

glasses of beer to the small tables in the boxes. Then we got back to the hotel, not a little tired with the long, hot, parching day; and we went to bed—perchance to dream of cool English rains and our Surrey hedges, and the wet and windy clouds blowing over from the sea.

CHAPTER XXXI.

GHOSTS AND VISIONS.

OF course we did not run away from New York merely because our good Bell was of opinion that the city had something too much of a French look. We had many excellent friends pressing their hospitalities on us; we had many places to visit; and then Queen T—— must needs insist on telegraphing to England that letters should be sent out to us by a particular steamer. Letters! No doubt when Columbus landed on the shores of San Salvador, and found a whole new world awaiting his explorations, his first impulse was to sit down and cry because he could not hear whether his mother-in-law's cold was better.

She was most economical, too, about that telegram. She would not have Lady Sylvia send a separate message.

'A couple of words extra will do,' she said, 'and they will understand to go over to the Hall and let your father—and Mr. Balfour too—know that you have arrived safely. Why should you send a separate message?'

Why, indeed! The young wife was grateful to this kind friend of hers for so considerably throwing dust in her eyes. Why should she send a separate message to her husband, when the expense would be so desperate?

And although Queen T—— lavished her time on writing letters to her boys at home, she always did that in the privacy of her own room, and rather strove to hide, or to make little of these communications with England. Columbus himself, when the king and queen asked him to give an account of his travels, could not have been more particular than this new discoverer in describing the wonderful things she had seen. The amount of information conveyed to those boys—who would much

rather have had a sovereign sewn up between two cards—was enormous. On one occasion she was caught giving them a precise account of the Constitution of the United States, obviously cribbed from Mr. Nordhoff's *Politics for Young Americans*. But then these budgets were generally written at night, and they were never paraded next day. When, before Lady Sylvia, she spoke of England, she treated it as a place of little account. Our necessary interests were in the things around us. One could not always be looking back and indulging in sentiment. That was more to be pardoned—and as she said this, the small philosopher was down at the Battery, her tender eyes gazing wistfully at a certain archway which barred our view of the sea beyond—that was more to be pardoned to the thousands upon thousands of sad-hearted men and women who had landed at this very point, who had passed through that archway, with their hopes of the New World but feebly compensating them for their loss of home and kindred and friends. This, said she, was the most interesting spot in all America, and the most pathetic. And as she had been two whole days on this continent, we calmly acquiesced.

And at length the arrival of our letters, which contained a vast amount of important news about nothing at all, relieved the anxious hearts of the two mothers, and set us free. We bid farewell to this Atlantic Paris, with its hot pavements, its green ailanthus-trees, its dry air, and intolerable thirst; and at about three o'clock on a strangely still and sultry day we drive down to the wharf and embark on a large and curiously constructed steamer. But no sooner have we got out on to the broad bosom of the river than we find how grateful are these spacious saloons, and lofty archways, and cool awnings, for now the swift passage of the boat produces something like a breeze, and for a time we cease to brood on iced drinks. Under the pleasant awning we have our chairs and books and fruit; but the books are not much regarded. For, as we noiselessly and swiftly steam up against the current, it appears more and more certain that we have got into some mystic dream-land which can in no wise be any part of America, and that this river is not only neither the Hudson nor the Rhine, but wholly unlike any river seen out of a