VARIOUS

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Содержание

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THE CAXTONS. – PART XIII

CHAPTER LXVI

St Chrysostom, in his work on The Priesthood, defends deceit, if for a good purpose, by many Scriptural examples; ends his first book by asserting that it is often necessary, and that much benefit may arise from it; and begins his second book by saying that it ought not to be called *deceit*, but "good management."

Good management, then, let me call the innocent arts by which I now sought to insinuate my project into favour and assent with my unsuspecting family. And first I began with Roland. I easily induced him to read some of the books, full of the charm of Australian life, which Trevanion had sent me; and so happily did those descriptions suit his own erratic tastes, and the free, half-savage man that lay rough and large within that soldierly nature, that he himself, as it were, seemed to suggest my own ardent desire – sighed, as the careworn Trevanion had done, that "he was

not my age," and blew the flame that consumed me with his own willing breath. So that when at last – wandering one day over the wild moors – I said, knowing his hatred of law and lawyers —

"Alas, uncle, that nothing should be left for me but the bar! – "

Captain Roland struck his cane into the peat, and exclaimed, "Zounds, sir, the bar and lying, with truth and a world fresh from God before you!"

"Your hand, uncle – we understand each other. Now help me with those two quiet hearts at home!"

"Plague on my tongue! what have I done?" said the Captain, looking aghast. Then, after musing a little time, he turned his dark eye on me and growled out, "I suspect, young sir, you have been laying a trap for me; and I have fallen into it, like an old fool as I am."

"Oh, sir, if you prefer the bar! – "

"Rogue!"

"Or, indeed, I might perhaps get a clerkship in a merchant's office?"

"If you do, I will scratch you out of the pedigree!"

"Huzza then for Australasia!"

"Well, well, well," said my uncle,

"With a smile on his lip and a tear in his eye;"

"the old sea-king's blood will force its way – a soldier or a rover, there is no other choice for you. We shall mourn and miss you; but who can chain the young eagles to the eyrie?"

I had a harder task with my father, who at first seemed to listen

to me as if I had been talking of an excursion to the moon. But I threw in a dexterous dose of the old Greek *Cleruchiæ*– cited by Trevanion – which set him off full trot on his hobby, till, after a short excursion to Eubœa and the Chersonese, he was fairly lost amidst the Ionian colonies of Asia Minor. I then gradually and artfully decoyed him into his favourite science of Ethnology; and while he was speculating on the origin of the American savages, and considering the rival claims of Cimmerians, Israelites, and Scandinavians, I said quietly, – "And you, sir, who think that all human improvement depends on the mixture of races – you, whose whole theory is an absolute sermon upon emigration, and the transplanting and interpolity of our species – you, sir, should be the last man to chain your son, your elder son, to the soil, while your younger is the very missionary of rovers."

"Pisistratus," said my father, "you reason by synecdoche – ornamental, but illogical;" and therewith, resolved to hear no more, my father rose and retreated into his study.

But his observation, now quickened, began from that day to follow my moods and humours – then he himself grew silent and thoughtful, and finally he took to long conferences with Roland. The result was that, one evening in spring, as I lay listless amidst the weeds and fern that sprang up through the melancholy ruins, I felt a hand on my shoulder; and my father, seating himself beside me on a fragment of stone, said earnestly – "Pisistratus, – let us talk – I had hoped better things from your study of Robert Hall."

"Nay, dear father, the medicine did me great good: I have not

repined since, and I look steadfastly and cheerfully on life. But Robert Hall fulfilled his mission, and I would fulfil mine."

"Is there no mission in thy native land, O planeticose and exallotriote spirit?[1]" asked my father, with compassionate rebuke.

"Alas, yes! But what the impulse of genius is to the great, the instinct of vocation is to the mediocre. In every man there is a magnet; in that thing which the man can do best there is a loadstone."

"Papæ!" said my father, opening his eyes; "and are no loadstones to be found for you nearer than the great Australasian Bight?"

"Ah, sir, if you resort to irony, I can say no more!" My father looked down on me tenderly, as I hung my head moody and abashed.

"Son," said he, "do you think that there is any real jest at my heart when the matter discussed is whether you are to put wide seas and long years between us?" I pressed nearer to his side, and made no answer.

"But I have noted you of late," continued my father, "and I have observed that your old studies are grown distasteful to you; and I have talked with Roland, and I see that your desire is deeper than a boy's mere whim. And then I have asked myself what prospect I can hold out at home to induce you to be contented

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[1] Words coined by Mr Caxton from πλανητικος, disposed to roaming, and εξαλλοτριοω, to export, to alienate.

here, and I see none; and therefore I should say to you, 'Go thy ways, and God shield thee,' – but, Pisistratus, *your mother*?"

"Ah, sir, that is indeed the question! and there indeed I shrink. But, after all, whatever I were – whether toiling at the bar, or in some public office – I should be still so much from home and her. And then you, sir – she loves *you* so entirely, that – "

"No," interrupted my father; "you can advance no arguments like these to touch a mother's heart. There is but one argument that comes home there – Is it for your good to leave her? If so, there will be no need of farther words. But let us not decide that question hastily; let you and I be together the next two months. Bring your books and sit with me; when you want to go out, tap me on the shoulder and say 'Come.' At the end of those two months, I will say to you 'Go,' or 'Stay.' And you will trust me; and if I say the last, you will submit?"

"Oh yes, sir, yes."

CHAPTER LXVII

This compact made, my father roused himself from all his studies – devoted his whole thoughts to me – sought with all his gentle wisdom to wean me imperceptibly from my own fixed tyrannical idea, ranged through his wide pharmacy of books for such medicaments as might alter the system of my thoughts. And little thought he that his very tenderness and wisdom worked against him, for at each new instance of either my heart called aloud, "Is it not that thy tenderness may be repaid, and thy wisdom be known abroad, that I go from thee into the strange land, O my father?"

And the two months expired, and my father saw that the magnet had turned unalterably to the loadstone in the great Australasian Bight; and he said to me, "Go, and comfort your mother. I have told her your wish, and authorised it by my consent, for I believe now that it *is* for your good."

I found my mother in the little room which she had appropriated to herself, next my father's study. And in that room there was a pathos which I have no words to express; for my mother's meek, gentle, womanly soul, spoke there, so that it was as the Home of Home. The care with which she had transplanted from the Brick House, and lovingly arranged, all the humble memorials of old times, dear to her affections – the black silhouette of my father's profile cut in paper, in the full

pomp of academics, cap and gown, (how had he ever consented to sit for it!) framed and glazed in the place of honour over the little hearth; and boyish sketches of mine at the Hellenic Institute, first essays in sepia and Indian ink, to animate the walls, and bring her back, when she sate there in the twilight musing alone, to sunny hours when Sisty and the young mother threw daisies at each other; – and, covered with a great glass shade, and dusted each day with her own hand, the flower-pot Sisty had bought with the proceeds of the domino-box, on that memorable occasion on which he had learned "how bad deeds are repaired with good." There, in one corner, stood the little cottage piano, which I remembered all my life – old-fashioned, and with the jingling voice of approaching decrepitude, but still associated with such melodies as, after childhood, we hear never more! And in the modest hanging shelves which looked so gay with ribbons, and tassels, and silken cords – my mother's own library, saying more to the heart than all the cold wise poets whose souls my father invoked in his grand Heraclea. The Bible over which, with eyes yet untaught to read, I had hung in vague awe and love, as it lay open on my mother's lap, while her sweet voice, then only serious, was made the oracle of its truths. And my first lesson-books were there, all hoarded. And bound in blue and gold, but elaborately papered up, *Cowper's Poems*– a gift from my father in the days of courtship – sacred treasure which not even I had the privilege to touch; and which my mother took out only in the great crosses and trials of conjugal life, whenever some word

less kind than usual had dropped unawares from her scholar's absent lips. Ah! all these poor household gods, all seemed to look on me with mild anger; and from all came a voice to my soul, "Cruel, dost thou forsake us!" And amongst them sate my mother, desolate as Rachel, and weeping silently.

"Mother! mother!" I cried, falling on her neck, "forgive me, it is past, I cannot leave you!"

CHAPTER LXVIII

"No – no! it is for your good – Austin says so. Go – it is but the first shock."

Then to my mother I opened the sluices of that deep I had concealed from scholar and soldier. To her I poured all the wild, restless thoughts which wandered through the ruins of love destroyed – to her I confessed what to myself I had scarcely before avowed. And when the picture of that, the darker, side of my mind was shown, it was with a prouder face, and less broken voice, that I spoke of the manlier hopes and nobler aims that gleamed across the wrecks and the desert, and showed me my escape.

