CHAPTER V

ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC

In the course of twelve years the Shuttle had woven steadily and--its movements lubricated by time and custom--with increasing rapidity. Threads of commerce it caught up and shot to and fro, with threads of literature and art, threads of life drawn from one shore to the other and back again, until they were bound in the fabric of its weaving. Coldness there had been between both lands, broad divergence of taste and thought, argument across seas, sometimes resentment, but the web in Fate's hands broadened and strengthened and held fast. Coldness faintly warmed despite itself, taste and thought drawn into nearer contact, reflecting upon their divergences, grew into tolerance and the knowledge that the diverging, seen more clearly, was not so broad; argument coming within speaking distance reasoned itself to logical and practical conclusions. Problems which had stirred anger began to find solutions. Books, in the first place, did perhaps more than all else. Cheap, pirated editions of English works, much quarrelled over by authors and publishers, being scattered over the land, brought before American eyes soft, home-like pictures of places which were, after all was said and done, the homes of those who read of them, at least in the sense of having been the birthplaces of fathers or grandfathers. Some subtle, far-reaching power of nature caused a stirring of the blood, a vague, unexpressed yearning and lingering over pages which depicted sweet, green lanes, broad acres rich with centuries of nourishment and care;

grey church towers, red roofs, and village children playing before cottage doors. None of these things were new to those who pondered over them, kinsmen had dwelt on memories of them in their fireside talk, and their children had seen them in fancy and in dreams. Old grievances having had time to fade away and take on less poignant colour, the stirring of the blood stirred also imaginations, and wakened something akin to homesickness, though no man called the feeling by its name. And this, perhaps, was the strongest cord the Shuttle wove and was the true meaning of its power. Being drawn by it, Americans in increasing numbers turned their faces towards the older land. Gradually it was discovered that it was the simplest affair in the world to drive down to the wharves and take a steamer which landed one, after a more or less interesting voyage, in Liverpool, or at some other convenient port. From there one went to London, or Paris, or Rome; in fact, whithersoever one's fancy guided, but first or last it always led the traveller to the treading of green, velvet English turf. And once standing on such velvet, both men and women, looking about them, felt, despite themselves, the strange old thrill which some of them half resented and some warmly loved.

In the course of twelve years, a length of time which will transform a little girl wearing a short frock into a young woman wearing a long one, the pace of life and the ordering of society may become so altered as to appear amazing when one finds time to reflect on the subject. But one does not often find time. Changes occur so gradually that one scarcely observes them, or so swiftly that they take the form of a kind of amazed

shock which one gets over as quickly as one experiences it and realises that its cause is already a fixed fact.

In the United States of America, which have not yet acquired the serene sense of conservative self-satisfaction and repose which centuries of age may bestow, the spirit of life itself is the aspiration for change. Ambition itself only means the insistence on change. Each day is to be better than yesterday fuller of plans, of briskness, of initiative. Each to-day demands of to-morrow new men, new minds, new work. A to-day which has not launched new ships, explored new countries, constructed new buildings, added stories to old ones, may consider itself a failure, unworthy even of being consigned to the limbo of respectable yesterdays. Such a country lives by leaps and bounds, and the ten years which followed the marriage of Reuben Vanderpoel's eldest daughter made many such bounds and leaps. They were years which initiated and established international social relations in a manner which caused them to incorporate themselves with the history of both countries. As America discovered Europe, that continent discovered America. American beauties began to appear in English drawing-rooms and Continental salons. They were presented at court and commented upon in the Row and the Bois. Their little transatlantic tricks of speech and their mots were repeated with gusto. It became understood that they were amusing and amazing. Americans "came in" as the heroes and heroines of novels and stories. Punch delighted in them vastly. Shopkeepers and hotel proprietors stocked, furnished, and provisioned for them. They spent money

enormously and were singularly indifferent (at the outset) under imposition. They "came over" in a manner as epoch-making, though less war-like than that of William the Conqueror.

