# ГЕНРИ ДЖЕЙМС

# CONFIDENCE

Генри Джеймс

# Confidence

**Джеймс Г.**

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# Содержание

# Henry James
# Confidence

## CHAPTER I

It was in the early days of April; Bernard Longueville had been spending the winter in Rome. He had travelled northward with the consciousness of several social duties that appealed to him from the further side of the Alps, but he was under the charm of the Italian spring, and he made a pretext for lingering. He had spent five days at Siena, where he had intended to spend but two, and still it was impossible to continue his journey. He was a young man of a contemplative and speculative turn, and this was his first visit to Italy, so that if he dallied by the way he should not be harshly judged. He had a fancy for sketching, and it was on his conscience to take a few pictorial notes. There were two old inns at Siena, both of them very shabby and very dirty. The one at which Longueville had taken up his abode was entered by a dark, pestiferous arch-way, surmounted by a sign which at a distance might have been read by the travellers as the Dantean injunction to renounce all hope. The other was not far off, and the day after his arrival, as he passed it, he saw two ladies going in who evidently belonged to the large fraternity of Anglo-Saxon tourists, and one of whom was young and carried herself very well. Longueville had his share—or more than his share—of gallantry, and this incident awakened a regret. If he had gone to the other inn he might have had charming company: at his own establishment there was no one but an aesthetic German who smoked bad tobacco in the dining-room. He remarked to himself that this was always his luck, and the remark was characteristic of the man; it was charged with the feeling of the moment, but it was not absolutely just; it was the result of an acute impression made by the particular occasion; but it failed in appreciation of a providence which had sprinkled Longueville's career with happy accidents—accidents, especially, in which his characteristic gallantry was not allowed to rust for want of exercise. He lounged, however, contentedly enough through these bright, still days of a Tuscan April, drawing much entertainment from the high picturesqueness of the things about him. Siena, a few years since, was a flawless gift of the Middle Ages to the modern imagination. No other Italian city could have been more interesting to an observer fond of reconstructing obsolete manners. This was a taste of Bernard Longueville's, who had a relish for serious literature, and at one time had made several lively excursions into mediaeval history. His friends thought him very clever, and at the same time had an easy feeling about him which was a tribute to his freedom from pedantry. He was clever indeed, and an excellent companion; but the real measure of his brilliancy was in the success with which he entertained himself. He was much addicted to conversing with his own wit, and he greatly enjoyed his own society. Clever as he often was in talking with his friends, I am not sure that his best things, as the phrase is, were not for his own ears. And this was not on account of any cynical contempt for the understanding of his fellow-creatures: it was simply because what I have called his own society was more of a stimulus than that of most other people. And yet he was not for this reason fond of solitude; he was, on the contrary, a very sociable animal. It must be admitted at the outset that he had a nature which seemed at several points to contradict itself, as will probably be perceived in the course of this narration.

He entertained himself greatly with his reflections and meditations upon Sienese architecture and early Tuscan art, upon Italian street-life and the geological idiosyncrasies of the Apennines. If he had only gone to the other inn, that nice-looking girl whom he had seen passing under the dusky portal with her face turned away from him might have broken bread with him at this intellectual banquet. Then came a day, however, when it seemed for a moment that if she were disposed she might gather up the crumbs of the feast. Longueville, every morning after breakfast, took a turn in the great square of Siena—the vast piazza, shaped like a horse-shoe, where the market is held beneath

the windows of that crenellated palace from whose overhanging cornice a tall, straight tower springs up with a movement as light as that of a single plume in the bonnet of a captain. Here he strolled about, watching a brown contadino disembarrass his donkey, noting the progress of half an hour's chaffer over a bundle of carrots, wishing a young girl with eyes like animated agates would let him sketch her, and gazing up at intervals at the beautiful, slim tower, as it played at contrasts with the large blue air. After he had spent the greater part of a week in these grave considerations, he made up his mind to leave Siena. But he was not content with what he had done for his portfolio. Siena was eminently sketchable, but he had not been industrious. On the last morning of his visit, as he stood staring about him in the crowded piazza, and feeling that, in spite of its picturesqueness, this was an awkward place for setting up an easel, he bethought himself, by contrast, of a quiet corner in another part of the town, which he had chanced upon in one of his first walks—an angle of a lonely terrace that abutted upon the city-wall, where three or four superannuated objects seemed to slumber in the sunshine—the open door of an empty church, with a faded fresco exposed to the air in the arch above it, and an ancient beggar-woman sitting beside it on a three-legged stool. The little terrace had an old polished parapet, about as high as a man's breast, above which was a view of strange, sad-colored hills. Outside, to the left, the wall of the town made an outward bend, and exposed its rugged and rusty complexion. There was a smooth stone bench set into the wall of the church, on which Longueville had rested for an hour, observing the composition of the little picture of which I have indicated the elements, and of which the parapet of the terrace would form the foreground. The thing was what painters call a subject, and he had promised himself to come back with his utensils. This morning he returned to the inn and took possession of them, and then he made his way through a labyrinth of empty streets, lying on the edge of the town, within the wall, like the superfluous folds of a garment whose wearer has shrunken with old age. He reached his little grass-grown terrace, and found it as sunny and as private as before. The old mendicant was mumbling petitions, sacred and profane, at the church door; but save for this the stillness was unbroken. The yellow sunshine warmed the brown surface of the city-wall, and lighted the hollows of the Etruscan hills. Longueville settled himself on the empty bench, and, arranging his little portable apparatus, began to ply his brushes. He worked for some time smoothly and rapidly, with an agreeable sense of the absence of obstacles. It seemed almost an interruption when, in the silent air, he heard a distant bell in the town strike noon. Shortly after this, there was another interruption. The sound of a soft footstep caused him to look up; whereupon he saw a young woman standing there and bending her eyes upon the graceful artist. A second glance assured him that she was that nice girl whom he had seen going into the other inn with her mother, and suggested that she had just emerged from the little church. He suspected, however —I hardly know why—that she had been looking at him for some moments before he perceived her. It would perhaps be impertinent to inquire what she thought of him; but Longueville, in the space of an instant, made two or three reflections upon the young lady. One of them was to the effect that she was a handsome creature, but that she looked rather bold; the burden of the other was that—yes, decidedly—she was a compatriot. She turned away almost as soon as she met his eyes; he had hardly time to raise his hat, as, after a moment's hesitation, he proceeded to do. She herself appeared to feel a certain hesitation; she glanced back at the church door, as if under the impulse to retrace her steps. She stood there a moment longer—long enough to let him see that she was a person of easy attitudes—and then she walked away slowly to the parapet of the terrace. Here she stationed herself, leaning her arms upon the high stone ledge, presenting her back to Longueville, and gazing at rural Italy. Longueville went on with his sketch, but less attentively than before. He wondered what this young lady was doing there alone, and then it occurred to him that her companion—her mother, presumably—was in the church. The two ladies had been in the church when he arrived; women liked to sit in churches; they had been there more than half an hour, and the mother had not enough of it even yet. The young lady, however, at present preferred the view that Longueville was painting; he became aware that she had placed herself in the very centre of his foreground. His first feeling

was that she would spoil it; his second was that she would improve it. Little by little she turned more into profile, leaning only one arm upon the parapet, while the other hand, holding her folded parasol, hung down at her side. She was motionless; it was almost as if she were standing there on purpose to be drawn. Yes, certainly she improved the picture. Her profile, delicate and thin, defined itself against the sky, in the clear shadow of a coquettish hat; her figure was light; she bent and leaned easily; she wore a gray dress, fastened up as was then the fashion, and displaying the broad edge of a crimson petticoat. She kept her position; she seemed absorbed in the view. "Is she posing—is she attitudinizing for my benefit?" Longueville asked of himself. And then it seemed to him that this was a needless assumption, for the prospect was quite beautiful enough to be looked at for itself, and there was nothing impossible in a pretty girl having a love of fine landscape. "But posing or not," he went on, "I will put her into my sketch. She has simply put herself in. It will give it a human interest. There is nothing like having a human interest." So, with the ready skill that he possessed, he introduced the young girl's figure into his foreground, and at the end of ten minutes he had almost made something that had the form of a likeness. "If she will only be quiet for another ten minutes," he said, "the thing will really be a picture." Unfortunately, the young lady was not quiet; she had apparently had enough of her attitude and her view. She turned away, facing Longueville again, and slowly came back, as if to re-enter the church. To do so she had to pass near him, and as she approached he instinctively got up, holding his drawing in one hand. She looked at him again, with that expression that he had mentally characterized as "bold," a few minutes before—with dark, intelligent eyes. Her hair was dark and dense; she was a strikingly handsome girl.

"I am so sorry you moved," he said, confidently, in English. "You were so—so beautiful."

She stopped, looking at him more directly than ever; and she looked at his sketch, which he held out toward her. At the sketch, however, she only glanced, whereas there was observation in the eye that she bent upon Longueville. He never knew whether she had blushed; he afterward thought she might have been frightened. Nevertheless, it was not exactly terror that appeared to dictate her answer to Longueville's speech.

"I am much obliged to you. Don't you think you have looked at me enough?"

"By no means. I should like so much to finish my drawing."

"I am not a professional model," said the young lady.

"No. That 's my difficulty," Longueville answered, laughing. "I can't propose to remunerate you."

The young lady seemed to think this joke in indifferent taste. She turned away in silence; but something in her expression, in his feeling at the time, in the situation, incited Longueville to higher play. He felt a lively need of carrying his point.

"You see it will be pure kindness," he went on,—"a simple act of charity. Five minutes will be enough. Treat me as an Italian beggar."

She had laid down his sketch and had stepped forward. He stood there, obsequious, clasping his hands and smiling.

His interruptress stopped and looked at him again, as if she thought him a very odd person; but she seemed amused. Now, at any rate, she was not frightened. She seemed even disposed to provoke him a little.

"I wish to go to my mother," she said.

"Where is your mother?" the young man asked.

"In the church, of course. I did n't come here alone!"

"Of course not; but you may be sure that your mother is very contented. I have been in that little church. It is charming. She is just resting there; she is probably tired. If you will kindly give me five minutes more, she will come out to you."

"Five minutes?" the young girl asked.

“Five minutes will do. I shall be eternally grateful.” Longueville was amused at himself as he said this. He cared infinitely less for his sketch than the words appeared to imply; but, somehow, he cared greatly that this graceful stranger should do what he had proposed.

