

even heard of Theocritus. She had a cold in her head, and was utterly at a loss to explain my attitude. Therefore she was coming back to London.

I wish I could find her a nice tame husband who had heard of Theocritus. It would be such a good thing for everybody, husband included. For, I repeat, Eleanor is a young woman of fine character, and the man to whom she gives her heart will be a fortunate fellow.

While I was reading the letter and meditating on it, with my back to the fire, Dale plunged into the morning's correspondence with an air of enjoyment. That is the astonishing thing about him. He loves work. The more I give him to do the better he likes it. His cronies, who in raiment, manners, and tastes differ from him no more than a row of pins differs from a stray brother, regard a writing-chair as a mediæval instrument of torture, and faint at the sight of ink. They will put themselves to all kinds of physical and pecuniary inconvenience in order to avoid regular employment. They are the tramps of the fashionable world. But in vain do they sing to Dale of the joys of silk-hatted and patent-leather-booted vagabondage and deride his habits of industry; Dale turns a deaf ear to them and urges on his strenuous career. Rogers, coming in to clear away the breakfast things, was despatched by my young friend to fetch a portfolio from the hall. It contained, he informed me, the unanswered letters of the past fortnight with which he had found himself unqualified to deal. He grasped the whole bundle of correspondence, and invited me to follow him to the library and start on a solid morning's work. I obeyed meekly. He sat down at the big table, arranged the pile in front of him, took a pencil from the tray, and began:

"This is from Finch, of the *Universal Review*."

I put my hand on his shoulder.