International marriages ceased to be a novelty. As Bettina Vanderpoel grew up, she grew up, so to speak, in the midst of them. She saw her country, its people, its newspapers, its literature, innocently rejoiced by the alliances its charming young women contracted with foreign rank. She saw it affectionately, gleefully, rubbing its hands over its duchesses, its countesses, its miladies. The American Eagle spread its wings and flapped them sometimes a trifle, over this new but so natural and inevitable triumph of its virgins. It was of course only "American" that such things should happen. America ruled the universe, and its women ruled America, bullying it a little, prettily, perhaps. What could be more a matter of course than that American women, being aided by adoring fathers, brothers and husbands, sumptuously to ship themselves to other lands, should begin to rule these lands also? Betty, in her growing up, heard all this intimated. At twelve years old, though she had detested Rosalie's marriage, she had rather liked to hear people talk of the picturesqueness of places like Stornham Court, and of the life led by women of rank in their houses in town and country. Such talk nearly always involved the description of things and people, whose colour and tone had only reached her through the medium of books, most frequently fiction.

She was, however, of an unusually observing mind, even as a child, and

the time came when she realised that the national bird spread its wings less proudly when the subject of international matches was touched upon, and even at such times showed signs of restlessness. Now and then things had not turned out as they appeared to promise; two or three seemingly brilliant unions had resulted in disaster. She had not understood all the details the newspapers cheerfully provided, but it was clear to her that more than one previously envied young woman had had practical reasons for discovering that she had made an astonishingly bad bargain. This being the case, she used frequently to ponder over the case of Rosy--Rosy! who had been swept away from them and swallowed up, as it seemed, by that other and older world. She was in certain ways a silent child, and no one but herself knew how little she had forgotten Rosy, how often she pondered over her, how sometimes she had lain awake in the night and puzzled out lines of argument concerning her and things which might be true.

The one grief of poor Mrs. Vanderpoel's life had been the apparent estrangement of her eldest child. After her first six months in England Lady Anstruthers' letters had become fewer and farther between, and had given so little information connected with herself that affectionate curiosity became discouraged. Sir Nigel's brief and rare epistles revealed so little desire for any relationship with his wife's family that gradually Rosy's image seemed to fade into far distance and become fainter with the passing of each month. It seemed almost an incredible thing, when they allowed themselves to think of it, but no member of the family had ever been to Stornham Court. Two or three efforts to arrange

a visit had been made, but on each occasion had failed through some apparently accidental cause. Once Lady Anstruthers had been away, once a letter had seemingly failed to reach her, once her children had had scarlet fever and the orders of the physicians in attendance had been stringent in regard to visitors, even relatives who did not fear contagion.

"If she had been living in New York and her children had been ill I should have been with her all the time," poor Mrs. Vanderpoel had said with tears. "Rosy's changed awfully, somehow. Her letters don't sound a bit like she used to be. It seems as if she just doesn't care to see her mother and father."

Betty had frowned a good deal and thought intensely in secret. She did not believe that Rosy was ashamed of her relations. She remembered, however, it is true, that Clara Newell (who had been a schoolmate) had become very super-fine and indifferent to her family after her marriage to an aristocratic and learned German. Hers had been one of the successful alliances, and after living a few years in Berlin she had quite looked down upon New Yorkers, and had made herself exceedingly unpopular during her one brief visit to her relatives. She seemed to think her father and mother undignified and uncultivated, and she disapproved entirely of her sisters dress and bearing. She said that they had no distinction of manner and that all their interests were frivolous and unenlightened.

"But Clara always was a conceited girl," thought Betty. "She was always patronising people, and Rosy was only pretty and sweet. She always said herself that she had no brains. But she had a heart."

After the lapse of a few years there had been no further discussion of plans for visiting Stornham. Rosalie had become so remote as to appear almost unreachable. She had been presented at Court, she had had three children, the Dowager Lady Anstruthers had died. Once she had written to her father to ask for a large sum of money, which he had sent to her, because she seemed to want it very much. She required it to pay off certain debts on the estate and spoke touchingly of her boy who would inherit.

"He is a delicate boy, father," she wrote, "and I don't want the estate to come to him burdened."

When she received the money she wrote gratefully of the generosity shown her, but she spoke very vaguely of the prospect of their seeing each other in the future. It was as if she felt her own remoteness even more than they felt it themselves.

In the meantime Bettina had been taken to France and placed at school there. The resulting experience was an enlightening one, far more illuminating to the quick-witted American child than it would have been to an English, French, or German one, who would not have had so much to learn, and probably would not have been so quick at the learning.