The graceful stranger dropped an eye on the sketch again.

“Is your picture so good as that?” she asked.

“I have a great deal of talent,” he answered, laughing. “You shall see for yourself, when it is finished.”

She turned slowly toward the terrace again.

“You certainly have a great deal of talent, to induce me to do what you ask.” And she walked to where she had stood before. Longueville made a movement to go with her, as if to show her the attitude he meant; but, pointing with decision to his easel, she said—

“You have only five minutes.” He immediately went back to his work, and she made a vague attempt to take up her position. “You must tell me if this will do,” she added, in a moment.

“It will do beautifully,” Longueville answered, in a happy tone, looking at her and plying his brush. “It is immensely good of you to take so much trouble.”

For a moment she made no rejoinder, but presently she said—

“Of course if I pose at all I wish to pose well.”

“You pose admirably,” said Longueville.

After this she said nothing, and for several minutes he painted rapidly and in silence. He felt a certain excitement, and the movement of his thoughts kept pace with that of his brush. It was very true that she posed admirably; she was a fine creature to paint. Her prettiness inspired him, and also her audacity, as he was content to regard it for the moment. He wondered about her—who she was, and what she was—perceiving that the so-called audacity was not vulgar boldness, but the play of an original and probably interesting character. It was obvious that she was a perfect lady, but it was equally obvious that she was irregularly clever. Longueville’s little figure was a success—a charming success, he thought, as he put on the last touches. While he was doing this, his model’s companion came into view. She came out of the church, pausing a moment as she looked from her daughter to the young man in the corner of the terrace; then she walked straight over to the young girl. She was a delicate little gentlewoman, with a light, quick step.

Longueville’s five minutes were up; so, leaving his place, he approached the two ladies, sketch in hand. The elder one, who had passed her hand into her daughter’s arm, looked up at him with clear, surprised eyes; she was a charming old woman. Her eyes were very pretty, and on either side of them, above a pair of fine dark brows, was a band of silvery hair, rather coquettishly arranged.

“It is my portrait,” said her daughter, as Longueville drew near. “This gentleman has been sketching me.”

“Sketching you, dearest?” murmured her mother. “Was n’t it rather sudden?”

“Very sudden—very abrupt!” exclaimed the young girl with a laugh.

“Considering all that, it ‘s very good,” said Longueville, offering his picture to the elder lady, who took it and began to examine it. “I can’t tell you how much I thank you,” he said to his model.

“It ‘s very well for you to thank me now,” she replied. “You really had no right to begin.”

“The temptation was so great.”

“We should resist temptation. And you should have asked my leave.”

“I was afraid you would refuse it; and you stood there, just in my line of vision.”

“You should have asked me to get out of it.”

“I should have been very sorry. Besides, it would have been extremely rude.”

The young girl looked at him a moment.

“Yes, I think it would. But what you have done is ruder.”

“It is a hard case!” said Longueville. “What could I have done, then, decently?”

"It 's a beautiful drawing," murmured the elder lady, handing the thing back to Longueville. Her daughter, meanwhile, had not even glanced at it.

"You might have waited till I should go away," this argumentative young person continued.

Longueville shook his head.

"I never lose opportunities!"

"You might have sketched me afterwards, from memory."

Longueville looked at her, smiling.

"Judge how much better my memory will be now!"

She also smiled a little, but instantly became serious.

"For myself, it 's an episode I shall try to forget. I don't like the part I have played in it."

"May you never play a less becoming one!" cried Longueville. "I hope that your mother, at least, will accept a memento of the occasion." And he turned again with his sketch to her companion, who had been listening to the girl's conversation with this enterprising stranger, and looking from one to the other with an air of earnest confusion. "Won't you do me the honor of keeping my sketch?" he said. "I think it really looks like your daughter."

"Oh, thank you, thank you; I hardly dare," murmured the lady, with a deprecating gesture.

"It will serve as a kind of amends for the liberty I have taken," Longueville added; and he began to remove the drawing from its paper block.

"It makes it worse for you to give it to us," said the young girl.

"Oh, my dear, I am sure it 's lovely!" exclaimed her mother. "It 's wonderfully like you."

"I think that also makes it worse!"

Longueville was at last nettled. The young lady's perversity was perhaps not exactly malignant; but it was certainly ungracious. She seemed to desire to present herself as a beautiful tormentress.

"How does it make it worse?" he asked, with a frown.

He believed she was clever, and she was certainly ready. Now, however, she reflected a moment before answering.

"That you should give us your sketch," she said at last.

"It was to your mother I offered it," Longueville observed.

But this observation, the fruit of his irritation, appeared to have no effect upon the young girl.

"Is n't it what painters call a study?" she went on. "A study is of use to the painter himself. Your justification would be that you should keep your sketch, and that it might be of use to you."

"My daughter is a study, sir, you will say," said the elder lady in a little, light, conciliating voice, and graciously accepting the drawing again.

"I will admit," said Longueville, "that I am very inconsistent. Set it down to my esteem, madam," he added, looking at the mother.

"That 's for you, mamma," said his model, disengaging her arm from her mother's hand and turning away.

The mamma stood looking at the sketch with a smile which seemed to express a tender desire to reconcile all accidents.

"It 's extremely beautiful," she murmured, "and if you insist on my taking it—"

"I shall regard it as a great honor."

"Very well, then; with many thanks, I will keep it." She looked at the young man a moment, while her daughter walked away. Longueville thought her a delightful little person; she struck him as a sort of transfigured Quakeress—a mystic with a practical side. "I am sure you think she 's a strange girl," she said.

"She is extremely pretty."

"She is very clever," said the mother.

"She is wonderfully graceful."

"Ah, but she 's good!" cried the old lady.

“I am sure she comes honestly by that,” said Longueville, expressively, while his companion, returning his salutation with a certain scrupulous grace of her own, hurried after her daughter.

Longueville remained there staring at the view but not especially seeing it. He felt as if he had at once enjoyed and lost an opportunity. After a while he tried to make a sketch of the old beggar-woman who sat there in a sort of palsied immobility, like a rickety statue at a church-door. But his attempt to reproduce her features was not gratifying, and he suddenly laid down his brush. She was not pretty enough—she had a bad profile.

# CHAPTER II

Two months later Bernard Longueville was at Venice, still under the impression that he was leaving Italy. He was not a man who made plans and held to them. He made them, indeed—few men made more—but he made them as a basis for variation. He had gone to Venice to spend a fortnight, and his fortnight had taken the form of eight enchanting weeks. He had still a sort of conviction that he was carrying out his plans; for it must be confessed that where his pleasure was concerned he had considerable skill in accommodating his theory to his practice. His enjoyment of Venice was extreme, but he was roused from it by a summons he was indisposed to resist. This consisted of a letter from an intimate friend who was living in Germany—a friend whose name was Gordon Wright. He had been spending the winter in Dresden, but his letter bore the date of Baden-Baden. As it was not long, I may give it entire.

"I wish very much that you would come to this place. I think you have been here before, so that you know how pretty it is, and how amusing. I shall probably be here the rest of the summer. There are some people I know and whom I want you to know. Be so good as to arrive. Then I will thank you properly for your various Italian rhapsodies. I can't reply on the same scale—I have n't the time. Do you know what I am doing? I am making love. I find it a most absorbing occupation. That is literally why I have not written to you before. I have been making love ever since the last of May. It takes an immense amount of time, and everything else has got terribly behindhand. I don't mean to say that the experiment itself has gone on very fast; but I am trying to push it forward. I have n't yet had time to test its success; but in this I want your help. You know we great physicists never make an experiment without an 'assistant'—a humble individual who burns his fingers and stains his clothes in the cause of science, but whose interest in the problem is only indirect. I want you to be my assistant, and I will guarantee that your burns and stains shall not be dangerous. She is an extremely interesting girl, and I really want you to see her—I want to know what you think of her. She wants to know you, too, for I have talked a good deal about you. There you have it, if gratified vanity will help you on the way. Seriously, this is a real request. I want your opinion, your impression. I want to see how she will affect you. I don't say I ask for your advice; that, of course, you will not undertake to give. But I desire a definition, a characterization; you know you toss off those things. I don't see why I should n't tell you all this—I have always told you everything. I have never pretended to know anything about women, but I have always supposed that you knew everything. You certainly have always had the tone of that sort of omniscience. So come here as soon as possible and let me see that you are not a humbug. She 's a very handsome girl."

Longueville was so much amused with this appeal that he very soon started for Germany. In the reader, Gordon Wright's letter will, perhaps, excite surprise rather than hilarity; but Longueville thought it highly characteristic of his friend. What it especially pointed to was Gordon's want of imagination—a deficiency which was a matter of common jocular allusion between the two young men, each of whom kept a collection of acknowledged oddities as a playground for the other's wit. Bernard had often spoken of his comrade's want of imagination as a bottomless pit, into which Gordon was perpetually inviting him to lower himself. "My dear fellow," Bernard said, "you must really excuse me; I cannot take these subterranean excursions. I should lose my breath down there; I should never come up alive. You know I have dropped things down—little jokes and metaphors, little fantasies and paradoxes—and I have never heard them touch bottom!" This was an epigram on the part of a young man who had a lively play of fancy; but it was none the less true that Gordon Wright had a firmly-treading, rather than a winged, intellect. Every phrase in his letter seemed, to Bernard, to march in stout-soled walking-boots, and nothing could better express his attachment to the process of reasoning things out than this proposal that his friend should come and make a chemical analysis—a geometrical survey—of the lady of his love. "That I shall have any difficulty in forming an opinion,

and any difficulty in expressing it when formed—of this he has as little idea as that he shall have any difficulty in accepting it when expressed." So Bernard reflected, as he rolled in the train to Munich. "Gordon's mind," he went on, "has no atmosphere; his intellectual process goes on in the void. There are no currents and eddies to affect it, no high winds nor hot suns, no changes of season and temperature. His premises are neatly arranged, and his conclusions are perfectly calculable."

