' Ransom continued. 'I think I should be able to interpret history for you by a new light.'

'Well, I should be very happy to see you in my home.' These words had barely fallen from Verena's lips (her mother told her they were, in general, the proper thing to say when people expressed such a desire as that; she must not let it be assumed that she would come first to them)—she had hardly uttered this hospitable speech when she felt the hand of her hostess upon her arm and became aware that a passionate appeal sat in Olive's eyes.

'You will just catch the Charles Street car,' that young woman murmured, with muffled sweetness.

Verena did not understand further than to see that she ought already to have departed; and the simplest response was to kiss Miss Chancellor, an act which she briefly performed. Basil Ransom understood still less, and it was a melancholy commentary on his contention that men are not inferior, that this meeting could not come, however rapidly, to a close without his plunging into a blunder which necessarily aggravated those he had already made. He had been invited by the little prophetess, and yet he had not been invited; but he did not take that up, because he must absolutely leave Boston on the morrow, and, besides, Miss Chancellor appeared to have something to say to it. But he put out his hand to Verena and said, 'Good-bye, Miss Tarrant; are we not to have the pleasure of hearing you in New York? I am afraid we are sadly sunk.'

'Certainly, I should like to raise my voice in the biggest city,' the girl replied.

'Well, try to come on. I won't refute you. It would be a very stupid world, after all, if we always knew what women were going to say.'

Verena was conscious of the approach of the Charles Street car, as well as of the fact that Miss Chancellor was in pain; but she lingered long enough to remark that she could see he had the old-fashioned ideas—he regarded woman as the toy of man.

'Don't say the toy—say the joy!' Ransom exclaimed. 'There is one statement I will venture to advance; I am quite as fond of you as you are of each other!'

'Much he knows about that!' said Verena, with a side-long smile at Olive Chancellor.

For Olive, it made her more beautiful than ever; still, there was no trace of this mere personal elation in the splendid sententiousness with which, turning to Mr. Ransom, she remarked: 'What women may be, or may not be, to each other, I won't attempt just now to say; but what *the truth* may be to a human soul, I think perhaps even a woman may faintly suspect!'

'The truth? My dear cousin, your truth is a most vain thing!'

'Gracious me!' cried Verena Tarrant; and the gay vibration of her voice as she uttered this simple ejaculation was the last that Ransom heard of her. Miss Chancellor swept her out of the room, leaving the young man to extract a relish from the ineffable irony with which she uttered the words 'even a woman.' It was to be supposed, on general grounds, that she would reappear, but there was nothing in the glance she gave him, as she turned her back, that was an earnest of this. He stood there a moment, wondering; then his wonder spent itself on the page of a book which, according to his habit at such times, he had mechanically taken up, and in which he speedily became interested. He read it for five minutes in an uncomfortable-looking attitude, and quite forgot that he had been forsaken. He was recalled to this fact by the entrance of Mrs. Luna, arrayed as if for the street, and putting on her gloves again—she seemed always to be putting on her gloves. She wanted to know what in the world he was doing there alone—whether her sister had not been notified.

'Oh yes,' said Ransom, 'she has just been with me, but she has gone downstairs with Miss Tarrant.'

'And who in the world is Miss Tarrant?'

Ransom was surprised that Mrs. Luna should not know of the intimacy of the two young ladies, in spite of the brevity of their acquaintance, being already so great. But, apparently, Miss Olive had not mentioned her new friend. 'Well, she is an inspirational speaker—the most charming creature in the world!'

Mrs. Luna paused in her manipulations, gave an amazed, amused stare, then caused the room to ring with her laughter. 'You don't mean to say you are converted—already?'

'Converted to Miss Tarrant, decidedly.'

'You are not to belong to any Miss Tarrant; you are to belong to me,' Mrs. Luna said, having thought over her Southern kinsman during the twenty-four hours, and made up her mind that he would be a good man for a lone woman to know. Then she added: 'Did you come here to meet her—the inspirational speaker?'

'No; I came to bid your sister good-bye.'

