

practical students and our observation is full of the fact that water turns to steam, and heat to light, and electricity to sound. We know that force is but a mode of motion, and it begins to dawn upon us that progress is but a mode of Christ. Only dull souls believe that the world grows worse. The more we know of it the more we know that it is growing better at incalculable speed. Wherever Christianity goes—and its white wings have in our day flown even to the sources of the Nile and land of the Midnight Sun, to the Indian's "tepee," and the Mormon's harem—there goes the truth and light and life of God. A missionary to China told me the Americans and English were so trusted by that lying nation that they could buy without a purse in that celestial empire, their verbal promise to pay being enough, and I found the same in lying Italy, goods being thrust upon us without money or price, only our visiting card with its address being desired; indeed, we had to urge that sometimes, the Italians saying the equivalent of, "All right, lady, you'll come back and pay me—I'm not afraid."

There is in all Christian countries an amount of confidence that predicts the coming day when all men shall be less afraid of being cheated than that they themselves might cheat. The "confidence games" of large cities but show the counterfeit that proves how current is the golden coin of faith. As I fly along in the swift train and we plunge into the darkness, every revolution of the wheels and throb of the engine's mighty heart seems to say, "good faith, good faith!" And we know that for every million persons carried only forty-one are in anywise harmed in this country of crossroads, and in England with her greater care, only ten in every million. So that notwithstanding an occasional and frightful disaster, it is positively safer to travel than to stay at home. What an incalculable number of "dependable" men this fact involves, and how it illustrates on a splendid scale the emergency of the human race out of chaos into order; out of lying into truth; out of faithlessness into faith. Even as we thus move on in these every day affairs, all of which pertain to that "common religion," which involves the reign of righteousness upon the dusty highways of our common life, so I have thought we are moving onward in the social world. There is less etiquette and more reality; less veneration and more real grain of the wood. Once the business of well to do women was society. What did that mean? That the be-all and end-all was to dress in fashion, dance a minuet with stateliness, preside at a dinner of several hours duration with mastery, and so on. Now, to be sure, there are large circles of women to whom the decollete dress, whirling waltz, progressive euchre party and box at the theater are the world's chief charm. But the spell of this sort of life is broken. The special enclosure known as "Society" grows smaller and less fascinating to the great many sided world of women. Christianity in emancipating us, and showing us so many other things to do. Women more gifted, cultured and rich than those who give themselves wholly to society, devote themselves now-a-days to things they find so much more worthy of them, that "society women" have become a sub-division, quite clearly marked, of the real womanhood that has a broad, free life and outlook on the world. Just in the early days, one who did not take wine was almost ostracized, but is now respectfully regarded and even praised, so "not to be in society" is no longer a mark of singularity, but a "differentiation from the type" that is clearly recognized and held in high esteem. Perhaps "society" itself will pass away. Who knows? One feels like saying this below one's breath, and yet, *who knows?* There

are so many better things to do than to sit for two hours as devotees around the stomachic altar of a dinner table, or to spin in a waltz taking attitudes elsewhere indecent or intolerable. But society dissected down to the marrow, yields but these two spectacles, and those two will pass away. Banish wine from the dinner, dancing from the "evening entertainment," and "society" with its bare arms and exposed busts, its late hours and indigestions, would collapse. Nothing is surer than that wine is to be banished, and that with the growing uplift and dignity of womanhood, dancing and the outrageous mode of dress that goes along with it, will one day be held as a mere relic of barbarism. That was a prophetic innovation at the White House when our gracious Mrs. Hayes replaced the dinner with its wine glasses by the stately and elegant reception. Perhaps while men rules the State, in their government "of the minority, by the minority, for the minority," its highest expression will still be the dinner table with its clinking glasses and plenty of tobacco smoke afterwards, but when man and woman both come into the kingdom for the glad new times that hasten to be here, the gustatory nerve will be dethroned once and forever more. For there are so many more worthy and delightful ways of investing (not "spending") one's time, "there are so many better things to do." The blossoming of woman into deeds of philanthropy gives us a hint of the truer forms of society that are to come. Emerson said, "We descend to meet," because he claims that we are on a higher plane when alone with God and nature. But this need not be so. Doubtless in the outworn and stereotyped forms of society where material pleasures still hold sway, we do "descend to meet," but when a philanthropic purpose determines our companionship and leads to our converging, then we climb together into purer and more vital air. The "coming women"—nay, the women who have come, have learned the loveliest meaning of the word "society." Indeed some of us like to call it "comradeship" instead, this interchange of highest thought and tenderest aspiration in which the sense of selfhood is diminished and the sense of otherhood increased. We make no "formal calls," but the informal ones are a hundred fold more pleasant. If a new woman's face appears in Church we wonder if she won't "come with us" in the W. H. M. S., the W. F. M. S., the W. C. T. U. or some other band "ringing around a rosy" circle formed "for her's sake." If new children sit beside her in the Church pew we plan to win them for our Band of Hope or other philanthropic guild where they will learn to find "society" in nobler forms than this poor old world has ever known before. The emptiness of conventional forms of speech and action is never so patent as when contrasted with the "fullness of life" that crown those hearts banded together to bring the day when all men's woe shall be each man's care. Wordsworth writes wearily of

"The greetings where no kindness is
And all the dreary intercourse of daily life."

Emerson says:

"Good-bye, proud world, I'm going home."
"Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face,
To Grandeur with her proud grimace,
To upstart Wealth's avowed eye,
To supple office low and high."

Indeed, the choicest natures, could their roll be called, have shunned "society" because, though it fed them on the most succulent viands of the real, it was too gross and glaring for the Ideal which was above all things else