Yet for the man on whose character he so freely exercised his wit Bernard Longueville had a strong affection. It is nothing against the validity of a friendship that the parties to it have not a mutual resemblance. There must be a basis of agreement, but the structure reared upon it may contain a thousand disparities. These two young men had formed an alliance of old, in college days, and the bond between them had been strengthened by the simple fact of its having survived the sentimental revolutions of early life. Its strongest link was a sort of mutual respect. Their tastes, their pursuits were different; but each of them had a high esteem for the other's character. It may be said that they were easily pleased; for it is certain that neither of them had performed any very conspicuous action. They were highly civilized young Americans, born to an easy fortune and a tranquil destiny, and unfamiliar with the glitter of golden opportunities. If I did not shrink from disparaging the constitution of their native land for their own credit, I should say that it had never been very definitely proposed to these young gentlemen to distinguish themselves. On reaching manhood, they had each come into property sufficient to make violent exertion superfluous. Gordon Wright, indeed, had inherited a large estate. Their wants being tolerably modest, they had not been tempted to strive for the glory of building up commercial fortunes—the most obvious career open to young Americans. They had, indeed, embraced no career at all, and if summoned to give an account of themselves would, perhaps, have found it hard to tell any very impressive story. Gordon Wright was much interested in physical science, and had ideas of his own on what is called the endowment of research. His ideas had taken a practical shape, and he had distributed money very freely among the investigating classes, after which he had gone to spend a couple of years in Germany, supposing it to be the land of laboratories. Here we find him at present, cultivating relations with several learned bodies and promoting the study of various tough branches of human knowledge, by paying the expenses of difficult experiments. The experiments, it must be added, were often of his own making, and he must have the honor of whatever brilliancy attaches, in the estimation of the world, to such pursuits. It was not, indeed, a brilliancy that dazzled Bernard Longueville, who, however, was not easily dazzled by anything. It was because he regarded him in so plain and direct a fashion, that Bernard had an affection for his friend—an affection to which it would perhaps be difficult to assign a definite cause. Personal sympathies are doubtless caused by something; but the causes are remote, mysterious to our daily vision, like those of the particular state of the weather. We content ourselves with remarking that it is fine or that it rains, and the enjoyment of our likes and dislikes is by no means apt to borrow its edge from the keenness of our analysis. Longueville had a relish for fine quality—superior savour; and he was sensible of this merit in the simple, candid, manly, affectionate nature of his comrade, which seemed to him an excellent thing of its kind. Gordon Wright had a tender heart and a strong will—a combination which, when the understanding is not too limited, is often the motive of admirable actions. There might sometimes be a question whether Gordon's understanding were sufficiently unlimited, but the impulses of a generous temper often play a useful part in filling up the gaps of an incomplete imagination, and the general impression that Wright produced was certainly that of intelligent good-nature. The reasons for appreciating Bernard Longueville were much more manifest. He pleased superficially, as well as fundamentally. Nature had sent him into the world with an armful of good gifts. He was very good-looking—tall, dark, agile, perfectly finished, so good-looking that he might have been a fool and yet be forgiven. As has already been intimated, however, he was far from being a fool. He had a number of talents, which, during three or four years that followed his leaving college, had received the discipline of the study of the law. He had not made much of the law; but he had made something of his talents. He was almost always spoken of as "accomplished;" people asked why he did n't do

something. This question was never satisfactorily answered, the feeling being that Longueville did more than many people in causing it to be asked. Moreover, there was one thing he did constantly —he enjoyed himself. This is manifestly not a career, and it has been said at the outset that he was not attached to any of the recognized professions. But without going into details, he was a charming fellow—clever, urbane, free-handed, and with that fortunate quality in his appearance which is known as distinction.

# CHAPTER III

He had not specified, in writing to Gordon Wright, the day on which he should arrive at Baden-Baden; it must be confessed that he was not addicted to specifying days. He came to his journey's end in the evening, and, on presenting himself at the hotel from which his friend had dated his letter, he learned that Gordon Wright had betaken himself after dinner, according to the custom of Baden-Baden, to the grounds of the Conversation-house. It was eight o'clock, and Longueville, after removing the stains of travel, sat down to dine. His first impulse had been to send for Gordon to come and keep him company at his repast; but on second thought he determined to make it as brief as possible. Having brought it to a close, he took his way to the Kursaal. The great German watering-place is one of the prettiest nooks in Europe, and of a summer evening in the gaming days, five-and-twenty years ago, it was one of the most brilliant scenes. The lighted windows of the great temple of hazard (of as chaste an architecture as if it had been devoted to a much purer divinity) opened wide upon the gardens and groves; the little river that issues from the bosky mountains of the Black Forest flowed, with an air of brook-like innocence, past the expensive hotels and lodging-houses; the orchestra, in a high pavilion on the terrace of the Kursaal, played a discreet accompaniment to the conversation of the ladies and gentlemen who, scattered over the large expanse on a thousand little chairs, preferred for the time the beauties of nature to the shuffle of coin and the calculation of chance; while the faint summer stars, twinkling above the vague black hills and woods, looked down at the indifferent groups without venturing to drop their light upon them.

Longueville, noting all this, went straight into the gaming-rooms; he was curious to see whether his friend, being fond of experiments, was trying combinations at roulette. But he was not to be found in any of the gilded chambers, among the crowd that pressed in silence about the tables; so that Bernard presently came and began to wander about the lamp-lit terrace, where innumerable groups, seated and strolling, made the place a gigantic conversazione. It seemed to him very agreeable and amusing, and he remarked to himself that, for a man who was supposed not to take especially the Epicurean view of life, Gordon Wright, in coming to Baden, had certainly made himself comfortable. Longueville went his way, glancing from one cluster of talkers to another; and at last he saw a face which brought him to a stop. He stood a moment looking at it; he knew he had seen it before. He had an excellent memory for faces; but it was some time before he was able to attach an identity to this one. Where had he seen a little elderly lady with an expression of timorous vigilance, and a band of hair as softly white as a dove's wing? The answer to the question presently came—Where but in a grass-grown corner of an old Italian town? The lady was the mother of his inconsequent model, so that this mysterious personage was probably herself not far off. Before Longueville had time to verify this induction, he found his eyes resting upon the broad back of a gentleman seated close to the old lady, and who, turning away from her, was talking to a young girl. It was nothing but the back of this gentleman that he saw, but nevertheless, with the instinct of true friendship, he recognized in this featureless expanse the robust personality of Gordon Wright. In a moment he had stepped forward and laid his hand upon Wright's shoulder.

His friend looked round, and then sprang up with a joyous exclamation and grasp of the hand.

"My dear fellow—my dear Bernard! What on earth—when did you arrive?"

While Bernard answered and explained a little, he glanced from his friend's good, gratified face at the young girl with whom Wright had been talking, and then at the lady on the other side, who was giving him a bright little stare. He raised his hat to her and to the young girl, and he became conscious, as regards the latter, of a certain disappointment. She was very pretty; she was looking at him; but she was not the heroine of the little incident of the terrace at Siena.

"It 's just like Longueville, you know," Gordon Wright went on; "he always comes at you from behind; he 's so awfully fond of surprises." He was laughing; he was greatly pleased; he introduced Bernard to the two ladies. "You must know Mrs. Vivian; you must know Miss Blanche Evers."

Bernard took his place in the little circle; he wondered whether he ought to venture upon a special recognition of Mrs. Vivian. Then it seemed to him that he should leave the option of this step with the lady, especially as he had detected recognition in her eye. But Mrs. Vivian ventured upon nothing special; she contented herself with soft generalities—with remarking that she always liked to know when people would arrive; that, for herself, she never enjoyed surprises.

"And yet I imagine you have had your share," said Longueville, with a smile. He thought this might remind her of the moment when she came out of the little church at Siena and found her daughter posturing to an unknown painter.

But Mrs. Vivian, turning her benignant head about, gave but a superficial reply.

"Oh, I have had my share of everything, good and bad. I don't complain of anything." And she gave a little deprecating laugh.

Gordon Wright shook hands with Bernard again; he seemed really very glad to see him. Longueville, remembering that Gordon had written to him that he had been "making love," began to seek in his countenance for the ravages of passion. For the moment, however, they were not apparent; the excellent, honest fellow looked placid and contented. Gordon Wright had a clear gray eye, short, straight, flaxen hair, and a healthy diffusion of color. His features were thick and rather irregular; but his countenance—in addition to the merit of its expression—derived a certain grace from a powerful yellow moustache, to which its wearer occasionally gave a martial twist. Gordon Wright was not tall, but he was strong, and in his whole person there was something well-planted and sturdy. He almost always dressed in light-colored garments, and he wore round his neck an eternal blue cravat. When he was agitated he grew very red. While he questioned Longueville about his journey and his health, his whereabouts and his intentions, the latter, among his own replies, endeavored to read in Wright's eyes some account of his present situation. Was that pretty girl at his side the ambiguous object of his adoration, and, in that case, what was the function of the elder lady, and what had become of her argumentative daughter? Perhaps this was another, a younger daughter, though, indeed, she bore no resemblance to either of Longueville's friends. Gordon Wright, in spite of Bernard's interrogative glances, indulged in no optical confidences. He had too much to tell. He would keep his story till they should be alone together. It was impossible that they should adjourn just yet to social solitude; the two ladies were under Gordon's protection. Mrs. Vivian—Bernard felt a satisfaction in learning her name; it was as if a curtain, half pulled up and stopped by a hitch, had suddenly been raised altogether—Mrs. Vivian sat looking up and down the terrace at the crowd of loungers and talkers with an air of tender expectation. She was probably looking for her elder daughter, and Longueville could not help wishing also that this young lady would arrive. Meanwhile, he saw that the young girl to whom Gordon had been devoting himself was extremely pretty, and appeared eminently approachable. Longueville had some talk with her, reflecting that if she were the person concerning whom Gordon had written him, it behooved him to appear to take an interest in her. This view of the case was confirmed by Gordon Wright's presently turning away to talk with Mrs. Vivian, so that his friend might be at liberty to make acquaintance with their companion.