"Did you not once say, mother, that you had felt it like a remorse that my father's genius passed so noiselessly away, half accusing the happiness you gave him for the death of his ambition in the content of his mind? Did you not feel a new object in life when the ambition revived at last, and you thought you heard the applause of the world murmuring round your scholar's cell? Did you not share in the day-dreams your brother conjured up, and say, 'If *my* brother could be the means of raising *him* in the world!' and when you thought we had found the way to fame and fortune, did you not sob out from your full heart, 'And it is *my* brother who will pay back to *his* son – all – all he gave up for me?'"

"I cannot bear this, Sisty! – cease, cease!"

"No; for do you not yet understand me? Will it not be better still, if *your son*– yours – restore to your Austin all that he lost, no matter how? If through your son, mother, you do indeed make the world hear of your husband's genius – restore the spring to his mind, the glory to his pursuits – if you rebuild even that vaunted ancestral name, which is glory to our poor sonless Roland – if your son can restore the decay of generations, and reconstruct from the dust the whole house into which you have entered, its meek presiding angel – ah, mother, if this can be done, it will be your work; for unless you can share my ambition – unless you can dry those eyes, and smile in my face, and bid me go, with a cheerful voice – all my courage melts from my heart, and again I say I cannot leave you!"

Then my mother folded her arms round me, and we both wept, and could not speak – but we were both happy.

CHAPTER LXIX

Now the worst was over, and my mother was the most heroic of us all. So I began to prepare myself in good earnest; and I followed Trevanion's instructions with a perseverance, which I could never, at that young day, have thrown into the dead life of books. I was in a good school amongst our Cumberland sheepwalks, to learn those simple elements of rural art which belong to the pastoral state. Mr Sidney, in his admirable *Australian Hand-Book*, recommends young gentlemen who think of becoming settlers in the Bush to bivouac for three months on Salisbury Plain. That book was not then written, or I might have taken the advice; meanwhile I think, with due respect to such authority, that I went through a preparatory training quite as useful in seasoning the future emigrant. I associated readily with the kindly peasants and craftsmen, who became my teachers. With what pride I presented my father with a desk and my mother with a work-box, fashioned by my own hands! I made Bolt a lock for his plate-chest. And (that last was *my* magnum opus, my great masterpiece) I repaired and absolutely set going an old turret clock in the tower, that had stood at two P.M. since the memory of man. I loved to think, each time the hour sounded, that those who heard its deep chime would remember me. But the flocks were my main care. The sheep that I tended and helped to shear, and the lamb that I hooked out of the great marsh, and

the three venerable ewes that I nursed through a mysterious sort of murrain, which puzzled all the neighbourhood – are they not written in thy loving chronicles, O House of Caxton!

And now, since much of the success of my experiment must depend on the friendly terms I could establish with my intended partner, I wrote to Trevanion, begging him to get the young gentleman who was to join me, and whose capital I was to administer, to come and visit us. Trevanion complied, and there arrived a tall fellow somewhat more than six feet high, answering to the name of Guy Bolding, in a cut-away sporting-coat, with a dog-whistle tied to the button-hole; drab shorts and gaiters, and a waistcoat with all manner of strange furtive pockets. Guy Bolding had lived a year and a half at Oxford as a "fast man;" so "fast" had he lived that there was scarcely a tradesman at Oxford into whose books he had not contrived to run.

His father was compelled to withdraw him from the university, at which he had already had the honour of being plucked for the little go: and the young gentleman, on being asked for what profession he was fit, had replied with conscious pride, "That he could tool a coach!" In despair, the sire, who owed his living to Trevanion, had asked the statesman's advice, and the advice had fixed me with a partner in expatriation.

My first feeling, in greeting the fast man, was certainly that of deep disappointment and strong repugnance. But I was determined not to be too fastidious; and, having a lucky knack of suiting myself pretty well to all tempers, (without which a

man had better not think of loadstones in the great Australasian Bight,) I contrived, before the first week was out, to establish so many points of connexion between us that we became the best friends in the world. Indeed, it would have been my fault if we had not, for Guy Bolding, with all his faults, was one of those excellent creatures who are nobody's enemies but their own. His good humour was inexhaustible. Not a hardship or privation came amiss to him. He had a phrase "Such fun!" that always came to his lips when another man would have cursed and groaned. If we lost our way in the great trackless moors, missed our dinner, and were half-famished, Guy rubbed hands that would have felled an ox, and chuckled out "Such fun!" If we stuck in a bog, if we were caught in a thunderstorm, if we were pitched head over heels by the wild colts we undertook to break in, Guy Bolding's only elegy was "Such fan!" That grand shibboleth of philosophy only forsook him at the sight of an open book. I don't think that at that time, he could have found "fun" even in Don Quixote. This hilarious temperament had no insensibility; a kinder heart never beat, – but, to be sure, it beat to a strange, restless, tarantula sort of measure, which kept it in a perpetual dance. It made him one of those officiously good fellows who are never quiet themselves, and never let any one else be quiet if they can help it. But Guy's great fault, in this prudent world, was his absolute incontinence of money. If you had turned an Euphrates of gold into his pockets at morning, it would have been as dry as the great Sahara by twelve at noon.

What he did with the money was a mystery as much to himself as to every one else. His father said in a letter to me, that "he had seen him shying at sparrows with half-crowns!" That such a young man could come to no good in England, seemed perfectly clear. Still, it is recorded of many great men, who did not end their days in a workhouse, that they were equally non-retentive of money. Schiller, when he had nothing else to give away, gave the clothes from his back, and Goldsmith the blankets from his bed. Tender hands found it necessary to pick Beethoven's pockets at home before he walked out. Great heroes, who have made no scruple of robbing the whole world, have been just as lavish as poor poets and musicians. Alexander, in parcelling out his spoils, left himself "hope!" And as for Julius Cæsar, he was two millions in debt when he shied his last half-crown at the sparrows in Gaul. Encouraged by these illustrious examples, I had hopes of Guy Bolding; and the more as he was so aware of his own infirmity that he was perfectly contented with the arrangement which made me treasurer of his capital, and even besought me, on no account, let him beg ever so hard, to permit his own money to come in his own way. In fact, I contrived to gain a great ascendency over his simple, generous, thoughtless nature; and by artful appeals to his affections – to all he owed to his father for many bootless sacrifices, and to the duty of providing a little dower for his infant sister, whose meditated portion had half gone to pay his college debts – I at last succeeded in fixing into his mind an object to save for.

Three other companions did I select for our Cleruchia. The first was the son of our old shepherd, who had lately married, but was not yet encumbered with children, – a good shepherd, and an intelligent, steady fellow. The second was a very different character; he had been the dread of the whole squirearchy. A more bold and dexterous poacher did not exist. Now my acquaintance with this latter person, named Will Peterson, and more popularly "Will o' the Wisp," had commenced thus: – Bolt had managed to rear, in a small copse about a mile from the house – and which was the only bit of ground in my uncle's domains that might by courtesy be called "a wood" – a young colony of pheasants, that he dignified by the title of a "preserve." This colony was audaciously despoiled and grievously depopulated, in spite of two watchers who, with Bolt, guarded for seven nights successively the slumbers of the infant settlement. So insolent was the assault that bang, bang went the felonious gun – behind, before – within but a few yards of the sentinels – and the gunner was off, and the prey seized, before they could rush to the spot. The boldness and skill of the enemy soon proclaimed him, to the experienced watchers, to be Will o' the Wisp; and so great was the dread of this fellow's strength and courage, and so complete their despair of being a match for his swiftness and cunning, that after the seventh night the watchers refused to go out any longer; and poor Bolt himself was confined to his bed by an attack of what a doctor would have called rheumatism, and a moralist, rage. My indignation and sympathy were greatly excited by this

mortifying failure, and my interest romantically aroused by the anecdotes I had heard of Will o' the Wisp; accordingly, armed with a thick bludgeon, I stole out at night, and took my way to the copse. The leaves were not off the trees, and how the poacher contrived to see his victims I know not; but five shots did he fire, and not in vain, without allowing me to catch a glimpse of him. I then retreated to the outskirt of the copse, and waited patiently by an angle, which commanded two sides of the wood. Just as the dawn began to peep, I saw my man emerge within twenty yards of me. I held my breath, suffered him to get a few steps from the wood, crept on so as to intercept his retreat, and then pounce – such a bound! My hand was on his shoulder – prr, prr – no eel was ever more lubricate. He slid from me like a thing immaterial, and was off over the moors with a swiftness which might well have baffled any clodhopper – a race whose calves are generally absorbed in the soles of their hobnail shoes. But the Hellenic Institute, with its classical gymnasia, had trained its pupils in all bodily exercises; and though the Will o' the Wisp was swift for a clodhopper, he was no match at running for any youth who has spent his boyhood in the discipline of cricket, prisoner's bars, and hunt-the-hare. I reached him at length, and brought him to bay.

"Stand back," said he, panting, and taking aim with his gun; "it is loaded."

