"Will you let me know," I said, "when you hear from Rome?"

"With the greatest pleasure," Mrs. Eyrecourt answered, briskly. "Good-by, you best of friends--good-by."

I write these lines while the servant is packing my portmanteau. Traveler knows what that means. My dog is glad, at any rate, to get away from London. I think I shall hire a yacht, and try what a voyage round the world will do for me. I wish to God I had never seen Stella!

Second Extract.

Beaupark, February 10.--News at last from Mrs. Eyrecourt.

Romayne has not even read the letter that she addressed to him--it has actually been returned to her by Father Benwell. Mrs. Eyrecourt writes, naturally enough, in a state of fury. Her one consolation, under this insulting treatment, is that her daughter knows nothing of the circumstances. She warns me (quite needlessly) to keep the secret--and sends me a copy of Father Benwell's letter:

"Dear Madam--Mr. Romayne can read nothing that diverts his attention from his preparation for the priesthood, or that recalls past associations with errors which he has renounced forever. When a letter reaches him, it is his wise custom to look at the signature first. He has handed your letter to me, unread--with a request that I will return it to you. In his presence, I instantly sealed it up. Neither he nor I know, or wish to know, on what subject you have addressed him. We respectfully advise you not to write again."

This is really too bad; but it has one advantage, so far as I am concerned. It sets my own unworthy doubts and jealousies before me in a baser light than ever. How honestly I defended Father Benwell! and how completely he has deceived me! I wonder whether I shall live long enough to see the Jesuit caught in one of his own traps?

11th.--I was disappointed at not hearing from Stella, yesterday. This morning has made amends; it has brought me a letter from her.

She is not well; and her mother's conduct sadly perplexes her. At one time, Mrs. Eyrecourt's sense of injury urges her to indulge in violent measures--she is eager to place her deserted daughter under the protection of the law; to insist on a restitution of conjugal rights or on a judicial separation. At another time she sinks into a state of abject depression; declares that it is impossible for her, in Stella's deplorable situation, to face society; and recommends immediate retirement to some place on the Continent in which they can live cheaply. This latter suggestion Stella is not only ready, but eager, to adopt. She proves it by asking for my advice, in a postscript; no doubt remembering the happy days when I courted her in Paris, and the many foreign friends of mine who called at our hotel.

The postscript gave me the excuse that I wanted. I knew perfectly well that it would be better for me not to see her--and I went to London, for the sole purpose of seeing her, by the first train.

London, February 12.--I found mother and daughter together in the drawing-room. It was one of Mrs. Eyrecourt's days of depression. Her little twinkling eyes tried to cast on me a look of tragic reproach; she shook her dyed head and said, "Oh. Winterfield, I didn't think you would have done this!--Stella, fetch me my smelling bottle."

But Stella refused to take the hint. She almost brought the tears into my eyes, she received me so kindly. If her mother had not been in the room--but her mother was in the room; I had no other choice than to enter on my business, as if I had been the family lawyer.

Mrs. Eyrecourt began by reproving Stella for asking my advice, and then assured me that she had no intention of leaving London. "How am I to get rid of my house?" she asked, irritably enough. I knew that "her house" (as she called it) was the furnished upper part of a house belonging to another person, and that she could leave it at a short notice. But I said nothing. I addressed myself to Stella.

"I have been thinking of two or three places which you might like," I went on. "The nearest place belongs to an old French gentleman and his wife. They have no children, and they don't let lodgings; but I believe they would be glad to receive friends of mine, if their spare rooms are not already occupied. They live at St. Germain--close to Paris."

I looked at Mrs. Eyrecourt as I said those last words--I was as sly as Father Benwell himself. Paris justified my confidence: the temptation was too much for her. She not only gave way, but actually mentioned the amount of rent which she could afford to pay. Stella whispered her thanks to me as I went out. "My name is not mentioned, but my misfortune is alluded to in the newspapers," she said. "Well-meaning friends are calling and condoling with me already. I shall die, if you don't help me to get away among strangers!"

I start for Paris by the mail train, to-night.

Paris, February 13.--It is evening. I have just returned from St. Germain. Everything is settled--with more slyness on my part. I begin to think I am a born Jesuit; there must have been some detestable sympathy between Father Benwell and me.