'Are you really going? I haven't made you promise half the things I want yet. But we will settle that in New York. How do you get on with Olive Chancellor?' Mrs. Luna continued, making her points, as she always did, with eagerness, though her roundness and her dimples had hitherto prevented her from being accused of that vice. It was her practice to speak of her sister by her whole name, and you would have supposed, from her usual manner of alluding to her, that Olive was much the older, instead of having been born ten years later than Adeline. She had as many ways as possible of marking the gulf that divided them; but she bridged it over lightly now by saying to Basil Ransom: 'Isn't she a dear old thing?'

This bridge, he saw, would not bear his weight, and her question seemed to him to have more audacity than sense. Why should she be so insincere? She might know that a man couldn't recognise Miss Chancellor in such a description as that. She was not old—she was sharply young; and it was inconceivable to him, though he had just seen the little prophetess kiss her, that she should ever become any one's 'dear.' Least of all was she a 'thing'; she was intensely, fearfully, a person. He hesitated a moment, and then he replied: 'She's a very remarkable woman.'

'Take care—don't be reckless!' cried Mrs. Luna. 'Do you think she is very dreadful?'

'Don't say anything against my cousin,' Basil answered; and at that moment Miss Chancellor re-entered the room. She murmured some request that he would excuse her absence, but her sister interrupted her with an inquiry about Miss Tarrant.

'Mr. Ransom thinks her wonderfully charming. Why didn't you show her to me? Do you want to keep her all to yourself?'

Olive rested her eyes for some moments upon Mrs. Luna, without speaking. Then she said: 'Your veil is not put on straight, Adeline.'

'I look like a monster—that, evidently, is what you mean!' Adeline exclaimed, going to the mirror to rearrange the peccant tissue.

Miss Chancellor did not again ask Ransom to be seated;

she appeared to take it for granted that he would leave her now. But instead of this he returned to the subject of Verena; he asked her whether she supposed the girl would come out in public—would go about like Mrs. Farrinder?

'Come out in public!' Olive repeated; 'in public? Why, you don't imagine that pure voice is to be hushed?'

'Oh, hushed, no! it's too sweet for that. But not raised to a scream; not forced and cracked and ruined. She oughtn't to become like the others. She ought to remain apart.'

'Apart—*apart*?' said Miss Chancellor; 'when we shall all be looking to her, gathering about her, praying for her!' There was an exceeding scorn in her voice. 'If I can help her, she shall be an immense power for good.'

'An immense power for quackery, my dear Miss Olive!' This broke from Basil Ransom's lips in spite of a vow he had just taken not to say anything that should 'aggravate' his hostess, who was in a state of tension it was not difficult to detect. But he had lowered his tone to friendly pleading, and the offensive word was mitigated by his smile.

She moved away from him, backwards, as if he had given her a push. 'Ah, well, now you are reckless,' Mrs. Luna remarked, drawing out her ribbons before the mirror.

'I don't think you would interfere if you knew how little you understand us,' Miss Chancellor said to Ransom.

'Whom do you mean by "us"—your whole delightful sex? I don't understand *you*, Miss Olive.'

'Come away with me, and I'll explain her as we go,' Mrs. Luna went on, having finished her toilet.

Ransom offered his hand in farewell to his hostess; but Olive found it impossible to do anything but ignore the gesture. She could not have let him touch her. 'Well, then, if you must exhibit her to the multitude, bring her on to New York,' he said, with the same attempt at a light treatment.

'You'll have *me* in New York—you don't want any one else!' Mrs. Luna ejaculated, coquettishly. 'I have made up my mind to winter there now.'

Olive Chancellor looked from one to the other of her two relatives, one near and the other distant, but each so

little in sympathy with her, and it came over her that there might be a kind of protection for her in binding them together, entangling them with each other. She had never had an idea of that kind in her life before, and that this sudden subtlety should have gleamed upon her as a momentary talisman gives the measure of her present nervousness.

'If I could take her to New York, I would take her farther,' she remarked, hoping she was enigmatical.