"Yes," said I; "but though you're a brave poacher, you dare not fire at your fellow man. Give up the gun this instant."

My address took him by surprise; he did not fire. I struck up the barrel, and closed on him. We grappled pretty tightly, and in the wrestle the gun went off. The man loosened his hold. "Lord ha' mercy, I have not hurt you!" he said falteringly.

"My good fellow – no," said I; "and now let us throw aside gun and bludgeon, and light it out like Englishmen, or else let us sit down and talk it over like friends."

The Will o' the Wisp scratched its head and laughed.

"Well, you're a queer one," quoth it. And the poacher dropped the gun and sate down.

We did talk it over, and I obtained Peterson's promise to respect the preserve henceforth, and we thereon grew so cordial that he walked home with me, and even presented me, shyly and apologetically, with the five pheasants he had shot. From that time I sought him out. He was a young fellow not four-and-twenty, who had taken to poaching from the wild sport of the thing, and from some confused notions that he had a license from Nature to poach. I soon found out that he was meant for better things than to spend six months of the twelve in prison, and finish his life on the gallows after killing a gamekeeper. That seemed to me his most probable destiny in the Old World, so I talked him into a burning desire for the New one: and a most valuable aid in the Bush he proved too.

My third selection was in a personage who could bring little physical strength to help us, but who had more mind (though with a wrong twist in it) than all the others put together.

A worthy couple in the village had a son, who being slight and puny, compared to the Cumberland breed, was shouldered out of the market of agricultural labour, and went off, yet a boy, to a manufacturing town. Now about the age of thirty, this mechanic, disabled for his work by a long illness, came home to recover; and in a short time we heard of nothing but the pestilential doctrines with which he was either shocking or infecting our primitive villagers. According to report, Corcyra itself never engendered a democrat more awful. The poor man was really very ill, and his parents very poor; but his unfortunate doctrines dried up all the streams of charity that usually flowed through our kindly hamlet. The clergyman (an excellent man, but of the old school) walked by the house as if it were tabooed. The apothecary said "Miles Square ought to have wine," but he did not send him any. The farmers held his name in execration, for he had incited all their labourers to strike for another shilling a-week. And but for the old tower, Miles Square would soon have found his way to the only republic in which he could obtain that democratic fraternisation for which he sighed – the grave being, I suspect, the sole commonwealth which attains that dead flat of social equality, that life in its every principle so heartily abhors.

My uncle went to see Miles Square, and came back the colour of purple. Miles Square had preached him a long sermon on the unholiness of war. "Even in defence of your king and country!" had roared the Captain; and Miles Square had replied with a remark upon kings, in general, that the Captain could not have

repeated without expecting to see the old tower fall about his ears; and with an observation about the country, in particular, to the effect that "the country would be much better off if it *were* conquered!" On hearing the report of these loyal and patriotic replies, my father said, "Papæ!" and, roused out of his usual philosophical indifference, went himself to visit Miles Square. My father returned as pale as my uncle had been purple. "And to think," said he mournfully, "that in the town whence this man comes, there are, he tells me, ten thousand other of God's creatures who speed the work of civilisation while execrating its laws!"

But neither father nor uncle made any opposition when, with a basket laden with wine and arrowroot, and a neat little Bible, bound in brown, my mother took her way to the excommunicated cottage. Her visit was as signal a failure as those that preceded it. Miles Square refused the basket; 'he was not going to accept alms, and eat the bread of charity;' and on my mother meekly suggesting that, 'if Mr Miles Square would condescend to look into the Bible, he would see that even charity was no sin in giver or recipient,' Mr Miles Square had undertaken to prove 'that, according to the Bible, he had as much a right to my mother's property as she had – that all things should be in common – and that, when things were in common, what became of charity? No; he could not eat my uncle's arrowroot, and drink his wine, while my uncle was improperly withholding from him and his fellow-creatures so many unprofitable acres: the land belonged

to the people.' It was now the turn of Pisistratus to go. He went once, and he went often. Miles Square and Pisistratus wrangled and argued – argued and wrangled – and ended by taking a fancy to each other; for this poor Miles Square was not half so bad as his doctrines. His errors arose from intense sympathy with the sufferings he had witnessed, amidst the misery which accompanies the reign of *millocratism*, and from the vague aspirations of a half-taught, impassioned, earnest nature. By degrees, I persuaded him to drink the wine and eat the arrowroot, *en attendant* that millennium which was to restore the land to the people. And then my mother came again and softened his heart, and, for the first time in his life, let into its cold crotchets the warm light of human gratitude. I lent him some books, amongst others a few volumes on Australia. A passage in one of the latter, in which it was said "that an intelligent mechanic usually made his way in the colony, even as a shepherd, better than a dull agricultural labourer," caught hold of his fancy, and seduced his aspirations into a healthful direction. Finally, as he recovered, he entreated me to let him accompany me. And as I may not have to return to Miles Square, I think it right here to state, that he did go with me to Australia, and did succeed, first as shepherd, and, on saving money, as landowner; and that, in spite of his opinions on the unholiness of war, he was no sooner in possession of a comfortable log homestead, than he defended it with uncommon gallantry against an attack of the aborigines, whose right to the soil was, to say the least of it, as good as his claim to my

uncle's acres; that he commemorated his subsequent acquisition of a fresh allotment, with the stock on it, by a little pamphlet, published at Sydney, on the *Sanctity of the Rights of Property*; and that, when I left the colony, having been much pestered by two refractory "helps" that he had added to his establishment, he had just distinguished himself by a very anti-levelling lecture upon the duties of servants to their employers. What would the Old World have done for this man!

CHAPTER LXX

I had not been in haste to conclude my arrangements, for, independently of my wish to render myself acquainted with the small useful crafts that might be necessary to me in a life that makes the individual man a state in himself, I naturally desired to habituate my kindred to the idea of our separation, and to plan and provide for them all such substitutes or distractions, in compensation for my loss, as my fertile imagination could suggest. And first, for the sake of Blanche, Roland, and my mother, I talked the Captain into reluctant sanction of his sister-in-law's proposal, to unite their incomes and share alike, without considering which party brought the larger proportion into the firm. I represented to him that, unless he made that sacrifice of his pride, my mother would be wholly without those little notable uses and objects – those small household pleasures – so dear to woman; that all society in the neighbourhood would be impossible, and that my mother's time would hang so heavily on her hands that her only resource would be to muse on the absent one and fret. Nay, if he persisted in so false a pride, I told him, fairly, that I should urge my father to leave the tower. These representations succeeded; and hospitality had commenced in the old hall, and a knot of gossips had centred round my mother – groups of laughing children had relaxed the still brow of Blanche – and the Captain himself was a more cheerful and social man.

My next point was to engage my father in the completion of the Great Book. "Ah, sir," said I, "give me an inducement to toil, a reward for my industry. Let me think, in each tempting pleasure, each costly vice – No, no; I will save for the Great Book! and the memory of the father shall still keep the son from error. Ah, look you, sir! Mr Trevanion offered me the loan of the £1500 necessary to commence with; but you generously and at once said – 'No; you must not begin life under the load of debt.' And I knew you were right, and yielded – yielded the more gratefully, that I could not but forfeit something of the just pride of manhood in incurring such an obligation to the father of – Miss Trevanion. Therefore I have taken that sum from you – a sum that would almost have sufficed to establish your younger and worthier child in the world for ever. To that child let me repay it, otherwise I will not take it. Let me hold it as a trust for the Great Book; and promise me that the Great Book shall be ready when your wanderer returns, and accounts for the missing talent."

And my father pished a little, and rubbed off the dew that had gathered on his spectacles. But I would not leave him in peace till he had given me his word that the Great Book should go on *à pas du géant*– nay, till I had seen him sit down to it with good heart, and the wheel went round again in the quiet mechanism of that gentle life.

Finally, and as the culminating acme of my diplomacy, I effected the purchase of the neighbouring apothecary's practice and good-will for Squills, upon terms which he willingly

subscribed to; for the poor man had pined at the loss of his favourite patients, though, Heaven knows, they did not add much to his income. And as for my father, there was no man who diverted him more than Squills, though he accused him of being a materialist, and set his whole spiritual pack of sages to worry and bark at him, from Plato and Zeno to Reid and Abraham Tucker.

Thus, although I have very loosely intimated the flight of time, more than a whole year elapsed from the date of our settlement at the tower and that affixed for my departure.

In the meanwhile, despite the rarity amongst us of that phenomenon a newspaper, we were not so utterly cut off from the sounds of the far-booming world beyond, but what the intelligence of a change in the administration, and the appointment of Mr Trevanion to one of the great offices of state, reached our ears. I had kept up no correspondence with Trevanion subsequent to the letter that occasioned Guy Bolding's visit; I wrote now to congratulate him: his reply was short and hurried.