Though she had not been with the others at Siena, it seemed to Longueville, with regard to her, too, that this was not the first time he had seen her. She was simply the American pretty girl, whom he had seen a thousand times. It was a numerous sisterhood, pervaded by a strong family likeness. This young lady had charming eyes (of the color of Gordon's cravats), which looked everywhere at once and yet found time to linger in some places, where Longueville's own eyes frequently met them. She had soft brown hair, with a silky-golden thread in it, beautifully arranged and crowned by a smart little hat that savoured of Paris. She had also a slender little figure, neatly rounded, and delicate, narrow hands, prettily gloved. She moved about a great deal in her place, twisted her little flexible

body and tossed her head, fingered her hair and examined the ornaments of her dress. She had a great deal of conversation, Longueville speedily learned, and she expressed herself with extreme frankness and decision. He asked her, to begin with, if she had been long at Baden, but the impetus of this question was all she required. Turning her charming, conscious, coquettish little face upon him, she instantly began to chatter.

"I have been here about four weeks. I don't know whether you call that long. It does n't seem long to me; I have had such a lovely time. I have met ever so many people here I know—every day some one turns up. Now you have turned up to-day."

"Ah, but you don't know me," said Longueville, laughing.

"Well, I have heard a great deal about you!" cried the young girl, with a pretty little stare of contradiction. "I think you know a great friend of mine, Miss Ella Maclane, of Baltimore. She 's travelling in Europe now." Longueville's memory did not instantly respond to this signal, but he expressed that rapturous assent which the occasion demanded, and even risked the observation that the young lady from Baltimore was very pretty. "She 's far too lovely," his companion went on. "I have often heard her speak of you. I think you know her sister rather better than you know her. She has not been out very long. She is just as interesting as she can be. Her hair comes down to her feet. She 's travelling in Norway. She has been everywhere you can think of, and she 's going to finish off with Finland. You can't go any further than that, can you? That 's one comfort; she will have to turn round and come back. I want her dreadfully to come to Baden-Baden."

"I wish she would," said Longueville. "Is she travelling alone?"

"Oh, no. They 've got some Englishman. They say he 's devoted to Ella. Every one seems to have an Englishman, now. We 've got one here, Captain Lovelock, the Honourable Augustus Lovelock. Well, they 're awfully handsome. Ella Maclane is dying to come to Baden-Baden. I wish you 'd write to her. Her father and mother have got some idea in their heads; they think it 's improper—what do you call it?—immoral. I wish you would write to her and tell her it is n't. I wonder if they think that Mrs. Vivian would come to a place that 's immoral. Mrs. Vivian says she would take her in a moment; she does n't seem to care how many she has. I declare, she 's only too kind. You know I 'm in Mrs. Vivian's care. My mother 's gone to Marienbad. She would let me go with Mrs. Vivian anywhere, on account of the influence—she thinks so much of Mrs. Vivian's influence. I have always heard a great deal about it, have n't you? I must say it 's lovely; it 's had a wonderful effect upon me. I don't want to praise myself, but it has. You ask Mrs. Vivian if I have n't been good. I have been just as good as I can be. I have been so peaceful, I have just sat here this way. Do you call this immoral? You 're not obliged to gamble if you don't want to. Ella Maclane's father seems to think you get drawn in. I 'm sure I have n't been drawn in. I know what you 're going to say—you 're going to say I have been drawn out. Well, I have, to-night. We just sit here so quietly—there 's nothing to do but to talk. We make a little party by ourselves—are you going to belong to our party? Two of us are missing—Miss Vivian and Captain Lovelock. Captain Lovelock has gone with her into the rooms to explain the gambling—Miss Vivian always wants everything explained. I am sure I understood it the first time I looked at the tables. Have you ever seen Miss Vivian? She 's very much admired, she 's so very unusual. Black hair 's so uncommon—I see you have got it too—but I mean for young ladies. I am sure one sees everything here. There 's a woman that comes to the tables—a Portuguese countess—who has hair that is positively blue. I can't say I admire it when it comes to that shade. Blue 's my favorite color, but I prefer it in the eyes," continued Longueville's companion, resting upon him her own two brilliant little specimens of the tint.

He listened with that expression of clear amusement which is not always an indication of high esteem, but which even pretty chatterers, who are not the reverse of estimable, often prefer to masculine inattention; and while he listened Bernard, according to his wont, made his reflections. He said to himself that there were two kinds of pretty girls—the acutely conscious and the finely unconscious. Mrs. Vivian's protege was a member of the former category; she belonged to the genus

coquette. We all have our conception of the indispensable, and the indispensable, to this young lady, was a spectator; almost any male biped would serve the purpose. To her spectator she addressed, for the moment, the whole volume of her being—addressed it in her glances, her attitudes, her exclamations, in a hundred little experiments of tone and gesture and position. And these rustling artifices were so innocent and obvious that the directness of her desire to be well with her observer became in itself a grace; it led Bernard afterward to say to himself that the natural vocation and metier of little girls for whom existence was but a shimmering surface, was to prattle and ruffle their plumage; their view of life and its duties was as simple and superficial as that of an Oriental bayadere. It surely could not be with regard to this transparent little flirt that Gordon Wright desired advice; you could literally see the daylight—or rather the Baden gaslight—on the other side of her. She sat there for a minute, turning her little empty head to and fro, and catching Bernard's eye every time she moved; she had for the instant the air of having exhausted all topics. Just then a young lady, with a gentleman at her side, drew near to the little group, and Longueville, perceiving her, instantly got up from his chair.

"There 's a beauty of the unconscious class!" he said to himself. He knew her face very well; he had spent half an hour in copying it.

"Here comes Miss Vivian!" said Gordon Wright, also getting up, as if to make room for the daughter near the mother.

She stopped in front of them, smiling slightly, and then she rested her eyes upon Longueville. Their gaze at first was full and direct, but it expressed nothing more than civil curiosity. This was immediately followed, however, by the light of recognition—recognition embarrassed, and signalling itself by a blush.

Miss Vivian's companion was a powerful, handsome fellow, with a remarkable auburn beard, who struck the observer immediately as being uncommonly well dressed. He carried his hands in the pockets of a little jacket, the button-hole of which was adorned with a blooming rose. He approached Blanche Evers, smiling and dandling his body a little, and making her two or three jocular bows.

"Well, I hope you have lost every penny you put on the table!" said the young girl, by way of response to his obeisances.

He began to laugh and repeat them.

"I don't care what I lose, so long—so long—"

"So long as what, pray?"

"So long as you let me sit down by you!" And he dropped, very gallantly, into a chair on the other side of her.

"I wish you would lose all your property!" she replied, glancing at Bernard.

"It would be a very small stake," said Captain Lovelock. "Would you really like to see me reduced to misery?"

While this graceful dialogue rapidly established itself, Miss Vivian removed her eyes from Longueville's face and turned toward her mother. But Gordon Wright checked this movement by laying his hand on Longueville's shoulder and proceeding to introduce his friend.

"This is the accomplished creature, Mr. Bernard Longueville, of whom you have heard me speak. One of his accomplishments, as you see, is to drop down from the moon."

"No, I don't drop from the moon," said Bernard, laughing. "I drop from—Siena!" He offered his hand to Miss Vivian, who for an appreciable instant hesitated to extend her own. Then she returned his salutation, without any response to his allusion to Siena.

She declined to take a seat, and said she was tired and preferred to go home. With this suggestion her mother immediately complied, and the two ladies appealed to the indulgence of little Miss Evers, who was obliged to renounce the society of Captain Lovelock. She enjoyed this luxury, however, on the way to Mrs. Vivian's lodgings, toward which they all slowly strolled, in the sociable Baden fashion. Longueville might naturally have found himself next Miss Vivian, but he received an impression that

she avoided him. She walked in front, and Gordon Wright strolled beside her, though Longueville noticed that they appeared to exchange but few words. He himself offered his arm to Mrs. Vivian, who paced along with a little lightly-wavering step, making observations upon the beauties of Baden and the respective merits of the hotels.

# CHAPTER IV

“Which of them is it?” asked Longueville of his friend, after they had bidden good-night to the three ladies and to Captain Lovelock, who went off to begin, as he said, the evening. They stood, when they had turned away from the door of Mrs. Vivian’s lodgings, in the little, rough-paved German street.

“Which of them is what?” Gordon asked, staring at his companion.

“Oh, come,” said Longueville, “you are not going to begin to play at modesty at this hour! Did n’t you write to me that you had been making violent love?”

“Violent? No.”

“The more shame to you! Has your love-making been feeble?”

His friend looked at him a moment rather soberly.

“I suppose you thought it a queer document—that letter I wrote you.”

“I thought it characteristic,” said Longueville smiling.

“Is n’t that the same thing?”

“Not in the least. I have never thought you a man of oddities.” Gordon stood there looking at him with a serious eye, half appealing, half questioning; but at these last words he glanced away. Even a very modest man may wince a little at hearing himself denied the distinction of a few variations from the common type. Longueville made this reflection, and it struck him, also, that his companion was in a graver mood than he had expected; though why, after all, should he have been in a state of exhilaration? “Your letter was a very natural, interesting one,” Bernard added.

“Well, you see,” said Gordon, facing his companion again, “I have been a good deal preoccupied.”

“Obviously, my dear fellow!”

“I want very much to marry.”

“It ‘s a capital idea,” said Longueville.

“I think almost as well of it,” his friend declared, “as if I had invented it. It has struck me for the first time.”

These words were uttered with a mild simplicity which provoked Longueville to violent laughter.

“My dear fellow,” he exclaimed, “you have, after all, your little oddities.”

Singularly enough, however, Gordon Wright failed to appear flattered by this concession.

“I did n’t send for you to laugh at me,” he said.

“Ah, but I have n’t travelled three hundred miles to cry! Seriously, solemnly, then, it is one of these young ladies that has put marriage into your head?”

“Not at all. I had it in my head.”

“Having a desire to marry, you proceeded to fall in love.”

“I am not in love!” said Gordon Wright, with some energy.

“Ah, then, my dear fellow, why did you send for me?”

Wright looked at him an instant in silence.

“Because I thought you were a good fellow, as well as a clever one.”

“A good fellow!” repeated Longueville. “I don’t understand your confounded scientific nomenclature. But excuse me; I won’t laugh. I am not a clever fellow; but I am a good one.” He paused a moment, and then laid his hand on his companion’s shoulder. “My dear Gordon, it ‘s no use; you are in love.”

“Well, I don’t want to be,” said Wright.

“Heavens, what a horrible sentiment!”

"I want to marry with my eyes open. I want to know my wife. You don't know people when you are in love with them. Your impressions are colored."

"They are supposed to be, slightly. And you object to color?"

"Well, as I say, I want to know the woman I marry, as I should know any one else. I want to see her as clearly."