Betty Vanderpoel knew nothing which was not American, and only vaguely a few things which were not of New York. She had lived in Fifth Avenue, attended school in a numbered street near her own home, played in and been driven round Central Park. She had spent the hot months of the summer in places up the Hudson, or on Long Island, and such resorts of pleasure. She had believed implicitly in all she saw and knew. She had been surrounded by wealth and decent good nature throughout her existence, and had enjoyed her life far too much to admit of any doubt that America was the most perfect country in the world, Americans the cleverest and most amusing people, and that other nations were a little out of it, and consequently sufficiently scant of resource to render pity without condemnation a natural sentiment in connection with one's occasional thoughts of them.

But hers was a mentality by no means ordinary. Inheritance in her nature had combined with circumstances, as it has a habit of doing in all human beings. But in her case the combinations were unusual and produced a result somewhat remarkable. The quality of brains which, in the first Reuben Vanderpoel had expressed itself in the marvellously successful planning and carrying to their ends of commercial and financial schemes, the absolute genius of penetration and calculation of the sordid and uneducated little trader in skins and barterer of goods, having filtered through two generations of gradual education and refinement of existence, which was no longer that of the mere trader, had been transformed in the great-granddaughter into keen, clear sight,

level-headed perceptiveness and a logical sense of values. As the first Reuben had known by instinct the values of pelts and lands, Bettina knew by instinct the values of qualities, of brains, of hearts, of circumstances, and the incidents which affect them. She was as unaware of the significance of her great possession as were those around her. Nevertheless it was an unerring thing. As a mere child, unformed and uneducated by life, she had not been one of the small creatures to be deceived or flattered.

"She's an awfully smart little thing, that Betty," her New York aunts and cousins often remarked. "She seems to see what people mean, it doesn't matter what they say. She likes people you would not expect her to like, and then again she sometimes doesn't care the least for people who are thought awfully attractive."

As has been already intimated, the child was crude enough and not particularly well bred, but her small brain had always been at work, and each day of her life recorded for her valuable impressions. The page of her young mind had ceased to be a blank much earlier than is usual.

The comparing of these impressions with such as she received when her life in the French school was new afforded her active mental exercise.

She began with natural, secret indignation and rebellion. There was no other American pupil in the establishment besides herself. But for the fact that the name of Vanderpoel represented wealth so enormous as

to amount to a sort of rank in itself, Bettina would not have been received. The proprietress of the institution had gravely disquieting doubts of the propriety of America. Her pupils were not accustomed to freedom of opinions and customs. An American child might either consciously or unconsciously introduce them. As this must be guarded against, Betty's first few months at the school were not agreeable to her. She was supervised and expurgated, as it were. Special Sisters were told off to converse and walk with her, and she soon perceived that conversations were not only French lessons in disguise, but were lectures on ethics, morals, and good manners, imperfectly concealed by the mask and domino of amiable entertainment. She translated into English after the following manner the facts her swift young perceptions gathered. There were things it was so inelegant to say that only the most impossible persons said them; there were things it was so inexcusable to do that when done their inexcusability assumed the proportions of a crime. There were movements, expressions, points of view, which one must avoid as one would avoid the plague. And they were all things, acts, expressions, attitudes of mind which Bettina had been familiar with from her infancy, and which she was well aware were considered almost entirely harmless and unobjectionable in New York, in her beloved New York, which was the centre of the world, which was bigger, richer, gayer, more admirable than any other city known upon the earth.

If she had not so loved it, if she had ever dreamed of the existence of any other place as being absolutely necessary, she would not have felt

the thing so bitterly. But it seemed to her that all these amiable diatribes in exquisite French were directed at her New York, and it must be admitted that she was humiliated and enraged. It was a personal, indeed, a family matter. Her father, her mother, her relatives, and friends were all in some degree exactly the kind of persons whose speech, habits, and opinions she must conscientiously avoid. But for the instinct of summing up values, circumstances, and intentions, it is probable that she would have lost her head, let loose her temper and her tongue, and have become insubordinate. But the quickness of perception which had revealed practical potentialities to old Reuben Vanderpoel, revealed to her the value of French which was perfectly fluent, a voice which was musical, movements which were grace, manners which had a still beauty, and comparing these things with others less charming she listened and restrained herself, learning, marking, and inwardly digesting with a cleverness most enviable.

