

CHAPTER I

THE AFFABLE STRANGER

ONE day a group of Americans talked for publication without being aware of the fact. The democratic sociability of an observation car made it possible for me to get expressions of opinion on many subjects without the caution and frequent insincerity of formal interviews. No one knew the name or occupation of any of his fellow-passengers, and the conversation had "a charter large as the wind." For twelve hours, while making the trip from Montreal to Boston, the conversation ebbed and flowed over many fields of human interest, and by interjecting a remark here and there it was possible to turn the talk in any direction. Having a definite purpose in view and plenty of time at my disposal, I managed to get some spontaneous expressions of opinion along the particular line in which I am interested at the