"Depend upon it, you have too great an appetite for knowledge; you set too high an esteem upon the dry light of science."

"Ah!" said Gordon promptly; "of course I want to be fond of her."

Bernard, in spite of his protest, began to laugh again.

"My dear Gordon, you are better than your theories. Your passionate heart contradicts your frigid intellect. I repeat it—you are in love."

"Please don't repeat it again," said Wright.

Bernard took his arm, and they walked along.

"What shall I call it, then? You are engaged in making studies for matrimony."

"I don't in the least object to your calling it that. My studies are of extreme interest."

"And one of those young ladies is the fair volume that contains the precious lesson," said Longueville. "Or perhaps your text-book is in two volumes?"

"No; there is one of them I am not studying at all. I never could do two things at once."

"That proves you are in love. One can't be in love with two women at once, but one may perfectly have two of them—or as many as you please—up for a competitive examination. However, as I asked you before, which of these young ladies is it that you have selected?"

Gordon Wright stopped abruptly, eying his friend.

"Which should you say?"

"Ah, that 's not a fair question," Bernard urged. "It would be invidious for me to name one rather than the other, and if I were to mention the wrong one, I should feel as if I had been guilty of a rudeness towards the other. Don't you see?"

Gordon saw, perhaps, but he held to his idea of making his companion commit himself.

"Never mind the rudeness. I will do the same by you some day, to make it up. Which of them should you think me likely to have taken a fancy to? On general grounds, now, from what you know of me?" He proposed this problem with an animated eye.

"You forget," his friend said, "that though I know, thank heaven, a good deal of you, I know very little of either of those girls. I have had too little evidence."

"Yes, but you are a man who notices. That 's why I wanted you to come."

"I spoke only to Miss Evers."

"Yes, I know you have never spoken to Miss Vivian." Gordon Wright stood looking at Bernard and urging his point as he pronounced these words. Bernard felt peculiarly conscious of his gaze. The words represented an illusion, and Longueville asked himself quickly whether it were not his duty to dispel it. The answer came more slowly than the question, but still it came, in the shape of a negative. The illusion was but a trifling one, and it was not for him, after all, to let his friend know that he had already met Miss Vivian. It was for the young girl herself, and since she had not done so—although she had the opportunity—Longueville said to himself that he was bound in honor not to speak. These reflections were very soon made, but in the midst of them our young man, thanks to a great agility of mind, found time to observe, tacitly, that it was odd, just there, to see his "honor" thrusting in its nose. Miss Vivian, in her own good time, would doubtless mention to Gordon the little incident of Siena. It was Bernard's fancy, for a moment, that he already knew it, and that the remark he had just uttered had an ironical accent; but this impression was completely dissipated by the tone in which he added—"All the same, you noticed her."

"Oh, yes; she is very noticeable."

"Well, then," said Gordon, "you will see. I should like you to make it out. Of course, if I am really giving my attention to one to the exclusion of the other, it will be easy to discover."

Longueville was half amused, half irritated by his friend's own relish of his little puzzle. "'The exclusion of the other' has an awkward sound," he answered, as they walked on. "Am I to notice that you are very rude to one of the young ladies?"

"Oh dear, no. Do you think there is a danger of that?"

"Well," said Longueville, "I have already guessed."

Gordon Wright remonstrated. "Don't guess yet—wait a few days. I won't tell you now."

"Let us see if he does n't tell me," said Bernard, privately. And he meditated a moment. "When I presented myself, you were sitting very close to Miss Evers and talking very earnestly. Your head was bent toward her—it was very lover-like. Decidedly, Miss Evers is the object!"

For a single instant Gordon Wright hesitated, and then—"I hope I have n't seemed rude to Miss Vivian!" he exclaimed.

Bernard broke into a light laugh. "My dear Gordon, you are very much in love!" he remarked, as they arrived at their hotel.

# CHAPTER V

Life at Baden-Baden proved a very sociable affair, and Bernard Longueville perceived that he should not lack opportunity for the exercise of those gifts of intelligence to which Gordon Wright had appealed. The two friends took long walks through the woods and over the mountains, and they mingled with human life in the crowded precincts of the Conversation-house. They engaged in a ramble on the morning after Bernard's arrival, and wandered far away, over hill and dale. The Baden forests are superb, and the composition of the landscape is most effective. There is always a bosky dell in the foreground, and a purple crag embellished with a ruined tower at a proper angle. A little timber-and-plaster village peeps out from a tangle of plum-trees, and a way-side tavern, in comfortable recurrence, solicits concessions to the national custom of frequent refreshment. Gordon Wright, who was a dogged pedestrian, always enjoyed doing his ten miles, and Longueville, who was an incorrigible stroller, felt a keen relish for the picturesqueness of the country. But it was not, on this occasion, of the charms of the landscape or the pleasures of locomotion that they chiefly discoursed. Their talk took a more closely personal turn. It was a year since they had met, and there were many questions to ask and answer, many arrears of gossip to make up. As they stretched themselves on the grass on a sun-warmed hill-side, beneath a great German oak whose arms were quiet in the blue summer air, there was a lively exchange of impressions, opinions, speculations, anecdotes. Gordon Wright was surely an excellent friend. He took an interest in you. He asked no idle questions and made no vague professions; but he entered into your situation, he examined it in detail, and what he learned he never forgot. Months afterwards, he asked you about things which you yourself had forgotten. He was not a man of whom it would be generally said that he had the gift of sympathy; but he gave his attention to a friend's circumstances with a conscientious fixedness which was at least very far removed from indifference. Bernard had the gift of sympathy—or at least he was supposed to have it; but even he, familiar as he must therefore have been with the practice of this charming virtue, was at times so struck with his friend's fine faculty of taking other people's affairs seriously that he constantly exclaimed to himself, "The excellent fellow—the admirable nature!"

Bernard had two or three questions to ask about the three persons who appeared to have formed for some time his companion's principal society, but he was indisposed to press them. He felt that he should see for himself, and at a prospect of entertainment of this kind, his fancy always kindled. Gordon was, moreover, at first rather shy of confidences, though after they had lain on the grass ten minutes there was a good deal said.

"Now what do you think of her face?" Gordon asked, after staring a while at the sky through the oak-boughs.

"Of course, in future," said Longueville, "whenever you make use of the personal pronoun feminine, I am to understand that Miss Vivian is indicated."

"Her name is Angela," said Gordon; "but of course I can scarcely call her that."

"It 's a beautiful name," Longueville rejoined; "but I may say, in answer to your question, that I am not struck with the fact that her face corresponds to it."

"You don't think her face beautiful, then?"

"I don't think it angelic. But how can I tell? I have only had a glimpse of her."

"Wait till she looks at you and speaks—wait till she smiles," said Gordon.

"I don't think I saw her smile—at least, not at me, directly. I hope she will!" Longueville went on. "But who is she—this beautiful girl with the beautiful name?"

"She is her mother's daughter," said Gordon Wright. "I don't really know a great deal more about her than that."

"And who is her mother?"

"A delightful little woman, devoted to Miss Vivian. She is a widow, and Angela is her only child. They have lived a great deal in Europe; they have but a modest income. Over here, Mrs. Vivian says, they can get a lot of things for their money that they can't get at home. So they stay, you see. When they are at home they live in New York. They know some of my people there. When they are in Europe they live about in different places. They are fond of Italy. They are extremely nice; it 's impossible to be nicer. They are very fond of books, fond of music, and art, and all that. They always read in the morning. They only come out rather late in the day."

"I see they are very superior people," said Bernard. "And little Miss Evers—what does she do in the morning? I know what she does in the evening!"

"I don't know what her regular habits are. I have n't paid much attention to her. She is very pretty."

"Wunderschon!" said Bernard. "But you were certainly talking to her last evening."

"Of course I talk to her sometimes. She is totally different from Angela Vivian—not nearly so cultivated; but she seems very charming."

"A little silly, eh?" Bernard suggested.

"She certainly is not so wise as Miss Vivian."

"That would be too much to ask, eh? But the Vivians, as kind as they are wise, have taken her under their protection."

"Yes," said Gordon, "they are to keep her another month or two. Her mother has gone to Marienbad, which I believe is thought a dull place for a young girl; so that, as they were coming here, they offered to bring her with them. Mrs. Evers is an old friend of Mrs. Vivian, who, on leaving Italy, had come up to Dresden to be with her. They spent a month there together; Mrs. Evers had been there since the winter. I think Mrs. Vivian really came to Baden-Baden—she would have preferred a less expensive place—to bring Blanche Evers. Her mother wanted her so much to come."

"And was it for her sake that Captain Lovelock came, too?" Bernard asked.

Gordon Wright stared a moment.

"I 'm sure I don't know!"

"Of course you can't be interested in that," said Bernard smiling. "Who is Captain Lovelock?"

"He is an Englishman. I believe he is what 's called aristocratically connected—the younger brother of a lord, or something of that sort."

"Is he a clever man?"

"I have n't talked with him much, but I doubt it. He is rather rakish; he plays a great deal."

"But is that considered here a proof of rakishness?" asked Bernard. "Have n't you played a little yourself?"

Gordon hesitated a moment.

"Yes, I have played a little. I wanted to try some experiments. I had made some arithmetical calculations of probabilities, which I wished to test."

Bernard gave a long laugh.

"I am delighted with the reasons you give for amusing yourself! Arithmetical calculations!"

"I assure you they are the real reasons!" said Gordon, blushing a little.

"That 's just the beauty of it. You were not afraid of being 'drawn in,' as little Miss Evers says?"

"I am never drawn in, whatever the thing may be. I go in, or I stay out; but I am not drawn," said Gordon Wright.

"You were not drawn into coming with Mrs. Vivian and her daughter from Dresden to this place?"

"I did n't come with them; I came a week later."

"My dear fellow," said Bernard, "that distinction is unworthy of your habitual candor."

"Well, I was not fascinated; I was not overmastered. I wanted to come to Baden."

"I have no doubt you did. Had you become very intimate with your friends in Dresden?"

“I had only seen them three times.”

“After which you followed them to this place? Ah, don’t say you were not fascinated!” cried Bernard, laughing and springing to his feet.