Among her fellow pensionnaires she met with discomforting illuminations, which were fine discipline also, though if she herself had been a less intellectual creature they might have been embittering. Without doubt Betty, even at twelve years, was intellectual. Hers was the practical working intellect which begins duty at birth and does not lay down its tools because the sun sets. The little and big girls who wrote their exercises at her side did not deliberately enlighten her, but she learned from them in vague ways that it was not New York which was the centre of the earth, but Paris, or Berlin, Madrid, London, or Rome. Paris and London were perhaps more calmly positive of themselves than

other capitals, and were a little inclined to smile at the lack of seriousness in other claims. But one strange fact was more predominant than any other, and this was that New York was not counted as a civilised centre at all; it had no particular existence. Nobody expressed this rudely; in fact, it did not acquire the form of actual statement at any time. It was merely revealed by amiable and ingenuous unconsciousness of the circumstance that such a part of the world expected to be regarded or referred to at all. Betty began early to realise that as her companions did not talk of Timbuctoo or Zanzibar, so they did not talk of New York. Stockholm or Amsterdam seemed, despite their smallness, to be considered. No one denied the presence of Zanzibar on the map, but as it conveyed nothing more than the impression of being a mere geographical fact, there was no reason why one should dwell on it in conversation. Remembering all she had left behind, the crowded streets, the brilliant shop windows, the buzz of individual people, there were moments when Betty ground her strong little teeth. She wanted to express all these things, to call out, to explain, and command recognition for them. But her cleverness showed to her that argument or protestation would be useless. She could not make such hearers understand. There were girls whose interest in America was founded on their impression that magnificent Indian chieftains in blankets and feathers stalked about the streets of the towns, and that Betty's own thick black hair had been handed down to her by some beautiful Minnehaha or Pocahontas. When first she was approached by timid, tentative questionings revealing this point of view, Betty felt hot and answered with unamiable curtness. No, there were no red Indians

in New York. There had been no red Indians in her family. She had neither grandmothers nor aunts who were squaws, if they meant that.

She felt so scornfully, so disgustedly indignant at their benighted ignorance, that she knew she behaved very well in saying so little in reply. She could have said so much, but whatsoever she had said would have conveyed nothing to them, so she thought it all out alone. She went over the whole ground and little realised how much she was teaching herself as she turned and tossed in her narrow, spotlessly white bed at night, arguing, comparing, drawing deductions from what she knew and did not know of the two continents. Her childish anger, combining itself with the practical, alert brain of Reuben Vanderpoel the first, developed in her a logical reasoning power which led her to arrive at many an excellent and curiously mature conclusion. The result was finely educational. All the more so that in her fevered desire for justification of the things she loved, she began to read books such as little girls do not usually take interest in. She found some difficulty in obtaining them at first, but a letter or two written to her father obtained for her permission to read what she chose. The third Reuben Vanderpoel was deeply fond of his younger daughter, and felt in secret a profound admiration for her, which was saved from becoming too obvious by the ever present American sense of humour.

"Betty seems to be going in for politics," he said after reading the letter containing her request and her first list of books. "She's about as mad as she can be at the ignorance of the French girls about America

and Americans. She wants to fill up on solid facts, so that she can come out strong in argument. She's got an understanding of the power of solid facts that would be a fortune to her if she were a man."

It was no doubt her understanding of the power of facts which led her to learn everything well and to develop in many directions. She began to dip into political and historical volumes because she was furious, and wished to be able to refute idiocy, but she found herself continuing to read because she was interested in a way she had not expected. She began to see things. Once she made a remark which was prophetic. She made it in answer to a guileless observation concerning the gold mines with which Boston was supposed to be enriched.

"You don't know anything about America, you others," she said. "But you WILL know!"

"Do you think it will become the fashion to travel in America?" asked a German girl.

"Perhaps," said Betty. "But--it isn't so much that you will go to America. I believe it will come to you. It's like that--America. It doesn't stand still. It goes and gets what it wants."

She laughed as she ended, and so did the other girls. But in ten years' time, when they were young women, some of them married, some of them court beauties, one of them recalled this speech to another, whom she

encountered in an important house in St. Petersburg, the wife of the celebrated diplomat who was its owner being an American woman.