Intelligence that startled me more, and more deeply moved my heart, was conveyed to me some three months or so before my departure, by Trevanion's steward. The ill health of Lord Castleton had deferred his marriage, intended originally to be celebrated as soon as he came of age. He left the university with the honours of "a double-first class;" and his constitution appeared to rally from the effects of studies more severe to him, than they might have been to a man of quicker and more

brilliant capacities – when a feverish cold, caught at a county meeting, in which his first public appearance was so creditable as fully to justify the warmest hopes of his party, produced inflammation of the lungs, and ended fatally. The startling contrast forced on my mind – here sudden death, and cold clay – there youth in its first flower, princely rank, boundless wealth, the sanguine expectation of an illustrious career, and the prospect of that happiness which smiled from the eyes of Fanny – that contrast impressed me with a strange awe: death seems so near to us when it strikes those whom life most flatters and caresses. Whence is that curious sympathy that we all have with the possessors of worldly greatness, when the hour-glass is shaken and the scythe descends? If the famous meeting between Diogenes and Alexander had taken place not before, but after, the achievements which gave to Alexander the name of Great, the cynic would not, perhaps, have envied the hero his pleasures or his splendours, the charms of Statira, or the tiara of the Mede; but if, the day after, a cry had gone forth, "Alexander the Great is dead!" verily I believe that Diogenes would have coiled himself up in his tub, and felt that, with the shadow of the stately hero, something of glory and of warmth had gone from that sun, which it should darken never more. In the nature of man, the humblest or the hardest, there is a something that lives in all of the Beautiful or the Fortunate, which hope and desire have appropriated, even in the vanities of a childish dream.

CHAPTER LXXI

"Why are you here all alone, cousin? How cold and still it is amongst the graves!"

"Sit down beside me, Blanche; it is not colder in the churchyard than on the village green."

And Blanche sate down beside me, nestled close to me, and leant her head upon my shoulder. We were both long silent. It was an evening in the early spring, clear and serene – the roseate streaks were fading gradually from the dark gray of long, narrow, fantastic clouds. Tall, leafless poplars, that stood in orderly level line, on the lowland between the churchyard and the hill, with its crown of ruins, left their sharp summits distinct against the sky. But the shadows coiled dull and heavy round the evergreens that skirted the churchyard, so that their outline was vague and confused; and there was a depth in their gloomy stillness, broken only when the thrush flew out from the lower bushes, and the thick laurel leaves stirred reluctantly, and again were rigid in repose. There is a certain melancholy in the evenings of early spring which is among those influences of nature the most universally recognised, the most difficult to explain. The silent stir of reviving life, which does not yet betray signs in the bud and blossom – only in a softer clearness in the air, a more lingering pause in the slowly lengthening day; a more delicate freshness and balm in the twilight atmosphere; a more lively yet still

unquiet note from the birds, settling down into their coverts; – the vague sense under all that hush, which still outwardly wears the bleak sterility of winter – of the busy change, hourly, momently, at work – renewing the youth of the world, reclothing with vigorous bloom the skeletons of things – all these messages from the heart of Nature to the heart of Man may well affect and move us. But why with melancholy? No thought on our part connects and construes the low, gentle voices. It is not *thought* that replies and reasons: it is *feeling* that hears and dreams. Examine not, O child of man! – examine not that mysterious melancholy with the hard eyes of thy reason; thou canst not impale it on the spikes of thy thorny logic, nor describe its enchanted circle by problems conned from thy schools. Borderer thyself of two worlds – the Dead and the Living – give thine ear to the tones, bow thy soul to the shadows, that steal, in the season of change, from the dim Border Land.

Blanche (*in a whisper*.) – What are you thinking of? – speak, pray!

Pisistratus. – I was not thinking, Blanche; or, if I were, the thought is gone at the mere effort to seize or detain it.

Blanche (*after a pause*.) – I know what you mean. It is the same with me often – so often, when I am sitting by myself, quite still. It is just like the story Primmins was telling us the other evening, how there was a woman in her village who saw things and people in a piece of crystal, not bigger than my hand:[2] they

[2] In primitive villages in the west of England, the belief that the absent may be

passed along as large as life, but they were only pictures in the crystal. Since I heard the story, when aunt asks me what I am thinking of, I long to say, "I'm not thinking! I am seeing pictures in the crystal!"

Pisistratus. – Tell my father that; it will please him. There is more philosophy in it than you are aware of, Blanche. There are wise men who have thought the whole world, "its pride, pomp, and circumstance," only a phantom image – a picture in the crystal.

Blanche. – And I shall see you – see us both, as we are sitting here – and that star which has just risen yonder – see it all in my crystal – when you are gone! – gone, cousin!

And Blanche's head drooped.

There was something so quiet and deep in the tenderness of this poor motherless child, that it did not affect one superficially, like a child's loud momentary affection, in which we know that the first toy will replace us. I kissed my little cousin's pale face, and said, "And I too, Blanche, have my crystal; and when I consult it, I shall be very angry if I see you sad and fretting, or seated alone. For you must know, Blanche, that that is all selfishness. God made us, not to indulge only in crystal pictures, weave idle fancies, pine alone, and mourn over what we cannot help – but to be alert and active – givers of happiness. Now,

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seen in a piece of crystal is, or was not many years ago, by no means an uncommon superstition. I have seen more than one of these magic mirrors, which Spenser, by the way, has beautifully described. They are about the size and shape of a swan's egg. It is not every one, however, who can be a crystal-seer; like second-sight, it is a special gift.

Blanche, see what a trust I am going to bequeath you. You are to supply my place to all whom I leave. You are to bring sunshine wherever you glide with that shy, soft step – whether to your father, when you see his brows knit and his arms crossed, (that, indeed, you always do,) or to mine, when the volume drops from his hand – when he walks to and fro the room, restless, and murmuring to himself – then you are to steal up to him, put your hand in his, lead him back to his books, and whisper, 'What will Sisty say if his younger brother, the Great Book, is not grown up when he comes back?' – And my poor mother, Blanche! – ah, how can I counsel you there – how tell you where to find comfort for her? Only, Blanche, steal into her heart and be her daughter. And, to fulfil this threefold trust, you must not content yourself with seeing pictures in the crystal – do you understand me?"

"Oh yes," said Blanche, raising her eyes, while the tears rolled from them, and folding her arms resolutely on her breast.

"And so," said I, "as we two, sitting in this quiet burial-ground, take new heart for the duties and cares of life, so see, Blanche, how the stars come out, one by one, to smile upon us, for they too, glorious orbs as they are, perform their appointed tasks. Things seem to approximate to God in proportion to their vitality and movement. Of all things, least inert and sullen should be the soul of man. How the grass grows up over the very graves – quickly it grows and greenly – but neither so quick and so green, my Blanche, as hope and comfort from human sorrows."

CHAPTER LXXII

There is a beautiful and singular passage in Dante, (which has not perhaps attracted the attention it deserves,) wherein the stern Florentine defends Fortune from the popular accusations against her. According to him, she is an angelic power appointed by the Supreme Being to direct and order the course of human splendours; she obeys the will of God; she is blessed, and, hearing not those who blaspheme her, calm and aloft amongst the other angelic powers, revolves her spheral course, and rejoices in her beatitude.[3]

This is a conception very different from the popular notion which Aristophanes, in his true instinct of things popular, expresses by the sullen lips of his Plutus. That deity accounts for his blindness by saying, that "when a boy he had indiscreetly promised to visit only the good," and Jupiter was so envious of the good that he blinded the poor money-god. Whereon Chremylus asks him, whether, "if he recovered his sight, he would frequent the company of the good?" "Certainly," quoth Plutus, "for I have not seen them ever so long." "Nor I either," rejoins Chremylus pithily, "for all I can see out of both eyes!"

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[3] Dante here evidently associates Fortune with the planetary influences of judicial astrology. It is doubtful whether Schiller ever read Dante, but in one of his most thoughtful poems, he undertakes the same defence of Fortune, making the Fortunate a part of the Beautiful.

But that misanthropical answer of Chremylus is neither here nor there, and only diverts us from the real question, and that is, "Whether Fortune be a heavenly, Christian angel, or a blind, blundering, old heathen deity?" For my part, I hold with Dante – for which, if I were so pleased, or if, at this period of my memoirs, I had half a dozen pages to spare, I could give many good reasons. One thing, however, is quite clear – that, whether Fortune be more like Plutus or an angel, it is no use abusing her – one may as well throw stones at a star. And I think if one looked narrowly at her operations, one might perceive that she gives every man a chance, at least once in his life; if he take and make the best of it, she will renew her visits; if not —*itur ad astra*! And therewith I am reminded of an incident quaintly narrated by Mariana in his "History of Spain," how the army of the Spanish kings got out of a sad hobble among the mountains at the pass of Losa, by the help of a shepherd, who showed them the way. "But," saith Mariana, parenthetically, "some do say the shepherd was an angel; for after he had shown the way, he was never seen more." That is, the angelic nature of the guide was proved by being only once seen, and disappearing after having got the army out of the hobble, leaving it to fight or run away, as it had most mind to. Now I look upon that shepherd, or angel, as a very good type of my fortune at least. The apparition showed me my way in the rocks to the great "Battle of Life;" after that, – hold fast and strike hard!