# CHAPTER VI

That evening, in the gardens of the Kursaal, he renewed acquaintance with Angela Vivian. Her mother came, as usual, to sit and listen to the music, accompanied by Blanche Evers, who was in turn attended by Captain Lovelock. This little party found privacy in the crowd; they seated themselves in a quiet corner in an angle of one of the barriers of the terrace, while the movement of the brilliant Baden world went on around them. Gordon Wright engaged in conversation with Mrs. Vivian, while Bernard enjoyed an interview with her daughter. This young lady continued to ignore the fact of their previous meeting, and our hero said to himself that all he wished was to know what she preferred—he would rigidly conform to it. He conformed to her present programme; he had ventured to pronounce the word Siena the evening before, but he was careful not to pronounce it again. She had her reasons for her own reserve; he wondered what they were, and it gave him a certain pleasure to wonder. He enjoyed the consciousness of their having a secret together, and it became a kind of entertaining suspense to see how long she would continue to keep it. For himself, he was in no hurry to let the daylight in; the little incident at Siena had been, in itself, a charming affair; but Miss Vivian's present attitude gave it a sort of mystic consecration. He thought she carried it off very well—the theory that she had not seen him before; last evening she had been slightly confused, but now she was as self-possessed as if the line she had taken were a matter of conscience. Why should it be a matter of conscience? Was she in love with Gordon Wright, and did she wish, in consequence, to forget—and wish him not to suspect—that she had ever received an expression of admiration from another man? This was not likely; it was not likely, at least, that Miss Vivian wished to pass for a prodigy of innocence; for if to be admired is to pay a tribute to corruption, it was perfectly obvious that so handsome a girl must have tasted of the tree of knowledge. As for her being in love with Gordon Wright, that of course was another affair, and Bernard did not pretend, as yet, to have an opinion on this point, beyond hoping very much that she might be.

He was not wrong in the impression of her good looks that he had carried away from the short interview at Siena. She had a charmingly chiselled face, with a free, pure outline, a clear, fair complexion, and the eyes and hair of a dusky beauty. Her features had a firmness which suggested tranquillity, and yet her expression was light and quick, a combination—or a contradiction—which gave an original stamp to her beauty. Bernard remembered that he had thought it a trifle "bold"; but he now perceived that this had been but a vulgar misreading of her dark, direct, observant eye. The eye was a charming one; Bernard discovered in it, little by little, all sorts of things; and Miss Vivian was, for the present, simply a handsome, intelligent, smiling girl. He gave her an opportunity to make an allusion to Siena; he said to her that his friend told him that she and her mother had been spending the winter in Italy.

"Oh yes," said Angela Vivian; "we were in the far south; we were five months at Sorrento."

"And nowhere else?"

"We spent a few days in Rome. We usually prefer the quiet places; that is my mother's taste."

"It was not your mother's taste, then," said Bernard, "that brought you to Baden?"

She looked at him a moment.

"You mean that Baden is not quiet?"

Longueville glanced about at the moving, murmuring crowd, at the lighted windows of the Conversation-house, at the great orchestra perched up in its pagoda.

"This is not my idea of absolute tranquillity."

"Nor mine, either," said Miss Vivian. "I am not fond of absolute tranquillity."

"How do you arrange it, then, with your mother?"

Again she looked at him a moment, with her clever, slightly mocking smile.

"As you see. By making her come where I wish."

“You have a strong will,” said Bernard. “I see that.”

“No. I have simply a weak mother. But I make sacrifices too, sometimes.”

“What do you call sacrifices?”

“Well, spending the winter at Sorrento.”

Bernard began to laugh, and then he told her she must have had a very happy life—“to call a winter at Sorrento a sacrifice.”

“It depends upon what one gives up,” said Miss Vivian.

“What did you give up?”

She touched him with her mocking smile again.

“That is not a very civil question, asked in that way.”

“You mean that I seem to doubt your abnegation?”

“You seem to insinuate that I had nothing to renounce. I gave up—I gave up—” and she looked about her, considering a little—“I gave up society.”

“I am glad you remember what it was,” said Bernard. “If I have seemed uncivil, let me make it up. When a woman speaks of giving up society, what she means is giving up admiration. You can never have given up that—you can never have escaped from it. You must have found it even at Sorrento.”

“It may have been there, but I never found it. It was very respectful—it never expressed itself.”

“That is the deepest kind,” said Bernard.

“I prefer the shallower varieties,” the young girl answered.

“Well,” said Bernard, “you must remember that although shallow admiration expresses itself, all the admiration that expresses itself is not shallow.”

Miss Vivian hesitated a moment.

“Some of it is impertinent,” she said, looking straight at him, rather gravely.

Bernard hesitated about as long.

“When it is impertinent it is shallow. That comes to the same thing.”

The young girl frowned a little.

“I am not sure that I understand—I am rather stupid. But you see how right I am in my taste for such places as this. I have to come here to hear such ingenious remarks.”

“You should add that my coming, as well, has something to do with it.”

“Everything!” said Miss Vivian.

“Everything? Does no one else make ingenious remarks? Does n’t my friend Wright?”

“Mr. Wright says excellent things, but I should not exactly call them ingenious remarks.”

“It is not what Wright says; it ‘s what he does. That ‘s the charm!” said Bernard.

His companion was silent for a moment. “That ‘s not usually a charm; good conduct is not thought pleasing.”

“It surely is not thought the reverse!” Bernard exclaimed.

“It does n’t rank—in the opinion of most people—among the things that make men agreeable.”

“It depends upon what you call agreeable.”

“Exactly so,” said Miss Vivian. “It all depends on that.”

“But the agreeable,” Bernard went on—“it is n’t after all, fortunately, such a subtle idea! The world certainly is agreed to think that virtue is a beautiful thing.”

Miss Vivian dropped her eyes a moment, and then, looking up,

“Is it a charm?” she asked.

“For me there is no charm without it,” Bernard declared.

“I am afraid that for me there is,” said the young girl.

Bernard was puzzled—he who was not often puzzled. His companion struck him as altogether too clever to be likely to indulge in a silly affectation of cynicism. And yet, without this, how could one account for her sneering at virtue?

"You talk as if you had sounded the depths of vice!" he said, laughing. "What do you know about other than virtuous charms?"

"I know, of course, nothing about vice; but I have known virtue when it was very tiresome."

"Ah, then it was a poor affair. It was poor virtue. The best virtue is never tiresome."

Miss Vivian looked at him a little, with her fine discriminating eye.

"What a dreadful thing to have to think any virtue poor!"

This was a touching reflection, and it might have gone further had not the conversation been interrupted by Mrs. Vivian's appealing to her daughter to aid a defective recollection of a story about a Spanish family they had met at Biarritz, with which she had undertaken to entertain Gordon Wright. After this, the little circle was joined by a party of American friends who were spending a week at Baden, and the conversation became general.

# CHAPTER VII

But on the following evening, Bernard again found himself seated in friendly colloquy with this interesting girl, while Gordon Wright discoursed with her mother on one side, and little Blanche Evers chattered to the admiring eyes of Captain Lovelock on the other.

"You and your mother are very kind to that little girl," our hero said; "you must be a great advantage to her."

Angela Vivian directed her eyes to her neighbors, and let them rest a while on the young girl's little fidgeting figure and her fresh, coquettish face. For some moments she said nothing, and to Longueville, turning over several things in his mind, and watching her, it seemed that her glance was one of disfavor. He divined, he scarcely knew how, that her esteem for her pretty companion was small.

"I don't know that I am very kind," said Miss Vivian. "I have done nothing in particular for her."

"Mr. Wright tells me you came to this place mainly on her account."

"I came for myself," said Miss Vivian. "The consideration you speak of perhaps had weight with my mother."

"You are not an easy person to say appreciative things to," Bernard rejoined. "One is tempted to say them; but you don't take them."

The young girl colored as she listened to this observation.

"I don't think you know," she murmured, looking away. Then, "Set it down to modesty," she added.

"That, of course, is what I have done. To what else could one possibly attribute an indifference to compliments?"

"There is something else. One might be proud."

"There you are again!" Bernard exclaimed. "You won't even let me praise your modesty."

"I would rather you should rebuke my pride."

"That is so humble a speech that it leaves no room for rebuke."

For a moment Miss Vivian said nothing.

"Men are singularly base," she declared presently, with a little smile. "They don't care in the least to say things that might help a person. They only care to say things that may seem effective and agreeable."

"I see: you think that to say agreeable things is a great misdemeanor."

"It comes from their vanity," Miss Vivian went on, as if she had not heard him. "They wish to appear agreeable and get credit for cleverness and tendresse, no matter how silly it would be for another person to believe them."

Bernard was a good deal amused, and a little nettled.

"Women, then," he said, "have rather a fondness for producing a bad impression—they like to appear disagreeable?"

His companion bent her eyes upon her fan for a moment as she opened and closed it.

"They are capable of resigning themselves to it—for a purpose."

Bernard was moved to extreme merriment.

"For what purpose?"

"I don't know that I mean for a purpose," said Miss Vivian; "but for a necessity."

"Ah, what an odious necessity!"

"Necessities usually are odious. But women meet them. Men evade them and shirk them."

"I contest your proposition. Women are themselves necessities; but they are not odious ones!" And Bernard added, in a moment, "One could n't evade them, if they were!"

"I object to being called a necessity," said Angela Vivian. "It diminishes one's merit."

"Ah, but it enhances the charm of life!"

"For men, doubtless!"

"The charm of life is very great," Bernard went on, looking up at the dusky hills and the summer stars, seen through a sort of mist of music and talk, and of powdery light projected from the softly lurid windows of the gaming-rooms. "The charm of life is extreme. I am unacquainted with odious necessities. I object to nothing!"

Angela Vivian looked about her as he had done—looked perhaps a moment longer at the summer stars; and if she had not already proved herself a young lady of a contradictory turn, it might have been supposed she was just then tacitly admitting the charm of life to be considerable.

"Do you suppose Miss Evers often resigns herself to being disagreeable—for a purpose?" asked Longueville, who had glanced at Captain Lovelock's companion again.

"She can't be disagreeable; she is too gentle, too soft."

"Do you mean too silly?"

"I don't know that I call her silly. She is not very wise; but she has no pretensions—absolutely none—so that one is not struck with anything incongruous."

"What a terrible description! I suppose one ought to have a few pretensions."

"You see one comes off more easily without them," said Miss Vivian.

"Do you call that coming off easily?"

