

and so crowded. Such figures are, indeed, but the component features of one great Form, and their actions only so many modes of one collective impersonal character—that of the Parisian Society of Imperial and Democratic France ;—a character everywhere present and busy throughout the story, of which it is the real hero or heroine. This society was doubtless selected for characteristic illustration as being the most advanced in the progress of ‘modern ideas.’ Thus, for a complete perception of its writer’s fundamental purpose, ‘The Parisians’ should be read in connection with ‘Chillingly,’ and these two books in connection with ‘The Coming Race.’ It will then be perceived that, through the medium of alternate fancy, sentiment, and observation, assisted by humour and passion, these three books (in all other respects so different from each other) complete the presentation of the same purpose under different aspects ; and thereby constitute a group of fictions which claims a separate place of its own in any thoughtful classification of their author’s works.

One last word to those who will miss from these pages the connecting and completing touches of the master’s hand.\* It may be hoped that such a disadvantage, though irreparable, is somewhat mitigated by the essential character of

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\* See also Note by the Author’s Son, p. 680.