Bettina Vanderpoel's education was a rather fine thing. She herself had more to do with it than girls usually have to do with their own training. In a few months' time those in authority in the French school found that it was not necessary to supervise and expurgate her. She learned with an interested rapacity which was at once unusual and amazing. And she evidently did not learn from books alone. Her voice, as an organ, had been musical and full from babyhood. It began to modulate itself and to express things most voices are incapable of expressing. She had been so built by nature that the carriage of her head and limbs was good to behold. She acquired a harmony of movement which caused her to lose no shade of grace and spirit. Her eyes were full of thought, of speculation, and intentness.

"She thinks a great deal for one so young," was said of her frequently by one or the other of her teachers. One finally went further and added, "She has genius."

This was true. She had genius, but it was not specialised. It was not genius which expressed itself through any one art. It was a genius for life, for living herself, for aiding others to live, for vivifying mere existence. She herself was, however, aware only of an eagerness of temperament, a passion for seeing, doing, and gaining knowledge. Everything interested her, everybody was suggestive and more or less

enlightening.

Her relatives thought her original in her fancies. They called them fancies because she was so young. Fortunately for her, there was no reason why she should not be gratified. Most girls preferred to spend their holidays on the Continent. She elected to return to America every alternate year. She enjoyed the voyage and she liked the entire change of atmosphere and people.

"It makes me like both places more," she said to her father when she was thirteen. "It makes me see things."

Her father discovered that she saw everything. She was the pleasure of his life. He was attracted greatly by the interest she exhibited in all orders of things. He saw her make bold, ingenuous plunges into all waters, without any apparent consciousness that the scraps of knowledge she brought to the surface were unusual possessions for a schoolgirl. She had young views on the politics and commerce of different countries, as she had views on their literature. When Reuben Vanderpoel swooped across the American continent on journeys of thousands of miles, taking her as a companion, he discovered that he actually placed a sort of confidence in her summing up of men and schemes. He took her to see mines and railroads and those who worked them, and he talked them over with her afterward, half with a sense of humour, half with a sense of finding comfort in her intelligent comprehension of all he said.

She enjoyed herself immensely and gained a strong picturesqueness of character. After an American holiday she used to return to France, Germany, or Italy, with a renewed zest of feeling for all things romantic and antique. After a few years in the French convent she asked that she might be sent to Germany.

"I am gradually changing into a French girl," she wrote to her father. "One morning I found I was thinking it would be nice to go into a convent, and another day I almost entirely agreed with one of the girls who was declaiming against her brother who had fallen in love with a Californian. You had better take me away and send me to Germany."

Reuben Vanderpoel laughed. He understood Betty much better than most of her relations did. He knew when seriousness underlay her jests and his respect for her seriousness was great. He sent her to school in Germany. During the early years of her schooldays Betty had observed that America appeared upon the whole to be regarded by her schoolfellows principally as a place to which the more unfortunate among the peasantry emigrated as steerage passengers when things could become no worse for them in their own country. The United States was not mentally detached from any other portion of the huge Western Continent. Quite well-educated persons spoke casually of individuals having "gone to America," as if there were no particular difference between Brazil and Massachusetts.

"I wonder if you ever saw my cousin Gaston," a French girl once asked her as they sat at their desks. "He became very poor through ill living.

He was quite without money and he went to America."

"To New York?" inquired Bettina.

"I am not sure. The town is called Concepcion."

"That is not in the United States," Betty answered disdainfully. "It is in Chili."

She dragged her atlas towards her and found the place.

"See," she said. "It is thousands of miles from New York." Her companion was a near-sighted, rather slow girl. She peered at the map, drawing a line with her finger from New York to Concepcion.

"Yes, they are at a great distance from one another," she admitted, "but they are both in America."

"But not both in the United States," cried Betty. "French girls always seem to think that North and South America are the same, that they are both the United States."

"Yes," said the slow girl with deliberation. "We do make odd mistakes sometimes." To which she added with entire innocence of any ironic intention. "But you Americans, you seem to feel the United States, your New York, to be all America."

Betty started a little and flushed. During a few minutes of rapid reflection she sat bolt upright at her desk and looked straight before her. Her mentality was of the order which is capable of making discoveries concerning itself as well as concerning others. She had never thought of this view of the matter before, but it was quite true. To passionate young patriots such as herself at least, that portion of the map covered by the United States was America. She suddenly saw also that to her New York had been America. Fifth Avenue Broadway, Central Park, even Tiffany's had been "America." She laughed and reddened a shade as she put the atlas aside having recorded a new idea. She had found out that it was not only Europeans who were local, which was a discovery of some importance to her fervid youth.