She looked at him a moment gravely.

"I am very fond of Blanche," she said.

"Captain Lovelock is rather fond of her," Bernard went on.

The girl assented.

"He is completely fascinated—he is very much in love with her."

"And do they mean to make an international match?"

"I hope not; my mother and I are greatly troubled."

"Is n't he a good fellow?"

"He is a good fellow; but he is a mere trifler. He has n't a penny, I believe, and he has very expensive habits. He gambles a great deal. We don't know what to do."

"You should send for the young lady's mother."

"We have written to her pressingly. She answers that Blanche can take care of herself, and that she must stay at Marienbad to finish her cure. She has just begun a new one."

"Ah well," said Bernard, "doubtless Blanche can take care of herself."

For a moment his companion said nothing; then she exclaimed—

"It 's what a girl ought to be able to do!"

"I am sure you are!" said Bernard.

She met his eyes, and she was going to make some rejoinder; but before she had time to speak, her mother's little, clear, conciliatory voice interposed. Mrs. Vivian appealed to her daughter, as she had done the night before.

"Dear Angela, what was the name of the gentleman who delivered that delightful course of lectures that we heard in Geneva, on—what was the title?—'The Redeeming Features of the Pagan Morality.'"

Angela flushed a little.

"I have quite forgotten his name, mamma," she said, without looking round.

"Come and sit by me, my dear, and we will talk them over. I wish Mr. Wright to hear about them," Mrs. Vivian went on.

"Do you wish to convert him to paganism?" Bernard asked.

"The lectures were very dull; they had no redeeming features," said Angela, getting up, but turning away from her mother. She stood looking at Bernard Longueville; he saw she was annoyed at

her mother's interference. "Every now and then," she said, "I take a turn through the gaming-rooms. The last time, Captain Lovelock went with me. Will you come to-night?"

Bernard assented with expressive alacrity; he was charmed with her not wishing to break off her conversation with him.

"Ah, we 'll all go!" said Mrs. Vivian, who had been listening, and she invited the others to accompany her to the Kursaal.

They left their places, but Angela went first, with Bernard Longueville by her side; and the idea of her having publicly braved her mother, as it were, for the sake of his society, lent for the moment an almost ecstatic energy to his tread. If he had been tempted to presume upon his triumph, however, he would have found a check in the fact that the young girl herself tasted very soberly of the sweets of defiance. She was silent and grave; she had a manner which took the edge from the wantonness of filial independence. Yet, for all this, Bernard was pleased with his position; and, as he walked with her through the lighted and crowded rooms, where they soon detached themselves from their companions, he felt that peculiar satisfaction which best expresses itself in silence. Angela looked a while at the rows of still, attentive faces, fixed upon the luminous green circle, across which little heaps of louis d'or were being pushed to and fro, and she continued to say nothing. Then at last she exclaimed simply, "Come away!" They turned away and passed into another chamber, in which there was no gambling. It was an immense apartment, apparently a ball-room; but at present it was quite unoccupied. There were green velvet benches all around it, and a great polished floor stretched away, shining in the light of chandeliers adorned with innumerable glass drops. Miss Vivian stood a moment on the threshold; then she passed in, and they stopped in the middle of the place, facing each other, and with their figures reflected as if they had been standing on a sheet of ice. There was no one in the room; they were entirely alone.

"Why don't you recognize me?" Bernard murmured quickly.

"Recognize you?"

"Why do you seem to forget our meeting at Siena?"

She might have answered if she had answered immediately; but she hesitated, and while she did so something happened at the other end of the room which caused her to shift her glance. A green velvet portiere suspended in one of the door-ways—not that through which our friends had passed —was lifted, and Gordon Wright stood there, holding it up, and looking at them. His companions were behind him.

"Ah, here they are!" cried Gordon, in his loud, clear voice.

This appeared to strike Angela Vivian as an interruption, and Bernard saw it very much in the same light.

# CHAPTER VIII

He forbore to ask her his question again—she might tell him at her convenience. But the days passed by, and she never told him—she had her own reasons. Bernard talked with her very often; conversation formed indeed the chief entertainment of the quiet little circle of which he was a member. They sat on the terrace and talked in the mingled starlight and lamplight, and they strolled in the deep green forests and wound along the side of the gentle Baden hills, under the influence of colloquial tendencies. The Black Forest is a country of almost unbroken shade, and in the still days of midsummer the whole place was covered with a motionless canopy of verdure. Our friends were not extravagant or audacious people, and they looked at Baden life very much from the outside—they sat aloof from the brightly lighted drama of professional revelry. Among themselves as well, however, a little drama went forward in which each member of the company had a part to play. Bernard Longueville had been surprised at first at what he would have called Miss Vivian's approachableness—at the frequency with which he encountered opportunities for sitting near her and entering into conversation. He had expected that Gordon Wright would deem himself to have established an anticipatory claim upon the young lady's attention, and that, in pursuance of this claim, he would occupy a recognized place at her side. Gordon was, after all, wooing her; it was very natural he should seek her society. In fact, he was never very far off; but Bernard, for three or four days, had the anomalous consciousness of being still nearer. Presently, however, he perceived that he owed this privilege simply to his friend's desire that he should become acquainted with Miss Vivian—should receive a vivid impression of a person in whom Gordon was so deeply interested. After this result might have been supposed to be attained, Gordon Wright stepped back into his usual place and showed her those small civilities which were the only homage that the quiet conditions of their life rendered possible—walked with her, talked with her, brought her a book to read, a chair to sit upon, a couple of flowers to place in the bosom of her gown, treated her, in a word, with a sober but by no means inexpressive gallantry. He had not been making violent love, as he told Longueville, and these demonstrations were certainly not violent. Bernard said to himself that if he were not in the secret, a spectator would scarcely make the discovery that Gordon cherished an even very safely tended flame. Angela Vivian, on her side, was not strikingly responsive. There was nothing in her deportment to indicate that she was in love with her systematic suitor. She was perfectly gracious and civil. She smiled in his face when he shook hands with her; she looked at him and listened when he talked; she let him stroll beside her in the Lichtenthal Alley; she read, or appeared to read, the books he lent her, and she decorated herself with the flowers he offered. She seemed neither bored nor embarrassed, neither irritated nor oppressed. But it was Bernard's belief that she took no more pleasure in his attentions than a pretty girl must always take in any recognition of her charms. "If she 's not indifferent," he said to himself, "she is, at any rate, impartial—profoundly impartial."

It was not till the end of a week that Gordon Wright told him exactly how his business stood with Miss Vivian and what he had reason to expect and hope—a week during which their relations had been of the happiest and most comfortable cast, and during which Bernard, rejoicing in their long walks and talks, in the charming weather, in the beauty and entertainment of the place, and in other things besides, had not ceased to congratulate himself on coming to Baden. Bernard, after the first day, had asked his friend no questions. He had a great respect for opportunity, coming either to others or to himself, and he left Gordon to turn his lantern as fitfully as might be upon the subject which was tacitly open between them, but of which as yet only the mere edges had emerged into light. Gordon, on his side, seemed content for the moment with having his clever friend under his hand; he reserved him for final appeal or for some other mysterious use.

"You can't tell me you don't know her now," he said, one evening as the two young men strolled along the Lichtenthal Alley—"now that you have had a whole week's observation of her."

"What is a week's observation of a singularly clever and complicated woman?" Bernard asked.

"Ah, your week has been of some use. You have found out she is complicated!" Gordon rejoined.

"My dear Gordon," Longueville exclaimed, "I don't see what it signifies to you that I should find Miss Vivian out! When a man 's in love, what need he care what other people think of the loved object?"

"It would certainly be a pity to care too much. But there is some excuse for him in the loved object being, as you say, complicated."

"Nonsense! That 's no excuse. The loved object is always complicated."

Gordon walked on in silence a moment.

"Well, then, I don't care a button what you think!"

"Bravo! That 's the way a man should talk," cried Longueville.

Gordon indulged in another fit of meditation, and then he said—

"Now that leaves you at liberty to say what you please."

"Ah, my dear fellow, you are ridiculous!" said Bernard.

"That 's precisely what I want you to say. You always think me too reasonable."

"Well, I go back to my first assertion. I don't know Miss Vivian—I mean I don't know her to have opinions about her. I don't suppose you wish me to string you off a dozen mere banalites—'She 's a charming girl—evidently a superior person—has a great deal of style.'"

"Oh no," said Gordon; "I know all that. But, at any rate," he added, "you like her, eh?"

"I do more," said Longueville. "I admire her."

"Is that doing more?" asked Gordon, reflectively.

"Well, the greater, whichever it is, includes the less."

"You won't commit yourself," said Gordon. "My dear Bernard," he added, "I thought you knew such an immense deal about women!"

Gordon Wright was of so kindly and candid a nature that it is hardly conceivable that this remark should have been framed to make Bernard commit himself by putting him on his mettle. Such a view would imply indeed on Gordon's part a greater familiarity with the uses of irony than he had ever possessed, as well as a livelier conviction of the irritable nature of his friend's vanity. In fact, however, it may be confided to the reader that Bernard was pricked in a tender place, though the resentment of vanity was not visible in his answer.

"You were quite wrong," he simply said. "I am as ignorant of women as a monk in his cloister."

"You try to prove too much. You don't think her sympathetic!" And as regards this last remark, Gordon Wright must be credited with a certain ironical impulse.

Bernard stopped impatiently.

"I ask you again, what does it matter to you what I think of her?"

"It matters in this sense—that she has refused me."

"Refused you? Then it is all over, and nothing matters."

"No, it is n't over," said Gordon, with a positive head-shake. "Don't you see it is n't over?"

Bernard smiled, laid his hand on his friend's shoulder and patted it a little.

"Your attitude might almost pass for that of resignation."

"I 'm not resigned!" said Gordon Wright.

"Of course not. But when were you refused?"

Gordon stood a minute with his eyes fixed on the ground. Then, at last looking up,

"Three weeks ago—a fortnight before you came. But let us walk along," he said, "and I will tell you all about it."