'You talk about "taking" her, as if you were a lecture-agent. Are you going into that business?' Mrs. Luna asked.

Ransom could not help noticing that Miss Chancellor would not shake hands with him, and he felt, on the whole, rather injured. He paused a moment before leaving the room—standing there with his hand on the knob of the door. 'Look here, Miss Olive, what did you write to me to come and see you for?' He made this inquiry with a countenance not destitute of gaiety, but his eyes showed something of that yellow light—just momentarily lurid—of which mention has been made. Mrs. Luna was on her way downstairs, and her companions remained face to face.

'Ask my sister—I think she will tell you,' said Olive, turning away from him and going to the window. She remained there, looking out; she heard the door of the house close, and saw the two cross the street together. As they passed out of sight her fingers played, softly, a little air upon the pane; it seemed to her that she had had an inspiration.

Basil Ransom, meanwhile, put the question to Mrs. Luna. 'If she was not going to like me, why in the world did she write to me?'

'Because she wanted you to know me—she thought I would like you!' And apparently she had not been wrong; for Mrs. Luna, when they reached Beacon Street, would not hear of his leaving her to go her way alone, would not in the least admit his plea that he had only an hour or two more in Boston (he was to travel, economically, by the boat) and must devote the time to his business. She appealed to his Southern chivalry, and not in vain; practically, at least, he admitted the rights of women.

XIII.

MRS. TARRANT was delighted, as may be imagined, with her daughter's account of Miss Chancellor's interior, and the reception the girl had found there; and Verena, for the next month, took her way very often to Charles Street. 'Just you be as nice to her as you know how,' Mrs. Tarrant had said to her; and she reflected with some complacency that her daughter did know—she knew how to do everything of that sort. It was not that Verena had been taught; that branch of the education of young ladies which is known as 'manners and deportment' had not figured, as a definite head, in Miss Tarrant's curriculum. She had been told, indeed, that she must not lie nor steal; but she had been told very little else about behaviour; her only great advantage, in short, had been the parental example. But her mother liked to think that she was quick and graceful, and she questioned her exhaustively as to the progress of this interesting episode; she didn't see why, as she said, it shouldn't be a permanent 'stand-by' for Verena. In Mrs. Tarrant's meditations upon the girl's future she had never thought of a fine marriage as a reward of effort; she would have deemed herself very immoral if she had endeavoured to capture for her child a rich husband. She had not, in fact, a very vivid sense of the existence of such agents of fate; all the rich men she had seen already had wives, and the unmarried men, who were generally very young, were distinguished from each other not so much by the figure of their income, which came little into question, as by the degree of their interest in regenerating ideas. She supposed Verena would marry some one, some day, and she hoped the personage would be connected with public life—which meant, for Mrs. Tarrant, that his name would be visible, in

the lamplight, on a coloured poster, in the doorway of Tremont Temple. But she was not eager about this vision, for the implications of matrimony were for the most part wanting in brightness—consisted of a tired woman holding a baby over a furnace-register that emitted lukewarm air. A real lovely friendship with a young woman who had, as Mrs. Tarrant expressed it, 'prop'ty,' would occupy agreeably such an interval as might occur before Verena should meet her sterner fate; it would be a great thing for her to have a place to run into when she wanted a change, and there was no knowing but what it might end in her having two homes. For the idea of the home, like most American women of her quality, Mrs. Tarrant had an extreme reverence; and it was her candid faith that in all the vicissitudes of the past twenty years she had preserved the spirit of this institution. If it should exist in duplicate for Verena, the girl would be favoured indeed.

