

never let her doubt that—hence the paltry proportions of his letters and the impossibility of fixing the date of his return. All the same he found his protracted exile well worth while—never let her doubt that either. Profits were in process of piling up to an altitude not unworthy of the great Sierra Madre from whose metallurgically fruitful womb they were drawn.

It followed that, though Morris's address struck her as slightly embarrassed, Morris himself struck her as by no means depressed. She detected, indeed, an insufficiently veiled jubilation and swagger. And of that she was glad. If she read a growing alienation on his part, she did so without bitterness. Let him be happy in his own fashion! Let him glitter and dazzle whom he would, court and achieve success and popularity—even were it a little trickily—to the top of his bent. For wasn't it sheer waste that any one so fitted to enjoy, one with so large a swallow for the pleasures of living, shouldn't feast on those pleasures to the full?

She thought so.—And went on across the black and white chequered floor of the hall and began ascending the pale, lofty walled staircase slowly—