Behold me in London with Uncle Roland. My poor parents

naturally wished to accompany me, and take the last glimpse of the adventurer on board ship; but I, knowing that the parting would seem less dreadful to them by the hearthstone, and while they could say, "He is with Roland – he is not yet gone from the land" – insisted on their staying behind; and so the farewell was spoken. But Roland, the old soldier, had so many practical instructions to give – could so help me in the choice of the outfit, and the preparations for the voyage, that I could not refuse his companionship to the last. Guy Bolding, who had gone to take leave of his father, was to join me in town, as well as my humbler Cumberland colleagues.

As my uncle and I were both of one mind upon the question of economy, we took up our quarters at a lodging-house in the City; and there it was that I first made acquaintance with a part of London, of which few of my politer readers even pretend to be cognisant. I do not mean any sneer at the City itself, my dear alderman; that jest is worn out. I am not alluding to streets, courts, and lanes; what I mean may be seen at the west end, not so well as at the east, but still seen very fairly; I mean – the House-tops!

CHAPTER LXXIII

BEING A CHAPTER ON HOUSE-TOPS

The house-tops! what a soberising effect that prospect produces on the mind. But a great many requisites go towards the selection of the right point of survey. It is not enough to secure a lodging in the attic; you must not be fobbed off with a front attic that faces the street. First, your attic must be unequivocally a back attic; secondly, the house in which it is located must be slightly elevated above its neighbours; thirdly, the window must not lie slant on the roof, as is common with attics – in which case you only catch a peep of that leaden canopy which infatuated Londoners call the sky – but must be a window perpendicular, and not half blocked up by the parapets of that fosse called the gutter; and, lastly, the sight must be so humoured that you cannot catch a glimpse of the pavements: if you once see the world beneath, the whole charm of that world above is destroyed. Taking it for granted that you have secured these requisites, open your window, lean your chin on both hands, the elbows propped commodiously on the sill, and contemplate the extraordinary scene which spreads before you. You find it difficult to believe that life can be so tranquil on high, while it is so noisy and turbulent below. What astonishing stillness!

Eliot Warburton (seductive enchanter) recommends you to sail down the Nile if you want to lull the vexed spirit. It is easier and cheaper to hire an attic in Holborn! You don't have the crocodiles, but you have animals no less hallowed in Egypt – the cats! And how harmoniously the tranquil creatures blend with the prospect – how noiselessly they glide along at the distance, pause, peer about, and disappear. It is only from the attic that you can appreciate the picturesque which belongs to our domesticated tiger-kin! The goat should be seen on the Alps, and the cat on the house-top.

By degrees the curious eye takes the scenery in detail: and first, what fantastic variety in the heights and shapes of the chimney-pots! Some all level in a row, uniform and respectable, but quite uninteresting; others, again, rising out of all proportion, and imperatively tasking the reason to conjecture why they are so aspiring. Reason answers that it is but a homely expedient to give freer vent to the smoke; whereon Imagination steps in, and represents to you all the fretting, and fuming, and worry, and care, which the owners of that chimney, now the tallest of all, endured, before, by building it higher, they got rid of the vapours! You see the distress of the cook, when the sooty invader rushed down, "like a wolf on the fold," full spring on the Sunday joint. You hear the exclamations of the mistress, (perhaps a bride, – house newly furnished,) when, with white apron and cap, she ventured into the drawing-room, and was straightway saluted by a joyous dance of those monads, called vulgarly *smuts*.

You feel manly indignation at the brute of a bridegroom, who rushes out from the door, with the smuts dancing after him, and swears, "Smoked out again – By the Arch-smoker himself, I'll go and dine at the club!" All this might well have been, till the chimney-pot was raised a few feet nearer heaven; and now perhaps that long-suffering family owns the happiest home in the Row. Such contrivances to get rid of the smoke! It is not every one who merely heightens his chimney; others clap on the hollow tormentor all sorts of odd headgear and cowls. Here patent contrivances act the purpose of weathercocks, swaying to and fro with the wind; there others stand as fixed as if by a "*sic jubeo*" they had settled the business. But of all those houses that, in the street, one passes by, unsuspicious of what's the matter within, there is not one in a hundred but what there has been the devil to do, to cure the chimneys of smoking! At that reflection, Philosophy dismisses the subject; and decides that, whether one lives in a hut or a palace, the first thing to do is to look to the hearth – and get rid of the vapours.

New beauties demand us. What endless undulations in the various declivities and ascents: here a slant, there a zig-zag! With what majestic disdain yon roof rises up to the left! – Doubtless, a palace of Genii or Gin, (which last is the proper Arabic word for those builders of halls out of nothing, employed by Aladdin.) Seeing only the roof of that palace boldly breaking the skyline – how serene your contemplations! Perhaps a star twinkles over it, and you muse on soft eyes far away; while below, at the threshold

– No, phantoms, we see you not from our attic! Note, yonder, that precipitous fall – how ragged and jagged the roof-scene descends in a gorge. He who would travel on foot through the pass of that defile, of which we see but the picturesque summits, stops his nose, averts his eyes, guards his pockets, and hurries along through the squalor of the grim London lazzaroni. But seen *above*, what a noble break in the skyline! It would be sacrilege to exchange that fine gorge for a dead flat of dull roof-tops. Look here – how delightful! – that desolate house with no roof at all – gutted and skinned by the last London fire! You can see the poor green and white paper still clinging to the walls, and the chasm that once was a cupboard, and the shadows gathering black on the aperture that once was a hearth! Seen below, how quickly you would cross over the way! That great crack forbodes an avalanche; you would hold your breath, not to bring it down on your head. But seen *above*, what a compassionate inquisitive charm in the skeleton ruin! How your fancy runs riot – repeopling the chambers, hearing the last cheerful good-night of that destined Pompeii – creeping on tiptoe with the mother, when she gives her farewell look to the baby. Now all is midnight and silence; then the red, crawling serpent comes out. Lo! his breath; hark! his hiss. Now, spire after spire he winds and coils; now he soars up erect – crest superb, and forked tongue – the beautiful horror! Then the start from the sleep, and the doubtful awaking, and the run here and there, and the mother's rush to the cradle; the cry from the window, and the knock at the door, and

the spring of those on high towards the stair that leads to safety below, and the smoke rushing up like the surge of a hell! And they run back stifled and blinded, and the floor heaves beneath them like a bark on the sea. Hark! the grating wheels thundering low; near and near comes the engine. Fix the ladders! – there! there! at the window, where the mother stands with the babe! Splash and hiss comes the water; pales, then flares out, the fire: foe defies foe; element, element. How sublime is the war! But the ladder, the ladder! – there at the window! All else are saved: the clerk and his books; the lawyer, with that tin box of title-deeds; the landlord, with his policy of insurance; the miser, with his bank-notes and gold: all are saved – all, but the babe and the mother. What a crowd in the streets! how the light crimsons over the gazers, hundreds on hundreds! All those faces seem as one face, with fear. Not a man mounts the ladder. Yes, there – gallant fellow! God inspires – God shall speed thee! How plainly I see him! – his eyes are closed, his teeth set. The serpent leaps up, the forked tongue darts upon him, and the reek of the breath wraps him round. The crowd has ebbed back like a sea, and the smoke rushes over them all. Ha! what dim forms are those on the ladder? Near and nearer – crash come the roof-tiles. Alas, and alas! – no; a cry of joy – a "Thank heaven!" and the women force their way through the men to come round the child and the mother. All is gone, save that skeleton ruin. But here, the ruin is seen from *above*. O Art, study life from the roof-tops!

CHAPTER LXXIV

I was again foiled in seeing Trevanion. It was the Easter recess, and he was at the house of one of his brother ministers, somewhere in the north of England. But Lady Ellinor was in London, and I was ushered into her presence. Nothing could be more cordial than her manner, though she was evidently much depressed in spirits, and looked wan and careworn.

After the kindest inquiries relative to my parents, and the Captain, she entered with much sympathy into my schemes and plans, which she said that Trevanion had confided to her. The sterling kindness that belonged to my old patron (despite his affected anger at my not accepting his proffered loan) had not only saved me and my fellow-adventurer all trouble as to allotment orders, but procured advice, as to choice of site and soil, from the best practical experience, which we found afterwards exceedingly useful. And as Lady Ellinor gave me the little packet of papers with Trevanion's shrewd notes on the margin, she said with a half sigh, "Albert bids me say, that he wishes he were as sanguine of his success in the cabinet as of yours in the Bush." She then turned to her husband's rise and prospects, and her face began to change. Her eyes sparkled, the colour came to her cheeks – "But you are one of the few who know him," she said, interrupting herself suddenly; "you know how he sacrifices all things – joy, leisure, health – to his country.