All this was as nothing, however, compared with the fact that Miss Chancellor seemed to think her young friend's gift *was* inspirational, or at any rate, as Selah had so often said, quite unique. She couldn't make out very exactly, by Verena, what she thought; but if the way Miss Chancellor had taken hold of her didn't show that she believed she could rouse the people, Mrs. Tarrant didn't know what it showed. It was a satisfaction to her that Verena evidently responded freely; she didn't think anything of what she spent in car-tickets, and indeed she had told her that Miss Chancellor wanted to stuff her pockets with them. At first she went in because her mother liked to have her; but now, evidently, she went because she was so much drawn. She expressed the highest admiration of her new friend; she said it took her a little while to see into her, but now that she did, well, she was perfectly splendid. When Verena wanted to admire she went ahead of every one, and it was delightful to see how she was stimulated by the young lady in Charles Street. They thought everything of each other—that was very plain; you could scarcely tell which thought most. Each thought the other so noble, and Mrs. Tarrant had a faith that between them they *would* rouse the people. What Verena wanted was some one

who would know how to handle her (her father hadn't handled anything except the healing, up to this time, with real success), and perhaps Miss Chancellor would take hold better than some that made more of a profession.

'It's beautiful, the way she draws you out,' Verena had said to her mother; 'there's something so searching that the first time I visited her it quite realised my idea of the Day of Judgment. But she seems to show all that's in herself at the same time, and then you see how lovely it is. She's just as pure as she can live; you see if she is not, when you know her. She's so noble herself that she makes you feel as if you wouldn't want to be less so. She doesn't care for anything but the elevation of our sex; if she can work a little toward that, it's all she asks. I can tell you, she kindles me; she does, mother, really. She doesn't care a speck what she wears—only to have an elegant parlour. Well, she *has* got that; it's a regular dream-like place to sit. She's going to have a tree in, next week; she says she wants to see me sitting under a tree. I believe it's some oriental idea; it has lately been introduced in Paris. She doesn't like French ideas as a general thing; but she says this has more nature than most. She has got so many of her own that I shouldn't think she would require to borrow any. I'd sit in a forest to hear her bring some of them out,' Verena went on, with characteristic raciness. 'She just quivers when she describes what our sex has been through. It's so interesting to me to hear what I have always felt. If she wasn't afraid of facing the public, she would go far ahead of me. But she doesn't want to speak herself; she only wants to call me out. Mother, if she doesn't attract attention to me there isn't any attention to be attracted. She says I have got the gift of expression—it doesn't matter where it comes from. She says it's a great advantage to a movement to be personified in a bright young figure. Well, of course I'm young, and I feel bright enough when once I get started. She says my serenity while exposed to the gaze of hundreds is in itself a qualification; in fact, she seems to think my serenity is quite God-given. She hasn't got much of it herself; she's the most emotional woman I have met, up to now. She wants to

know how I can speak the way I do unless I feel; and of course I tell her I do feel, so far as I realise. She seems to be realising all the time; I never saw any one that took so little rest. She says I ought to do something great, and she makes me feel as if I should. She says I ought to have a wide influence, if I can obtain the ear of the public; and I say to her that if I do it will be all her influence.'

Selah Tarrant looked at all this from a higher standpoint than his wife; at least such an altitude on his part was to be inferred from his increased solemnity. He committed himself to no precipitate elation at the idea of his daughter's being taken up by a patroness of movements who happened to have money; he looked at his child only from the point of view of the service she might render to humanity. To keep her ideal pointing in the right direction, to guide and animate her moral life—this was a duty more imperative for a parent so closely identified with revelations and panaceas than seeing that she formed profitable worldly connections. He was 'off,' moreover, so much of the time that he could keep little account of her comings and goings, and he had an air of being but vaguely aware of whom Miss Chancellor, the object now of his wife's perpetual reference, might be. Verena's initial appearance in Boston, as he called her performance at Miss Birdseye's, had been a great success; and this reflection added, as I say, to his habitually sacerdotal expression. He looked like the priest of a religion that was passing through the stage of miracles; he carried his responsibility in the general elongation of his person, of his gestures (his hands were now always in the air, as if he were being photographed in postures), of his words and sentences, as well as in his smile, as noiseless as a patent hinge, and in the folds of his eternal waterproof. He was incapable of giving an off-hand answer or opinion on the simplest occasion, and his tone of high deliberation increased in proportion as the subject was trivial or domestic. If his wife asked him at dinner if the potatoes were good, he replied that they were strikingly fine (he used to speak of the newspaper as 'fine'—he applied this term to objects the most dissimilar), and embarked on a parallel

