

"So, thou wast not my bounden foe,
 But shouldst have been, on earth, my mate:
 No more I strike the killing blow,
 No more thy hand shall be my fate!"
 "Ay, thou wast not my bounden foe—
 Thou shouldst have been, on earth, my mate;
 But we no more to earth shall go,
 And Knowledge dawns on us too late!"

This, in the Life beyond all life,
 This, in the World all worlds beyond. . . .
 Then, Memory grew a sheathèd Knife,
 And there was neither bar nor bond!

Editor's Easy Chair.

AT the moment of this writing, everybody is hurrying into the country, eager to escape the horrors of summer in the city; at the moment when it becomes that reading we hope for, everybody will be hurrying into the city, eager to escape the horrors of summer in the country. At either moment the experiences of Florindo and Lindora should have a certain interest.

I

Florindo and Lindora are a married pair, still comparatively happy after forty years of wedded life, who have spent the part or the whole of each hot season out of town, sometimes in the hills, sometimes by the sea, sometimes in Europe. Their acquaintance with either form of sojourn, if not exhaustive, is so comprehensive that it might be cited as encyclopædic.

The first season or so they did not think of shutting up their house in the city, or doing more than taking, the latter part of August, a trip to Niagara, or Saratoga, or Cape May, or Lake George, or some of those simple, old-fashioned resorts whose mere mention brings a sense of pre-existence, with a thrill of fond regret, to the age which can no longer be described as middle, and is perhaps flattered by the epithet of three-quartering. No doubt, people go to those places yet, but Florindo and Lindora have not been to any of them

for so many summers that they can hardly realize them as still open: for them they were closed in the earliest of the eighteen-seventies.

After that, say the third summer of their marriage, it appeared to Lindora essential to take board somewhere for the whole summer, at such an easy distance that Florindo could run up, or down, or out, every Saturday afternoon, and stay Sunday with her and the children; for there had now begun to be children, who could not teethe in town, and for whom the abundance of pure milk, small fruits, and fresh vegetables promised with the shade and safety of the farm, was really requisite. She kept the house in town still open, as before, or rather half-open, for she left only the cook in it to care for her husband, and do the family wash, sent to and fro by express, while she took the second girl with her as maid. In the first days of September, when the most enterprising of the fresh vegetables were beginning to appear on the table, and the mosquitoes were going, and the smell of old potatoes in the cellar and rats in the walls was airing out, and she was getting used to the peculiar undulations of her bed, she took the little teethers back to town with her; and when she found her husband in the comfortable dimensions of their own house, with melons and berries and tender steak, and rich cream (such as never comes on pure milk), and hot and cold

baths, and no flies, she could not help feeling that he had been very selfish. Now she understood, at least, why he never failed on Monday morning to wake in time for the stage to carry him to the station, and she said, No more farm-board for her, if she knew it.

In those idyllic days, while they were making their way, and counting the cost of every step as if it were the proverbial first step, the next step for Lindora was a large boarding-house for the summer. She tried it first in the country, and she tried it next at the seaside, with the same number of feet of piazza in both cases, and with no distinct difference except in the price. It was always dearer at the seaside, but if it had been better she should not have thought it so dear. Yet, as it was dearer, she could not help thinking it was better; and there was the beach for the teetters to dig in, and there was an effect of superior fashion in the gossipers on the piazza, one to every three of the three hundred feet of the piazza, rocking and talking, and guessing at the yachts in the offing, and then bathing and coming out to lie on the sand and dry their hair.

At the farm she had paid seven dollars a week for herself, and half-price for the children; at the country boarding-house she had paid ten for herself, and again half-price for the children; at the seaside boarding-house the rate for her was fourteen dollars, and nine for the children and the maid. Everybody on the piazza said it was very cheap, but to Lindora it was so dear that she decided for Florindo that they could not go on keeping the house open and the cook in it just for him, as the expressage on the wash took away all the saving in that. If she allowed him to sleep in the house, he could pick up his meals for much less than they now cost. They must not burn their candle at both ends; he must put out his end. There was reason in this, because now Florindo was sometimes kept so late at business that he could not get the last train Saturday night for the beach, and he missed the Sunday with his family on which she counted so much. Thinking these things over during the ensuing winter, she began to divine, toward spring, that the only thing for the teetters, and the

true way for Florindo, was for her to get away from the city to a good distance, where there would be a real change of air, and that a moderate hotel in the White Mountains or the Adirondacks was the only hopeful guess at their problem. If Florindo could not come for Sunday when they were off only an hour or two, it would be no worse for them to be seven or eight hours off. Florindo agreed the more easily because he had now joined a club, where he got his meals as comfortably as at home, and quite as economically, counting in the cook. He could get a room also at the club, and if they shut the house altogether, and had it wired by the burglar-insurance company, they would be cutting off a frightful drain.