There is not one selfish thought in his nature. And yet such envy – such obstacles still! and" (her eyes dropped on her dress, and I perceived that she was in mourning, though the mourning was not deep,) "and," she added, "it has pleased heaven to withdraw from his side one who would have been worthy his alliance."

I felt for the proud woman, though her emotion seemed more that of pride than sorrow. And perhaps Lord Castleton's highest merit in her eyes had been that of ministering to her husband's power and her own ambition. I bowed my head in silence, and thought of Fanny. Did she, too, pine for the lost rank, or rather mourn the lost lover?

After a time, I said hesitatingly, "I scarcely presume to condole with you, Lady Ellinor; yet, believe me, few things ever shocked me like the death you allude to. I trust Miss Trevanion's health has not much suffered. Shall I not see her before I leave England?"

Lady Ellinor fixed her keen bright eyes searchingly on my countenance, and perhaps the gaze satisfied her, for she held out her hand to me with a frankness almost tender, and said – "Had I had a son, the dearest wish of my heart had been to see you wedded to my daughter."

I started up – the blood rushed to my cheeks, and then left me pale as death. I looked reproachfully at Lady Ellinor, and the word "cruel" faltered on my lips.

"Yes," continued Lady Ellinor, mournfully, "that was my real thought, my impulse of regret, when I first saw you. But, as it

is, do not think me too hard and worldly, if I quote the lofty old French proverb, *Noblesse oblige*. Listen to me, my young friend, – we may never meet again, and I would not have your father's son think unkindly of me with all my faults. From my first childhood I was ambitious – not as women usually are, of mere wealth and rank – but ambitious as noble men are, of power and fame. A woman can only indulge such ambition by investing it in another. It was not wealth, it was not rank, that attracted me to Albert Trevanion; it was the nature that dispenses with the wealth, and commands the rank. Nay," continued Lady Ellinor, in a voice that slightly trembled, "I may have seen in my youth, before I knew Trevanion, one (she paused a moment, and went on hurriedly) – one who wanted but ambition to have realised my ideal. Perhaps, even when I married – and it was said for love – I loved less with my whole heart than with my whole mind. I may say this now, for *now* every beat of this pulse is wholly and only true to him with whom I have schemed, and toiled, and aspired; with whom I have grown as one; with whom I have shared the struggle, and now partake the triumph – realising the visions of my youth."

Again the light broke from the dark eyes of this grand daughter of the world, who was so superb a type of that moral contradiction —*an ambitious woman*.

"I cannot tell you," resumed Lady Ellinor, softening, "how pleased I was when you came to live with us. Your father has perhaps spoken to you of me, and of our first acquaintance?" —

Lady Ellinor paused abruptly, and surveyed me as she paused. I was silent.

"Perhaps, too, he has blamed me?" she resumed, with a heightened colour.

"He never blamed you, Lady Ellinor!"

"He had a right to do so – though I doubt if he would have blamed me on the true ground. Yet, no; he never could have done me the wrong that your uncle did, when, long years ago, Mr de Caxton in a letter – the very bitterness of which disarmed all anger – accused me of having trifled with Austin – nay, with himself! And *he*, at least, had *no* right to reproach me," continued Lady Ellinor warmly, and with a curve of her haughty lip, "for if I felt interest in his wild thirst for some romantic glory, it was but in the hope that, what made the one brother so restless, might at least wake the other to the ambition that would have become his intellect, and aroused his energies. But these are old tales of follies and delusions now no more: only this will I say, that I have ever felt in thinking of your father, and even of your sterner uncle, as if my conscience reminded me of a debt which I longed to discharge – if not to them, to their children. So when we knew you, believe me that your interests, your career, instantly became to me an object. But, mistaking you – when I saw your ardent industry bent on serious objects, and accompanied by a mind so fresh and buoyant; and, absorbed as I was in schemes or projects far beyond a woman's ordinary province of hearth and home – I never dreamed, while you were

our guest – never dreamed of danger to you or Fanny. I wound you, pardon me; but I must vindicate myself. I repeat that, if we had a son to inherit our name, to bear the burthen which the world lays upon those who are born to influence the world's destinies, there is no one to whom Trevanion and myself would sooner have intrusted the happiness of a daughter. But my daughter is the sole representative of the mother's line, of the father's name: it is not her happiness alone that I have to consult, it is her duty – duty to her birthright, to the career of the noblest of England's patriots – duty, I may say, without exaggeration, to the country for the sake of which that career is run!"

"Say no more, Lady Ellinor; say no more. I understand you. I have no hope – I never had hope – it was a madness – it is over. It is but as a friend that I ask again, if I may see Miss Trevanion in your presence, before – before I go alone into this long exile. Ay, look in my face – you cannot fear my resolution, my honour, my truth. But once, Lady Ellinor, but once more! Do I ask in vain?"

Lady Ellinor was evidently much moved. I bent down almost in the attitude of kneeling; and, brushing away her tears with one hand, she laid the other on my head tenderly, and said in a very low voice —

"I entreat you not to ask me; I entreat you not to see my daughter. You have shown that you are not selfish – conquer yourself still. What if such an interview, however guarded you might be, were but to agitate, unnerve my child, unsettle her peace, prey upon" —

"Oh, do not speak thus – she did not share my feelings!"

"Could her mother own it if she did? Come, come, remember how young you both are. When you return, all these dreams will be forgotten; then we can meet as before – then I will be your second mother, and again your career shall be my care; for do not think that we shall leave you so long in this exile as you seem to forbode. No, no; it is but an absence – an excursion – not a search after fortune. Your fortune – confide that to us when you return!"

"And I am to see her no more?" I murmured, as I rose, and went silently towards the window to conceal my face. The great struggles in life are limited to moments. In the drooping of the head upon the bosom – in the pressure of the hand upon the brow – we may scarcely consume a second in our threescore years and ten; but what revolutions of our whole being may pass within us, while that single sand drops noiseless down to the bottom of the hour-glass.

I came back with a firm step to Lady Ellinor, and said calmly, "My reason tells me that you are right, and I submit. Forgive me! and do not think me ungrateful, and over proud, if I add, that you must leave me still the object in life that consoles and encourages me through all."

"What object is that?" asked Lady Ellinor, hesitatingly.

"Independence for myself, and ease to those for whom life is still sweet. This is my twofold object; and the means to effect it must be my own heart and my own hands. And now convey all my

thanks to your noble husband, and accept my warm prayers for yourself and *her*– whom I will not name. Farewell, Lady Ellinor."

"No, do not leave me so hastily; I have many things to discuss with you – at least to ask of you. Tell me how your father bears his reverse? – tell me, at least, if there is aught he will suffer us to do for him? There are many appointments in Trevanion's range of influence that would suit even the wilful indolence of a man of letters. Come, be frank with me!"

I could not resist so much kindness; so I sat down, and, as collectedly as I could, replied to Lady Ellinor's questions, and sought to convince her that my father only felt his losses so far as they affected me, and that nothing in Trevanion's power was likely to tempt him from his retreat, or calculated to compensate for a change in his habits. Turning at last from my parents, Lady Ellinor inquired for Roland, and, on learning that he was with me in town, expressed a strong desire to see him. I told her I would communicate her wish, and she then said thoughtfully —

"He has a son, I think, and I have heard that there is some unhappy dissension between them."

"Who could have told you that?" I asked in surprise, knowing how closely Roland had kept the secret of his family afflictions.

"Oh, I heard so from some one who knew Captain Roland – I forget when and where I heard it – but is it not the fact?"

"My uncle Roland has no son."

"How!"

"His son is dead."

"How such a loss must grieve him!"

I did not speak.

"But is he sure that his son is dead! What joy if he were mistaken – if the son yet lived!"

"Nay, my uncle has a brave heart, and he is resigned; – but, pardon me, have you heard anything of that son?"

"I! – what should I hear? I would fain learn, however, from your uncle himself, what he might like to tell me of his sorrows – or if, indeed, there be any chance that" —

"That – what?"

"That – that his son still survives."

"I think not," said I; "and I doubt whether you will learn much from my uncle. Still there is something in your words that belies their apparent meaning, and makes me suspect that you know more than you will say."

"Diplomatist!" said Lady Ellinor, half smiling; but then, her face settling into a seriousness almost severe, she added, "It is terrible to think that a father should hate his son!"

"Hate! – Roland *hate* his son! What calumny is this?"