Because she thought so often of Rosalie, her attention was, during the passing years, naturally attracted by the many things she heard of such marriages as were made by Americans with men of other countries than their own. She discovered that notwithstanding certain commercial views of matrimony, all foreigners who united themselves with American heiresses were not the entire brutes primitive prejudice might lead one to imagine. There were rather one-sided alliances which proved themselves far from happy. The Cousin Gaston, for instance, brought home a bride whose fortune rebuilt and refurnished his dilapidated chateau and who ended by making of him a well-behaved and cheery country gentleman not at all to be despised in his amiable, if light-minded good nature and good spirits. His wife, fortunately, was not a young woman

who yearned for sentiment. She was a nice-tempered, practical American girl, who adored French country life and knew how to amuse and manage her husband. It was a genial sort of menage and yet though this was an undeniable fact, Bettina observed that when the union was spoken of it was always referred to with a certain tone which conveyed that though one did not exactly complain of its having been undesirable, it was not quite what Gaston might have expected. His wife had money and was good-natured, but there were limitations to one's appreciation of a marriage in which husband and wife were not on the same plane.

"She is an excellent person, and it has been good for Gaston," said Bettina's friend. "We like her, but she is not--she is not----" She paused there, evidently seeing that the remark was unlucky. Bettina, who was still in short frocks, took her up.

"What is she not?" she asked.

"Ah!--it is difficult to explain--to Americans. It is really not exactly a fault. But she is not of his world."

"But if he does not like that," said Bettina coolly, "why did he let her buy him and pay for him?"

It was young and brutal, but there were times when the business perspicuity of the first Reuben Vanderpoel, combining with the fiery, wounded spirit of his young descendant, rendered Bettina brutal. She saw

certain unadorned facts with unsparing young eyes and wanted to state them. After her frocks were lengthened, she learned how to state them with more fineness of phrase, but even then she was sometimes still rather unsparing.

In this case her companion, who was not fiery of temperament, only coloured slightly.

"It was not quite that," she answered. "Gaston really is fond of her. She amuses him, and he says she is far cleverer than he is."

But there were unions less satisfactory, and Bettina had opportunities to reflect upon these also. The English and Continental papers did not give enthusiastic, detailed descriptions of the marriages New York journals dwelt upon with such delight. They were passed over with a paragraph. When Betty heard them spoken of in France, Germany or Italy, she observed that they were not, as a rule, spoken of respectfully. It seemed to her that the bridegrooms were, in conversation, treated by their equals with scant respect. It appeared that there had always been some extremely practical reason for the passion which had led them to the altar. One generally gathered that they or their estates were very much out at elbow, and frequently their characters were not considered admirable by their relatives and acquaintances. Some had been rather cold shouldered in certain capitals on account of embarrassing little, or big, stories. Some had spent their patrimonies in riotous living. Those who had merely begun by coming into impoverished estates, and had

later attenuated their resources by comparatively decent follies, were of the more desirable order. By the time she was nineteen, Bettina had felt the blood surge in her veins more than once when she heard some comments on alliances over which she had seen her compatriots glow with affectionate delight.

"It was time Ludlow married some girl with money," she heard said of one such union. "He had been playing the fool ever since he came into the estate. Horses and a lot of stupid women. He had come some awful croppers during the last ten years. Good-enough looking girl, they tell me--the American he has married--tremendous lot of money. Couldn't have picked it up on this side. English young women of fortune are not looking for that kind of thing. Poor old Billy wasn't good enough."

Bettina told the story to her father when they next met. She had grown into a tall young creature by this time. Her low, full voice was like a bell and was capable of ringing forth some fine, mellow tones of irony.

"And in America we are pleased," she said, "and flatter ourselves that we are receiving the proper tribute of adoration of our American wit and beauty. We plume ourselves on our conquests."

"No, Betty," said her father, and his reflective deliberation had meaning. "There are a lot of us who don't plume ourselves particularly in these days. We are not as innocent as we were when this sort of thing began. We are not as innocent as we were when Rosy was married." And

he sighed and rubbed his forehead with the handle of his pen. "Not as innocent as we were when Rosy was married," he repeated.