It was therefore in the interest of clearly ascertained economy that Lindora took her brood with her to a White Mountain hotel, where she made a merit of getting board for seventeen dollars and a half a week, when so many were paying twenty and twenty-five. Florindo came up twice during the summer, and stayed a fortnight each time, and fished, and said that it had been a complete rest. On the way back to town Lindora stopped for October in one of those nice spring and fall places, where you put in the half-season which is so unwholesome in the city after a long summer in the country, and afterwards she always did this. Fortunately, Florindo was prospering, and he could afford the increased cost of this method of saving. The system was practised with great success for four or five years, and then, suddenly, it failed.

Lindora was tired of always going to the same place, sick and tired; and as far as she could see, all those mountain places were the same places. She could get no good of the air, if she bored herself; the nice people did not go to hotels so much now, anyway, and the children were dreadful, no fit associates for the teetters, who had long ceased to teethe, but needed a summer outing as much as ever. A series of seasons followed, when the married pair did not know where to go, in the person of the partner who represented them, and they had each spring a controversy vividly resembling a quarrel, but which was really not a quarrel,

because the Dear knew that if it were not for the children Lindora would only be too glad never to leave their own house winter or summer, but just to stick there, year out and year in. Then, at least, she could look a little after Florindo, who had lived so much at the club that he had fairly forgotten he *had* a wife and children. The trouble was all with Florindo, anyway; he cared more for his business than his family, much; if he did not, he could have managed somehow to spend the summers with them. Other men did it, and ran down once a month, or once a fortnight, to put things in shape, and then came back.

Sleeping on a midnight view of her hard case, Lindora woke one morning with an inspiration; it might not be too much to call it a revelation. She wondered at herself, she was ashamed of herself, for not having thought of it before. Europe of course was the only solution. Once in Europe, you need not worry about where to go, for you could go anywhere. Europe was everywhere, and you had your choice of the Swiss mountains, where every breath made another person of you, or the Italian lakes with their glorious scenery, or the English lakes with their literary associations, or Scheveningen and all Holland, or Etretat, or Ostend, or any of those thousands of German baths where you could get over whatever you had, and the children could pick up languages with tutors, and the life was so amusing. Going to Europe was excuse enough in itself for Florindo to leave his business, and if he could not be gone more than one summer, he could place her and the children out there till their health and education were completed, and they could all return home when it was time for the girls to think of coming out, and the boys of going to college.

Florindo, as she expected, had not a reasonable word to say against a scheme that must commend itself to any reasonable man. In fact, he scarcely opposed it. He said he had begun to feel a little run down, and he had just been going to propose Europe himself as the true solution. She gladly gave him credit for the idea, and said he had the most inventive mind she ever heard of. She agreed without a murmur to the par-

ticular German baths which the doctor said would be best for him, because she just knew that the waters would be good for all of them; and when he had taken his cure the family made his after-cure with him, and they had the greatest fun, after the after-cure, in travelling about Germany. They got as far down as the Italian lakes, in the early autumn, and by the time Florindo had to go back, the rest were comfortably settled in Paris for the winter.

II

As a solution Europe was perfect, but it was not perpetual. After three years the bottom seemed to fall out, as Florindo phrased it, and the family came home to face the old fearful problem of where to spend the summer. Lindora knew where not to spend it, but her wisdom ended there, and when a friend who was going to Europe offered them her furnished cottage at a merely nominal rent, Lindora took it because she could not think of anything else. They all found it so charming that after that summer she never would think again of hotels, or any manner of boarding. They hired cottages, at rents not so nominal as at first, but not so very extravagant, if you had not to keep the city rent going too; and it finally seemed best to buy a cottage, and stop the leak of the rent, however small it was. Lindora did not count the interest on the purchase-money, or the taxes, or the repairs, or the winter caretaking.

She was now living, and is still living, as most of her contemporaries and social equals are living, not quite free of care, but free of tiresome associations, cramped rooms, bad beds and bad food, with an environment which you can perfectly control if you are willing to pay the price. The situation is ideal to those without, and if not ideal to those within, it is nevertheless the best way of spending the hot season known to competitive civilization. What is most interesting to the student of that civilization is the surprisingly short time in which it has been evolved. Half a century ago, it was known only to some of the richest people. A few very old and opulent families in New York had country places on the Hudson; in Boston the same class had summer houses at Nahant, or in

Pepperell. The wealthy planters of the South came North to the hotels of Saratoga, Lake George, and Niagara, whither the vast majority of the fashionable Northern people also resorted. In the West it was the custom to leave home for a summer trip, up the lakes or down the St. Lawrence. But this was the custom only for the very sophisticated, and even now in the West people do not summer outside of their winter homes to at all the same extent as in the East.