"He does not do so, then! Assure me of that; I shall be so glad to know that I have been misinformed."

"I can tell you this, and no more – for no more do I know – that if ever the soul of a father were wrapt up in a son – fear, hope, gladness, sorrow, all reflected back on a father's heart from the shadows on a son's life – Roland was that father while the son lived still."

"I cannot disbelieve you," exclaimed Lady Ellinor, though in a tone of surprise. "Well, do let me see your uncle."

"I will do my best to induce him to visit you, and learn all that you evidently conceal from me."

Lady Ellinor evasively replied to this insinuation, and shortly afterwards I left that house in which I had known the happiness that brings the folly, and the grief that bequeaths the wisdom.

CHAPTER LXXV

I had always felt a warm and almost filial affection for Lady Ellinor, independently of her relationship to Fanny, and of the gratitude with which her kindness inspired me: for there is an affection very peculiar in its nature, and very high in its degree, which results from the blending of two sentiments not often allied, – viz., pity and admiration. It was impossible not to admire the rare gifts and great qualities of Lady Ellinor, and not to feel pity for the cares, anxieties, and sorrows which tormented one who, with all the sensitiveness of woman, went forth into the rough world of man.

My father's confession had somewhat impaired my esteem for Lady Ellinor, and had left on my mind the uneasy impression that she *had* trifled with his deep, and Roland's impetuous, heart. The conversation that had just passed allowed me to judge her with more justice – allowed me to see that she had really shared the affection she had inspired in the student, but that ambition had been stronger than love – an ambition, it might be, irregular and not strictly feminine, but still of no vulgar nor sordid kind. I gathered, too, from her hints and allusions, her true excuse for Roland's misconception of her apparent interest in himself: she had but seen, in the wild energies of the elder brother, some agency by which to arouse the serener faculties of the younger. She had but sought, in the strange comet that flashed before her,

to fix a lever that might move the star. Nor could I withhold my reverence from the woman who, not being married precisely from love, had no sooner linked her nature to one worthy of it, than her whole life became as fondly devoted to her husband's as if he had been the object of her first romance and her earliest affections. If even her child was so secondary to her husband – if the fate of that child was but regarded by her as one to be rendered subservient to the grand destinies of Trevanion – still it was impossible to recognise the error of that conjugal devotion without admiring the wife, though one might condemn the mother. Turning from these meditations, I felt a lover's thrill of selfish joy, amidst all the mournful sorrow comprised in the thought that I should see Fanny no more. Was it true as Lady Ellinor implied, though delicately, that Fanny still cherished a remembrance of me – which a brief interview, a last farewell, might re-awaken too dangerously for her peace? Well, that was a thought that it became me not to indulge.

What could Lady Ellinor have heard of Roland and his son? Was it possible that the lost lived still? Asking myself these questions, I arrived at our lodgings, and saw the Captain himself before me, busied with the inspection of sundry specimens of the rude necessaries an Australian adventurer requires. There stood the old soldier, by the window, examining narrowly into the temper of hand-saw and tenor-saw, broad axe and drawing-knife; and as I came up to him, he looked at me from under his black brows, with gruff compassion, and said peevishly —

"Fine weapons these for the son of a gentleman! – one bit of steel in the shape of a sword were worth them all."

"Any weapon that conquers fate is noble in the hands of a brave man, uncle!"

"The boy has an answer for everything," quoth the Captain, smiling, as he took out his purse and paid the shopman.

When we were alone, I said to him – "Uncle, you must go and see Lady Ellinor; she desires me to tell you so."

"Pshaw!"

"You will not?"

"No!"

"Uncle, I think that she has something to say to you with regard to – to – pardon me! – to my cousin."

"To Blanche?"

"No, no – to the cousin I never saw."

Roland turned pale, and, sinking down on a chair, faltered out – "To him – to my son!"

"Yes; but I do not think it is news that will afflict you. Uncle, are you sure that my cousin is dead?"

"What! – how dare you! – who doubts it? Dead – dead to me for ever! Boy, would you have him live to dishonour these gray hairs!"

"Sir, sir, forgive me – uncle, forgive me: but, pray, go to see Lady Ellinor; for whatever she has to say, I repeat that I am sure it will be nothing to wound you."

"Nothing to wound me – yet relate to *him*!"

It is impossible to convey to the reader the despair that was in those words.

"Perhaps," said I, after a long pause, and in a low voice – for I was awestricken – "perhaps – if he be dead – he may have repented of all offence to you before he died."

"Repented! – ha, ha!"

"Or, if he be not dead" —

"Hush, boy – hush!"

"While there is life, there is hope of repentance."

"Look you, nephew," said the Captain, rising and folding his arms resolutely on his breast – "look you, I desired that that name might never be breathed. I have not cursed my son yet; could he come to life – the curse might fall! You do not know what torture your words have given me, just when I had opened my heart to another son, and found that son in you! With respect to the lost, I have now but one prayer, and you know it – the heartbroken prayer – that his name never more may come to my ears!"

As he closed these words, to which I ventured no reply, the Captain took long disordered strides across the room; and suddenly, as if the space imprisoned, or the air stifled him, he seized his hat, and hastened into the streets. Recovering my surprise and dismay, I ran after him; but he commanded me to leave him to his own thoughts, in a voice so stern, yet so sad, that I had no choice but to obey. I knew, by my own experience, how necessary is solitude in the moments when grief is strongest and thought most troubled.

CHAPTER LXXVI

Hours elapsed, and the Captain had not returned home. I began to feel uneasy, and went forth in search of him, though I knew not whither to direct my steps. I thought it, however, at least probable, that he had not been able to resist visiting Lady Ellinor, so I went first to St James's Square. My suspicions were correct; the Captain had been there two hours before. Lady Ellinor herself had gone out shortly after the Captain left. While the porter was giving me this information, a carriage stopped at the door, and a footman, stepping up, gave the porter a note and a small parcel, seemingly of books, saying simply, "From the Marquis of Castleton." At the sound of that name I turned hastily, and recognised Sir Sedley Beaudesert seated in the carriage, and looking out of the window with a dejected, moody expression of countenance, very different from his ordinary aspect, except when the rare sight of a gray hair, or a twinge of the toothache, reminded him that he was no longer twenty-five. Indeed, the change was so great that I exclaimed, dubiously – "Is that Sir Sedley Beaudesert?" The footman looked at me, and touching his hat said, with a condescending smile, – "Yes, sir – now the Marquis of Castleton."

Then, for the first time since the young lord's death, I remembered Sir Sedley's expressions of gratitude to Lady Castleton, and the waters of Ems, for having saved him from

"that horrible marquisate." Meanwhile, my old friend had perceived me, exclaiming, —

"What, Mr Caxton! I am delighted to see you. Open the door, Thomas. Pray come in, come in."

I obeyed; and the new Lord Castleton made room for me by his side.

"Are you in a hurry?" said he; "if so, shall I take you anywhere? – if not, give me half an hour of your time, while I drive to the City."

As I knew not now in what direction, more than another, to prosecute my search for the Captain, and as I thought I might as well call at our lodgings to inquire if he had not returned, I answered that I should be very happy to accompany his lordship; "though the City," said I, smiling, "sounds to me strange upon the lips of Sir Sedley – I beg pardon, I should say of Lord – "

"Don't say any such thing; let me once more hear the grateful sound of Sedley Beaudesert. Shut the door, Thomas; to Gracechurch Street – Messrs Fudge and Fidget."

The carriage drove on.

"A sad affliction has befallen me," said the marquis, "and none sympathise with me!"

"Yet all, even unacquainted with the late lord, must have felt shocked at the death of one so young, and so full of promise."

"So fitted in every way to bear the burthen of the great Castleton name and property, and yet you see it killed him! Ah! if he had been but a simple gentleman, or if he had had less

conscientious desire to do his duties, he would have lived to a good old age. I know what it is already. Oh, if you saw the piles of letters on my table! I positively dread the post. Such colossal improvements on the property which the poor boy had begun, for me to finish. What do you think takes me to Fudge and Fidget's? Sir, they are the agents for an infernal coal mine which my cousin had reopened in Durham, to plague my life out with another thirty thousand pounds a-year! How am I to spend the money? – how am I to spend it! There's a cold-blooded head steward, who says that charity is the greatest crime a man in high station can commit; it demoralises the poor. Then, because some half-a-dozen farmers sent me a round-robin, to the effect that their rents were too high, and I wrote them word the rents should be lowered, there was such a hullabaloo – you would have thought heaven and earth were coming together. 'If a man in the position of the Marquis of Castleton set the example of letting land below its value, how could the poorer squires in the county exist? – or, if they did exist, what injustice to expose them, to the charge that they were grasping landlords, vampires, and bloodsuckers. Clearly, if Lord Castleton lowered his rents, (they were too low already,) he struck a mortal blow at the property of his neighbours, if they followed his example; or at their character, if they did not.' No man can tell how hard it is to do good, unless fortune gives him a hundred thousand pounds a-year, and says, – 'Now, do good with it!' Sedley Beaudesert might follow his whims, and all that would be said against him would be,

'Good-natured, simple fellow!' But if Lord Castleton follow his whims, you would think he was a second Catiline – unsettling the peace, and undermining the prosperity, of the entire nation!" Here the wretched man paused, and sighed heavily; then, as his thoughts wandered into a new channel of woe, he resumed, – "Ah, if you could but see the forlorn great house I am expected to inhabit, cooped up between dead walls, instead of my pretty rooms, with the windows full on the park; and the balls I am expected to give, and the parliamentary interest I am to keep up; and the villanous proposal made to me to become a lord steward, or lord chamberlain, because it suits my rank to be a sort of a servant. Oh, Pisistratus! you lucky dog – not twenty-one, and with, I dare say, not two hundred pounds a-year in the world!"