"I proposed to her three weeks ago," said Gordon, as they walked along. "My heart was very much set upon it. I was very hard hit—I was deeply smitten. She had been very kind to me—she had been charming—I thought she liked me. Then I thought her mother was pleased, and would have

liked it. Mrs. Vivian, in fact, told me as much; for of course I spoke to her first. Well, Angela does like me—or at least she did—and I see no reason to suppose she has changed. Only she did n't like me enough. She said the friendliest and pleasantest things to me, but she thought that she knew me too little, and that I knew her even less. She made a great point of that—that I had no right, as yet, to trust her. I told her that if she would trust me, I was perfectly willing to trust her; but she answered that this was poor reasoning. She said that I was trustworthy and that she was not, and—in short, all sorts of nonsense. She abused herself roundly—accused herself of no end of defects."

"What defects, for instance?"

"Oh, I have n't remembered them. She said she had a bad temper—that she led her mother a dreadful life. Now, poor Mrs. Vivian says she is an angel."

"Ah yes," Bernard observed; "Mrs. Vivian says that, very freely."

"Angela declared that she was jealous, ungenerous, unforgiving—all sorts of things. I remember she said 'I am very false,' and I think she remarked that she was cruel."

"But this did n't put you off," said Bernard.

"Not at all. She was making up."

"She makes up very well!" Bernard exclaimed, laughing.

"Do you call that well?"

"I mean it was very clever."

"It was not clever from the point of view of wishing to discourage me."

"Possibly. But I am sure," said Bernard, "that if I had been present at your interview—excuse the impudence of the hypothesis—I should have been struck with the young lady's—" and he paused a moment.

"With her what?"

"With her ability."

"Well, her ability was not sufficient to induce me to give up my idea. She told me that after I had known her six months I should detest her."

"I have no doubt she could make you do it if she should try. That 's what I mean by her ability."

"She calls herself cruel," said Gordon, "but she has not had the cruelty to try. She has been very reasonable—she has been perfect. I agreed with her that I would drop the subject for a while, and that meanwhile we should be good friends. We should take time to know each other better and act in accordance with further knowledge. There was no hurry, since we trusted each other—wrong as my trust might be. She had no wish that I should go away. I was not in the least disagreeable to her; she liked me extremely, and I was perfectly free to try and please her. Only I should drop my proposal, and be free to take it up again or leave it alone, later, as I should choose. If she felt differently then, I should have the benefit of it, and if I myself felt differently, I should also have the benefit of it."

"That 's a very comfortable arrangement. And that 's your present situation?" asked Bernard.

Gordon hesitated a moment.

"More or less, but not exactly."

"Miss Vivian feels differently?" said Bernard.

"Not that I know of."

Gordon's companion, with a laugh, clapped him on the shoulder again.

"Admirable youth, you are a capital match!"

"Are you alluding to my money?"

"To your money and to your modesty. There is as much of one as of the other—which is saying a great deal."

"Well," said Gordon, "in spite of that enviable combination, I am not happy."

"I thought you seemed pensive!" Bernard exclaimed. "It 's you, then, who feel differently."

Gordon gave a sigh.

"To say that is to say too much."

"What shall we say, then?" his companion asked, kindly.

Gordon stopped again; he stood there looking up at a certain particularly lustrous star which twinkled—the night was cloudy—in an open patch of sky, and the vague brightness shone down on his honest and serious visage.

"I don't understand her," he said.

"Oh, I 'll say that with you any day!" cried Bernard. "I can't help you there."

"You must help me;" and Gordon Wright deserted his star. "You must keep me in good humor."

"Please to walk on, then. I don't in the least pity you; she is very charming with you."

"True enough; but insisting on that is not the way to keep me in good humor—when I feel as I do."

"How is it you feel?"

"Puzzled to death—bewildered—depressed!"

This was but the beginning of Gordon Wright's list; he went on to say that though he "thought as highly" of Miss Vivian as he had ever done, he felt less at his ease with her than in the first weeks of their acquaintance, and this condition made him uncomfortable and unhappy.

"I don't know what 's the matter," said poor Gordon. "I don't know what has come between us. It is n't her fault—I don't make her responsible for it. I began to notice it about a fortnight ago—before you came; shortly after that talk I had with her that I have just described to you. Her manner has n't changed and I have no reason to suppose that she likes me any the less; but she makes a strange impression on me—she makes me uneasy. It 's only her nature coming out, I suppose—what you might call her originality. She 's thoroughly original—she 's a kind of mysterious creature. I suppose that what I feel is a sort of fascination; but that is just what I don't like. Hang it, I don't want to be fascinated—I object to being fascinated!"

This little story had taken some time in the telling, so that the two young men had now reached their hotel.

"Ah, my dear Gordon," said Bernard, "we speak a different language. If you don't want to be fascinated, what is one to say to you? 'Object to being fascinated!' There 's a man easy to satisfy! Raffine, va!"

"Well, see here now," said Gordon, stopping in the door-way of the inn; "when it comes to the point, do you like it yourself?"

"When it comes to the point?" Bernard exclaimed. "I assure you I don't wait till then. I like the beginning—I delight in the approach of it—I revel in the prospect."

"That's just what I did. But now that the thing has come—I don't revel. To be fascinated is to be mystified. Damn it, I like my liberty—I like my judgment!"

"So do I—like yours," said Bernard, laughing, as they took their bedroom candles.

# CHAPTER IX

Bernard talked of this matter rather theoretically, inasmuch as to his own sense, he was in a state neither of incipient nor of absorbed fascination. He got on very easily, however, with Angela Vivian, and felt none of the mysterious discomfort alluded to by his friend. The element of mystery attached itself rather to the young lady's mother, who gave him the impression that for undiscoverable reasons she avoided his society. He regretted her evasive deportment, for he found something agreeable in this shy and scrupulous little woman, who struck him as a curious specimen of a society of which he had once been very fond. He learned that she was of old New England stock, but he had not needed this information to perceive that Mrs. Vivian was animated by the genius of Boston. "She has the Boston temperament," he said, using a phrase with which he had become familiar and which evoked a train of associations. But then he immediately added that if Mrs. Vivian was a daughter of the Puritans, the Puritan strain in her disposition had been mingled with another element. "It is the Boston temperament sophisticated," he said; "perverted a little—perhaps even corrupted. It is the local east-wind with an infusion from climates less tonic." It seemed to him that Mrs. Vivian was a Puritan grown worldly—a Bostonian relaxed; and this impression, oddly enough, contributed to his wish to know more of her. He felt like going up to her very politely and saying, "Dear lady and most honored compatriot, what in the world have I done to displease you? You don't approve of me, and I am dying to know the reason why. I should be so happy to exert myself to be agreeable to you. It 's no use; you give me the cold shoulder. When I speak to you, you look the other way; it is only when I speak to your daughter that you look at me. It is true that at those times you look at me very hard, and if I am not greatly mistaken, you are not gratified by what you see. You count the words I address to your beautiful Angela—you time our harmless little interviews. You interrupt them indeed whenever you can; you call her away—you appeal to her; you cut across the conversation. You are always laying plots to keep us apart. Why can't you leave me alone? I assure you I am the most innocent of men. Your beautiful Angela can't possibly be injured by my conversation, and I have no designs whatever upon her peace of mind. What on earth have I done to offend you?"

These observations Bernard Longueville was disposed to make, and one afternoon, the opportunity offering, they rose to his lips and came very near passing them. In fact, however, at the last moment, his eloquence took another turn. It was the custom of the orchestra at the Kursaal to play in the afternoon, and as the music was often good, a great many people assembled under the trees, at three o'clock, to listen to it. This was not, as a regular thing, an hour of re-union for the little group in which we are especially interested; Miss Vivian, in particular, unless an excursion of some sort had been agreed upon the day before, was usually not to be seen in the precincts of the Conversation-house until the evening. Bernard, one afternoon, at three o'clock, directed his steps to this small world-centre of Baden, and, passing along the terrace, soon encountered little Blanche Evers strolling there under a pink parasol and accompanied by Captain Lovelock. This young lady was always extremely sociable; it was quite in accordance with her habitual geniality that she should stop and say how d' ye do to our hero.

"Mr. Longueville is growing very frivolous," she said, "coming to the Kursaal at all sorts of hours."

"There is nothing frivolous in coming here with the hope of finding you," the young man answered. "That is very serious."

"It would be more serious to lose Miss Evers than to find her," remarked Captain Lovelock, with gallant jocosity.

"I wish you would lose me!" cried the young girl. "I think I should like to be lost. I might have all kinds of adventures."

"I 'guess' so!" said Captain Lovelock, hilariously.

"Oh, I should find my way. I can take care of myself!" Blanche went on.

"Mrs. Vivian does n't think so," said Bernard, who had just perceived this lady, seated under a tree with a book, over the top of which she was observing her pretty protege. Blanche looked toward her and gave her a little nod and a smile. Then chattering on to the young men—

"She 's awfully careful. I never saw any one so careful. But I suppose she is right. She promised my mother she would be tremendously particular; but I don't know what she thinks I would do."

"That is n't flattering to me," said Captain Lovelock. "Mrs. Vivian does n't approve of me—she wishes me in Jamaica. What does she think me capable of?"

"And me, now?" Bernard asked. "She likes me least of all, and I, on my side, think she 's so nice."

"Can't say I 'm very sweet on her," said the Captain. "She strikes me as feline."

Blanche Evers gave a little cry of horror.

"Stop, sir, this instant! I won't have you talk that way about a lady who has been so kind to me."

"She is n't so kind to you. She would like to lock you up where I can never see you."

"I 'm sure I should n't mind that!" cried the young girl, with a little laugh and a toss of her head. "Mrs. Vivian has the most perfect character—that 's why my mother wanted me to come with her. And if she promised my mother she would be careful, is n't she right to keep her promise? She 's a great deal more careful than mamma ever was, and that 's just what mamma wanted. She would never take the trouble herself. And then she was always scolding me. Mrs. Vivian never scolds me. She only watches me, but I don't mind that."

"I wish she would watch you a little less and scold you a little more," said Captain Lovelock.

"I have no doubt you wish a great many horrid things," his companion rejoined, with delightful asperity.

"Ah, unfortunately I never have anything I wish!" sighed Lovelock.

"Your wishes must be comprehensive," said Bernard. "It seems to me you have a good deal."

The Englishman gave a shrug.

"It 's less than you might think. She is watching us more furiously than ever," he added, in a moment, looking at Mrs. Vivian. "Mr. Gordon Wright is the only man she likes. She is awfully fond of Mr. Gordon Wright."

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.