

● PEOPLE OF POPHAM ●

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It is very difficult for an old bachelor to get any one to argue with him, if he happens to be rich and the ultimate destination of his wealth uncertain.

So I, in the wisdom of my sixteen summers, affirmed that — from a worldly point of view — “Aunt Augusta” was justified in the attitude she adopted with regard to the marriage of her niece Mary Macdermott.

Old Mr. Wallace, Mary’s Great-uncle William, questioned with an amused look my knowledge of the world and said, “You are sure of that, quite sure?”

And I stuck to my guns, rather to humour him — since he loved opposition — than to air my own opinions. For I realised that it must be dull to sit in a large room, furnished with deep armchairs, upholstered in dark yellow morocco, and have no one to argue with. I still think unmarried people are more to be pitied on that score than on any other.

Living alone as I do, I know loneliness has its compensations. For instance, it is peaceful to be able to use the wrong end of the toasting-fork, if one likes.