

tightly, with the two pointed ends hanging down back. Yes, nun-like enough. And yet not altogether. People would have turned round after her if those things out to the half-past six mass hadn't been the occasion on which she ventured into the impious street. She was frightened of the streets, but in a particular way, not as if of a danger but as if of a contamination. Yet she didn't fly back to her mountains because at bottom she had an indomitable character, a peasant tenacity of purpose, predatory instincts. . . .

No, we didn't remain long enough with Mr. Blunt to see even as much as her back glide out of the house on her prayerful errand. She was prayerful. She was terrible. Her one-ideal peasant mind was as inaccessible as a closed iron safe. She was fatal. . . . It's perfectly ridiculous to confess that they all seem fatal to me now; but writing to you like this in all sincerity I do find my mind appearing ridiculous. I suppose fatality must be expressed, embodied, like other forces of this earth; and if so why not in such people as well as in other more glorious or more frightful figures?

We remained, however, long enough to let Mr. Blunt's half-hidden acrimony develop itself or prey on itself further talk about the man Allègre and the girl Rita. Mr. Blunt, still addressing Mills with that story, passed on to what he called the second act, the disclosure, with what he called, the characteristic Allègre impudence—which surpassed the impudence of kings, millionaires, or tramps, by many degrees—the revelation of Rita's existence to the world at large. It wasn't a very large world, but then it was most choicely composed. How is one to describe it shortly? In a sentence it was the world that rides in the morning in the Bois.

In something less than a year and a half from the time he found her sitting on a broken fragment of stone work