The experience of Florindo and Lindora is easily parallelable in that of innumerable other married pairs of American race, who were the primitive joke of the paragrapher and the caricaturist when the day of farm-boarding began. Though the sun of that day has long set for Florindo and Lindora, it seems to be still at the zenith for most young couples beginning life on their forgotten terms, and the joke holds in its pristine freshness with the lowlier satirists, who hunt the city boarder in the country and the seaside boarding-houses. The Florindos and the Lindoras of a little greater age and better fortune abound in the summer hotels at the beaches and in the mountains, though at the more worldly watering-places the cottagers have killed off the hotels, as the graphic parlance has it. The hotels nowhere, perhaps, flourish in their old vigor; except for a brief six weeks, when they are fairly full, they languish along the rivers, among the hills, and even by the shores of the mournful and misty Atlantic.

The summer cottage, in fine, is what Florindo and Lindora have typically come to in so many cases that it may be regarded as the typical experience of the easily circumstanced American of the East, if not of the West. The slightest relaxation of the pressure of narrow domestic things seems to indicate it, and the reader would probably be astonished to find what great numbers of people, who are comparatively poor, have summer cottages, though the cottage in most cases is perhaps as much below the dignity of a real cottage as the sumptuous villas of Newport are above it. Summer cottages with the great average of those who have them began in the slightest and simplest of shanties, progressing toward those simulacra of

houses aptly called shells, and gradually arriving at picturesque structures, prettily decorated, with all the modern conveniences, in which one may spend two-thirds of the year, and more of one's income than one has a quiet conscience in.

It would not be so bad, if one could live in them simply, as Lindora proposed doing when she made Florindo buy hers for her, but the graces of life cannot be had for nothing, or anything like nothing, and when you have a charming cottage, and have overcome all the disabilities of the country so as to be living on city terms in it, you have the wish to have people see you doing it. This ambition leads to endless and rather aimless hospitality, so that some Lindoras have been known, after keeping a private hotel in their cottages for a series of summers, to shut them or let them, and go abroad for a much-needed rest, leaving their Florindos to their clubs as in the days of their youth, or even allowing them to live in their own houses with their cooks.

III

Nothing in this world, it seems, is quite what we want it to be; we ourselves are not all that we could wish; and whatever shape our summering takes, the crumpled rose-leaf is there to disturb our repose. The only people who have no crumpled rose-leaves under them are those who have no repose, but stay striving on amidst the heat of the city, while the prey of the crumpled rose-leaf is suffering among the hills or by the sea. Those home-keeping Sybarites, composing seven-eighths of our urban populations, immune from the anguish of the rose-leaf, form themselves the pang of its victims in certain extreme cases; the thought of them poisons the pure air, and hums about the sleepless rest-seeker in the resorts where there are no mosquitoes. There are Florindos, there are Lindoras, so sensitively conscienceed that in the most picturesque, the most prettily appointed and thoroughly convenienceed cottages, they cannot forget their fellow mortals in the summer hotels, in the boarding-houses by sea or shore, in the farms where they have small fruits, fresh vegetables, and abundance of milk and eggs; yes, they even remember

those distant relations who toil and swelter in the offices, the shops, the streets, the sewers; and they are not without an unavailing shame for their own good fortune.

But is it really their good fortune? They would not exchange it for the better fortune of the home-keepers, and yet it seems worse than that of people less voluntarily circumstanced. There is nothing left for Florindo and Lindora to try, except spending the summer on a yacht, which they see many other Florindos and Lindoras doing. Even these gay voyagers, or gay anchorers (for they seem most of the time to be moored in safe harbors), do not appear altogether to like their lot, or to be so constantly contented with it but that they are always coming off in boats to dine at the neighboring hotels. Doubtless a yacht has a crumpled rose-leaf under it, and possibly the keelless hull of the house-boat feels the irk of a folded petal somewhere.

Florindo and Lindora are not spoiled, she is sure of that in her own case, for she has never been unreasonably exacting of circumstance. She has always tried to be more comfortable than she found herself, but that is the condition of progress, and it is from the perpetual endeavor for the amelioration of circumstance that civilization springs. The fault may be with Florindo, in some way that she cannot see, but it is certainly not with her, and if it is not with him, then it is with the summer, which is a season so unreasonable that it will not allow itself to be satisfactorily disposed of. In town it is intolerable; in the mountains it is sultry by day, and all but freezing by night; at the seaside it is cold and wet, or dry and cold; there are flies and mosquitoes everywhere but in Europe, and with the bottom once out of Europe, you cannot go there without dropping through. In Lindora's experience the summer has had the deceitful effect of owning its riddle read at each new conjecture, but having exhausted all her practical guesses, she finds the summer still the mute, inexorable sphinx, for which neither farm-board, boarding-houses, hotels, European sojourn, nor cottaging is the true answer.