Bettina went to him and slid her fine young arm round his neck. It was a long, slim, round arm with a wonderful power to caress in its curves. She kissed Vanderpoel's lined cheek.

"Have you had time to think much about Rosy?" she said.

"I've not had time, but I've done it," he answered. "Anything that hurts your mother hurts me. Sometimes she begins to cry in her sleep, and when I wake her she tells me she has been dreaming that she has seen Rosy."

"I have had time to think of her," said Bettina. "I have heard so much of these things. I was at school in Germany when Annie Butterfield and Baron von Steindahl were married. I heard it talked about there, and then my mother sent me some American papers."

She laughed a little, and for a moment her laugh did not sound like a girl's.

"Well, it's turned out badly enough," her father commented. "The papers had plenty to say about it later. There wasn't much he was too good to do to his wife, apparently."

"There was nothing too bad for him to do before he had a wife," said

Bettina. "He was black. It was an insolence that he should have dared to speak to Annie Butterfield. Somebody ought to have beaten him."

"He beat her instead."

"Yes, and I think his family thought it quite natural. They said that she was so vulgar and American that she exasperated Frederick beyond endurance. She was not geboren, that was it." She laughed her severe little laugh again. "Perhaps we shall get tired in time," she added. "I think we are learning. If it is made a matter of business quite open and aboveboard, it will be fair. You know, father, you always said that I was businesslike."

There was interested curiosity in Vanderpoel's steady look at her. There were times when he felt that Betty's summing up of things was well worth listening to. He saw that now she was in one of her moods when it would pay one to hear her out. She held her chin up a little, and her face took on a fine stillness at once sweet and unrelenting. She was very good to look at in such moments.

"Yes," he answered, "you have a particularly level head for a girl."

"Well," she went on. "What I see is that these things are not business, and they ought to be. If a man comes to a rich American girl and says, 'I and my title are for sale. Will you buy us?' If the girl is--is that kind of a girl and wants that kind of man, she can look them both over

and say, 'Yes, I will buy you,' and it can be arranged. He will not return the money if he is unsatisfactory, but she cannot complain that she has been deceived. She can only complain of that when he pretends that he asks her to marry him because he wants her for his wife, because he would want her for his wife if she were as poor as himself. Let it be understood that he is property for sale, let her make sure that he is the kind of property she wants to buy. Then, if, when they are married, he is brutal or impudent, or his people are brutal or impudent, she can say, 'I will forfeit the purchase money, but I will not forfeit myself. I will not stay with you.'"

"They would not like to hear you say that, Betty," said her father, rubbing his chin reflectively.

"No," she answered. "Neither the girl nor the man would like it, and it is their business, not mine. But it is practical and would prevent silly mistakes. It would prevent the girls being laughed at. It is when they are flattered by the choice made of them that they are laughed at. No one can sneer at a man or woman for buying what they think they want, and throwing it aside if it turns out a bad bargain."

She had seated herself near her father. She rested her elbow slightly on the table and her chin in the hollow of her hand. She was a beautiful young creature. She had a soft curving mouth, and a soft curving cheek which was warm rose. Taken in conjunction with those young charms, her next words had an air of incongruity.

"You think I am hard," she said. "When I think of these things I am hard--as hard as nails. That is an Americanism, but it is a good expression. I am angry for America. If we are sordid and undignified, let us get what we pay for and make the others acknowledge that we have paid."

She did not smile, nor did her father. Mr. Vanderpoel, on the contrary, sighed. He had a dreary suspicion that Rosy, at least, had not received what she had paid for, and he knew she had not been in the least aware that she had paid or that she was expected to do so. Several times during the last few years he had thought that if he had not been so hard worked, if he had had time, he would have seriously investigated the case of Rosy. But who is not aware that the profession of multimillionaire does not allow of any swerving from duty or of any interests requiring leisure?

"I wonder, Betty," he said quite deliberately, "if you know how handsome you are?"

"Yes," answered Bettina. "I think so. And I am tall. It is the fashion to be tall now. It was Early Victorian to be little. The Queen brought in the 'dear little woman,' and now the type has gone out."

"They will come to look at you pretty soon," said Vanderpoel. "What shall you say then?"

"I?" said Bettina, and her voice sounded particularly low and mellow.
"I have a little monomania, father. Some people have a monomania for one thing and some for another. Mine is for NOT taking a bargain from the ducal remnant counter."