

From the square there came the shouts of many lingerers, making merry in the tail of the great day according to their desire. Down either sidewalk poured a stream of people, laughing, talking, and calling to each other; the street still rumbled under passing vehicles; the Palace Hotel, in particular, had become a lodestone and near to Tommy's victoria much human traffic converged. In truth, it was a public place where all who wished could see, and many did see. Yet there was nothing in the little scene to fix the gaze of the casual wayfarer: a young girl sitting in a well-appointed carriage, and two men, one young and one old, approaching with bared heads to speak to her. Only a close observer would have been likely to notice that the old man's cheek was markedly pale, and that upon the marred face of the younger one there had descended a strange and solemn look. . . .

For Mary there had been no surprise in seeing the young man come out to her with the old one on his arm — had he not told her that he went in peace? — and even the glorious metamorphosis in Mr. Higginson's appearance quite failed to arrest her attention. She had smoothed his approach with a welcoming smile and the beginning of a gay greeting; but her eyes were for her lover. And now as she saw the look on Varney's face, and became aware of the odd and impressive silence in which he stood, like one called to officiate at some high ceremony, understanding incredibly dawned within her, and she was suddenly without speech or breath. Her little greeting was never finished; all at once her face, grown wonderfully sweet,