Sometimes Florindo or Lindora is out of all patience with the summer, and in a despair which she is careful to share with Florindo, as far as she can make him a partner of it. But as it is his business to provide the means of each new condition, and hers to prove it impossible, he is not apt to give way so fully as she. He tells her that their trouble is that they have always endeavored to escape an ordeal which if frankly borne, might not have been so bad, and he has tried to make her believe that some of the best times he has had in summer have been when he was too busy to think about it. She retorts that she is busy too, from morning till night, without finding the least relief from the summer ordeal, or forgetting it a single moment.

The other day he came home from the club with a beaming face, and told her that he had just heard of a place where the summer was properly disposed of, and she said that they would go there at once, she did not care where it was.

"Well, I don't know," he answered. "There would have to be two opinions, I believe."

"Why?" she demanded, sharply. "Where is it?"

"In the other world. Fanshawe, the Swedenborgian, was telling me about it. In one of the celestial heavens—there seem to be seven of them—it appears that all the four seasons are absorbed into one, as all the different ages are absorbed into a sort of second youth. This sole season is neither hot nor cold, but has the quality of a perpetual spring-time. How would you like that?"

Lindora was too vexed with him to make any answer, and he was sorry. He too felt the trouble of the summer more than he would allow, and he would willingly have got away from it if he could. Lindora's impatience with it amused him, but it is doubtful if in the moment of his greatest amusement with her impatience he had any glimpse of that law of the universal life by which no human creature is permitted to escape a due share of the responsibilities and burdens of the common lot, or realized that to seek escape from them is a species of immorality which is unfailingly punished like any other sin, in and from itself.

Editor's Study.

I

"THE extent of a palace," says Joubert, "is measured from east to west, or from north to south; but that of a literary work, from the earth to heaven; so that there may sometimes be found as much range and power of the mind in a few pages—in an ode, for example—as in a whole epic poem. It is better to be exquisite than to be ample."

Almost it might seem that a writer has a kind of advantage from his very limitations, if these are horizontal only—such advantage as have the deaf and blind. We recall a conversation with Helen Keller in which she spoke of her life, considered with reference to opportunity, as a contracted room, but reaching to heaven—vertically infinite. The closure within narrow limits forbids distraction or diversion. The degree of imaginative power is tested in such a situation, as in the case of Hawthorne, and indeed, with very few exceptions, of all American writers before our civil war. Sometimes it has happened that the first literary work of English and other European writers has been done under like provincial limitations—the product of individual genius working under severe restrictions as to material, but with vertically unlimited range of spiritual power in the use of it, disclosing the height and depth of its meaning. The result, as compared with more discursive work, shows greater tension and is apt to fix itself as a more distinctive trait in a people's literature. Either the writer in such straits takes the material at his hand, the humanity that comes directly under his observation, like a painter depicting its familiar features, and also with deep insight disclosing its humors, passions, and amiable follies, or, like Bunyan, he ignores the actual for the sake of types, and leaps at once to the dramatic spiritual allegory. Whichever course he takes, he, in the measure of his imaginative power, develops the tension and the distinctive trait.

But a cursory glance at English literature shows that for the most part it has been made by men of the world. Every-

body of note in England has, from time immemorial, been drawn to London—the centre of art and letters, as well as of fashion, and, more than any other city, a world in itself. The English authors have not only known their London, but nearly all of them have travelled abroad. The "journey into Italy" is especially associated with these writers, from Chaucer to Mrs. Humphry Ward—so that it has become a familiar phrase, linked with a familiar habit.

It seems to us quite likely that even Shakespeare took this journey. Mr. Rolfe concedes the possibility of his having done so in those years of his life after he went to London, and of which we know absolutely nothing, suggesting particularly the opportunity afforded for such a journey when the London theatres were closed in 1593. He also draws attention to the minute accuracy of his Italian plays, distinguishing them from all others whose scenes are laid outside of England.

All these world-contacts gave lateral extension to the writer's opportunity. Absolute provincialism there could be none save for the very poor—the provincialism of the garret—really none save for the dull; for, however poor the author might be, the rare and exquisite sensibility of genius became for him the mirror of the world, in which there was a world worth beholding to be reflected, even though he was denied the advantage of travel and leisure. The man of feeling might always be in an important sense a man of the world. No spot could for him be so primitive but that it was "primal nature with an added artistry." There was no present scene which was not also rich with associations of a storied past.

Contrast this Europe with the America of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. What a sense of the difference is conveyed to us in Boughton's painting, "The Return of the Mayflower!" The isolation of the pilgrims left behind is acutely but not amply measured by the distance from home and kindred. The institutional barrenness is even more