

London as a Piece of Mosaic

the time he is surrounded by an atmosphere of comfort from which mud, dirt, and the rough edge of life are carefully excluded. He has in the interspaces of other amusements, one of the best clubs in Piccadilly open to him, where the difficulty is to find that crumpled rose-leaf that so enhances appreciation. After the theatre or the music hall he may go to the Carlton with a party for supper. Here are the best-dressed women in Europe. At that table not far off a cabinet minister is supping with a party, beyond him is a man whom England calls her finest general. The women are all beautiful or have, what is more attractive than beauty, distinction. The soft swish of silk and satin, the delicate yet audacious combinations of colour in the gowns, the priceless laces, the scintillating jewels; the atmosphere of the right warmth, with just a suggestion of scent; the music which blends with conversation; the menu chosen by the highest connoisseur in London—that is to say in the world, and the noiseless waiting; all form a picture appealing to every sense, and soothing all. The young soldier goes back to his barracks, and the mental picture of London he carries with him is one of flashing radiance; the rubies have been his portion.

The gold of London is apparent to those whose tastes are cultivated, who are literary, artistic, scientific, or musical. In London are to be found the men who are at the top of their professions, celebrated authors, artists, and musicians. Even without being aught but a nonentity it is open to all to hear the best music composed by men famed all the world over, to see the great master-