worthy of Plutarch, in which he compared them with other specimens of the same vegetable. He produced, or would have liked to produce, the impression of looking above and beyond everything, of not caring for the immediate, of reckoning only with the long run. In reality he had one all-absorbing solicitude—the desire to get paragraphs put into the newspapers, paragraphs of which he had hitherto been the subject, but of which he was now to divide the glory with his daughter. The newspapers were his world, the richest expression, in his eyes, of human life; and, for him, if a diviner day was to come upon earth, it would be brought about by copious advertisement in the daily prints. He looked with longing for the moment when Verena should be advertised among the 'personals,' and to his mind the supremely happy people were those (and there were a good many of them) of whom there was some journalistic mention every day in the year. Nothing less than this would really have satisfied Selah Tarrant; his ideal of bliss was to be as regularly and indispensably a component part of the newspaper as the title and date, or the list of fires, or the column of Western jokes. The vision of that publicity haunted his dreams, and he would gladly have sacrificed to it the innermost sanctities of home. Human existence to him, indeed, was a huge publicity, in which the only fault was that it was sometimes not sufficiently effective. There had been a Spiritualist paper of old which he used to pervade; but he could not persuade himself that through this medium his personality had attracted general attention; and, moreover, the sheet, as he said, was played out anyway. Success was not success so long as his daughter's *physique*, the rumour of her engagement, were not included in the 'Jottings,' with the certainty of being extensively copied.

The account of her exploits in the West had not made their way to the seaboard with the promptitude that he had looked for; the reason of this being, he supposed, that the few addresses she had made had not been lectures, announced in advance, to which tickets had been sold, but incidents, of abrupt occurrence, of certain multitudinous meetings, where there had been other performers better

known to fame. They had brought in no money; they had been delivered only for the good of the cause. If it could only be known that she spoke for nothing, that might deepen the reverberation; the only trouble was that her speaking for nothing was not the way to remind him that he had a remunerative daughter. It was not the way to stand out so very much either, Selah Tarrant felt; for there were plenty of others that knew how to make as little money as she would. To speak—that was the one thing that most people were willing to do for nothing; it was not a line in which it was easy to appear conspicuously disinterested. Disinterestedness, too, was incompatible with receipts; and receipts were what Selah Tarrant was, in his own parlance, after. He wished to bring about the day when they would flow in freely; the reader perhaps sees the gesture with which, in his colloquies with himself, he accompanied this mental image.

It seemed to him at present that the fruitful time was not far off; it had been brought appreciably nearer by that fortunate evening at Miss Birdseye's. If Mrs. Farrinder could be induced to write an 'open letter' about Verena, that would do more than anything else. Selah was not remarkable for delicacy of perception, but he knew the world he lived in well enough to be aware that Mrs. Farrinder was liable to rear up, as they used to say down in Pennsylvania, where he lived before he began to peddle lead-pencils. She wouldn't always take things as you might expect, and if it didn't meet her views to pay a public tribute to Verena, there wasn't any way known to Tarrant's ingenious mind of getting round her. If it was a question of a favour from Mrs. Farrinder, you just had to wait for it, as you would for a rise in the thermometer. He had told Miss Birdseye what he would like, and she seemed to think, from the way their celebrated friend had been affected, that the idea might take her some day of just letting the public know all she had felt. She was off somewhere now (since that evening), but Miss Birdseye had an idea that when she was back in Roxbury she would send for Verena and give her a few points. Meanwhile, at any rate, Selah was sure he had a card; he felt there

was money in the air. It might already be said there were receipts from Charles Street; that rich, peculiar young woman seemed to want to lavish herself. He pretended, as I have intimated, not to notice this; but he never saw so much as when he had his eyes fixed on the cornice. He had no doubt that if he should make up his mind to take a hall some night, she would tell him where the bill might be sent. That was what he was thinking of now, whether he had better take a hall right away, so that Verena might leap at a bound into renown, or wait till she had made a few more appearances in private, so that curiosity might be worked up.

These meditations accompanied him in his multifarious wanderings through the streets and the suburbs of the New England capital. As I have also mentioned, he was absent for hours—long periods during which Mrs. Tarrant, sustaining nature with a hard-boiled egg and a doughnut, wondered how in the world he stayed his stomach. He never wanted anything but a piece of pie when he came in; the only thing about which he was particular was that it should be served up hot. She had a private conviction that he partook, at the houses of his lady patients, of little lunches; she applied this term to any episodic repast, at any hour of the twenty-four. It is but fair to add that once, when she betrayed her suspicion, Selah remarked that the only refreshment *he* ever wanted was the sense that he was doing some good. This effort with him had many forms; it involved, among other things, a perpetual perambulation of the streets, a haunting of horse-cars, railway-stations, shops that were 'selling off.' But the places that knew him best were the offices of the newspapers and the vestibules of the hotels—the big marble-paved chambers of informal reunion which offer to the streets, through high glass plates, the sight of the American citizen suspended by his heels. Here, amid the piled-up luggage, the convenient spittoons, the elbowing loungers, the disconsolate 'guests,' the truculent Irish porters, the rows of shaggy-backed men in strange hats, writing letters at a table inlaid with advertisements, Selah Tarrant made innumerable contemplative stations. He could not have

told you, at any particular moment, what he was doing; he only had a general sense that such places were national nerve-centres, and that the more one looked in, the more one was 'on the spot.' The *penetralia* of the daily press were, however, still more fascinating, and the fact that they were less accessible, that here he found barriers in his path, only added to the zest of forcing an entrance. He abounded in pretexts; he even sometimes brought contributions; he was persistent and penetrating, he was known as the irrepressible Tarrant. He hung about, sat too long, took up the time of busy people, edged into the printing-rooms when he had been eliminated from the office, talked with the compositors till they set up his remarks by mistake, and to the newsboys when the compositors had turned their backs. He was always trying to find out what was 'going in'; he would have liked to go in himself, bodily, and, failing in this, he hoped to get advertisements inserted gratis. The wish of his soul was that he might be interviewed; that made him hover at the editorial elbow. Once he thought he had been, and the headings, five or six deep, danced for days before his eyes; but the report never appeared. He expected his revenge for this the day after Verena should have burst forth; he saw the attitude in which he should receive the emissaries who would come after his daughter.



XIV.

'We ought to have some one to meet her,' Mrs. Tarrant said; 'I presume she wouldn't care to come out just to see us.' 'She,' between the mother and the daughter, at this period, could refer only to Olive Chancellor, who was discussed in the little house at Cambridge at all hours and from every possible point of view. It was never Verena now who began, for she had grown rather weary of the topic; she had her own ways of thinking of it, which were not her mother's, and if she lent herself to this lady's extensive considerations it was because that was the best way of keeping her thoughts to herself.

Mrs. Tarrant had an idea that she (Mrs. Tarrant) liked to study people, and that she was now engaged in an analysis of Miss Chancellor. It carried her far, and she came out at unexpected times with her results. It was still her purpose to interpret the world to the ingenuous mind of her daughter, and she translated Miss Chancellor with a confidence which made little account of the fact that she had seen her but once, while Verena had this advantage nearly every day. Verena felt that by this time she knew Olive very well, and her mother's most complicated versions of motive and temperament (Mrs. Tarrant, with the most imperfect idea of the meaning of the term, was always talking about people's temperament), rendered small justice to the phenomena it was now her privilege to observe in Charles Street. Olive was much more remarkable than Mrs. Tarrant suspected, remarkable as Mrs. Tarrant believed her to be. She had opened Verena's eyes to extraordinary pictures, made the girl believe that she had a heavenly mission, given her, as we have seen, quite a new measure of the interest of life. These were larger consequences