Thus bemoaning and bewailing his sad fortunes, the poor marquis ran on, till at last he exclaimed, in a tone of yet deeper despair, —

"And everybody says I must marry, too! – that the Castleton line must not be extinct! The Beaudeserts are a good old family eno' – as old, for what I know, as the Castletons; but the British empire would suffer no loss if they sank into the tomb of the Capulets. But that the Castleton peerage should expire, is a thought of crime and woe, at which all the mothers of England rise in a phalanx! And so, instead of visiting the sins of the fathers on the sons, it is the father that is to be sacrificed for the benefit of the third and fourth generation!"

Despite my causes for seriousness, I could not help laughing;

my companion turned on me a look of reproach.

"At least," said I, composing my countenance, "Lord Castleton has one comfort in his afflictions – if he must marry, he may choose as he pleases."

"That is precisely what Sedley Beaudesert could, and Lord Castleton cannot do," said the marquis gravely. "The rank of Sir Sedley Beaudesert was a quiet and comfortable rank – he might marry a curate's daughter, or a duke's – and please his eye or grieve his heart as the caprice took him. But Lord Castleton must marry, not for a wife, but for a marchioness, – marry some one who *will wear his rank* for him, – take the trouble of splendour off his hands, and allow him to retire into a corner, and dream that he is Sedley Beaudesert once more! Yes, it must be so – the crowning sacrifice must be completed at the altar. But a truce to my complaints. Trevanion informs me you are going to Australia, – can that be true?"

"Perfectly true."

"They say there is a sad want of ladies there."

"So much the better, – I shall be all the more steady."

"Well, there's something in that. Have you seen Lady Ellinor?"

"Yes – this morning."

"Poor woman! – a great blow to her – we have tried to console each other. Fanny, you know, is staying at Oxton, in Surrey, with Lady Castleton, – the poor lady is so fond of her – and no one has comforted her like Fanny."

"I was not aware that Miss Trevanion was out of town."

"Only for a few days, and then she and Lady Ellinor join Trevanion in the north – you know he is with Lord N – , settling measures on which – but alas, they consult me now on those matters – force their secrets on me. I have, heaven knows how many votes! Poor me! Upon my word, if Lady Ellinor was a widow, I should certainly make up to her: very clever woman – nothing bores her." (The marquis yawned – Sir Sedley Beaudesert never yawned.) "Trevanion has provided for his Scotch secretary, and is about to get a place in the Foreign Office for that young fellow Gower, whom, between you and me, I don't like. But he has bewitched Trevanion!"

"What sort of a person is this Mr Gower? – I remember you said that he was clever, and good-looking."

"He is both, but it is not the cleverness of youth; he is as hard and sarcastic as if he had been cheated fifty times, and jilted a hundred! Neither are his good looks that letter of recommendation which a handsome face is said to be. He has an expression of countenance very much like that of Lord Hertford's pet bloodhound, when a stranger comes into the room. Very sleek, handsome dog, the bloodhound is certainly – well-mannered, and I dare say exceedingly tame; but still you have but to look at the corner of the eye, to know that it is only the habit of the drawing-room that suppresses the creature's constitutional tendency to seize you by the throat, instead of giving you a paw. Still this Mr Gower has a very striking head – something about it Moorish or Spanish, like a picture by Murillo: I half suspect

that he is less a Gower than a gipsy!"

"What!" – I cried, as I listened with rapt and breathless attention to this description. "He is then very dark, with high narrow forehead, features slightly aquiline, but very delicate, and teeth so dazzling that the whole face seems to sparkle when he smiles – though it is only the lip that smiles, not the eye."

"Exactly as you say; you have seen him, then?"

"Why, I am not sure, since you say his name is Gower."

"*He* says his name is Gower," returned Lord Castleton, drily, as he inhaled the Beaudesert mixture.

"And where is he now? – with Mr Trevanion?"

"Yes, I believe so. Ah! here we are – Fudge and Fidget! But perhaps," added Lord Castleton, with a gleam of hope in his blue eye, – "perhaps they are not at home!"

Alas, that was an illusive "imagining," as the poets of the nineteenth century unaffectedly express themselves. Messrs Fudge and Fidget were never out to such clients as the Marquis of Castleton: with a deep sigh, and an altered expression of face, the Victim of Fortune slowly descended the steps of the carriage.

"I can't ask you to wait for me," said he; "heaven only knows how long I shall be kept! Take the carriage where you will, and send it back to me."

"A thousand thanks, my dear lord, I would rather walk – but you will let me call on you before I leave town."

"Let you! – I insist on it. I am still at the old quarters, under pretence," said the marquis, with a sly twinkle of the eyelid, "that

Castleton House wants painting!"

"At twelve to-morrow, then?"

"Twelve to-morrow. Alas! that's just the hour at which Mr Screw, the agent for the London property, (two squares, seven streets, and a lane!) is to call."

"Perhaps two o'clock will suit you better?"

"Two! – just the hour at which Mr Plausible, one of the Castleton members, insists upon telling me why his conscience will not let him vote with Trevanion!"

"Three o'clock?"

"Three! – just the hour at which I am to see the Secretary of the Treasury, who has promised to relieve Mr Plausible's conscience! But come and dine with me – you will meet the executors to the will!"

"Nay, Sir Sedley – that is, my dear lord – I will take my chance, and look in, after dinner."

"Do so; my guests are not lively! What a firm step the rogue has! Only twenty, I think – twenty! and not an acre of property to plague him!" So saying, the marquis dolorously shook his head, and vanished through the noiseless mahogany doors, behind which Messrs Fudge and Fidget awaited the unhappy man, – with the accounts of the great Castleton coal mine.

CHAPTER LXXVII

On my way towards our lodgings, I resolved to look in at a humble tavern, in the coffee-room of which the Captain and myself habitually dined. It was now about the usual hour in which we took that meal, and he might be there waiting for me. I had just gained the steps of this tavern, when a stage coach came rattling along the pavement, and drew up at an inn of more pretensions than that which we favoured, situated within a few doors of the latter. As the coach stopped, my eye was caught by the Trevanion livery, which was very peculiar. Thinking I must be deceived, I drew near to the wearer of the livery, who had just descended from the roof, and, while he paid the coachman, gave his orders to a waiter who emerged from the inn – "Half-and-half, cold without!" The tone of the voice struck me as familiar, and, the man now looking up, I beheld the features of Mr Peacock. Yes, unquestionably it was he. The whiskers were shaved – there were traces of powder in the hair or the wig – the livery of the Trevanions (ay, the very livery – crestbutton, and all) upon that portly figure, which I had last seen in the more august robes of a beadle. But Mr Peacock it was – Peacock travestied, but Peacock still. Before I had recovered my amaze, a woman got out of a cabriolet, which seemed to have been in waiting for the arrival of the coach, and, hurrying up to Mr Peacock, said in the loud impatient tone common to the fairest of the fair sex,

when in haste – "How late you are – I was just going. I must get back to Oxton to-night."

Oxton – Miss Trevanion was staying at Oxton! I was now close behind the pair – I listened with my heart in my ear.

"So you shall, my dear – so you shall; just come in, will you."

"No, no; I have only ten minutes to catch the coach. Have you any letter for me from Mr Gower? How can I be sure, if I don't see it under his own hand, that" —

"Hush!" said Peacock, sinking his voice so low that I could only catch the words, "no names, letter, pooh, I'll tell you." He then drew her apart, and whispered to her for some moments. I watched the woman's face, which was bent towards her companion's, and it seemed to show quick intelligence. She nodded her head more than once, as if in impatient assent to what was said; and, after a shaking of hands, hurried off to the cab; then, as if a thought struck her, she ran back, and said —

"But in case my lady should not go – if there's any change of plan?"

"There'll be no change, you may be sure: Positively to-morrow – not too early; you understand?"

"Yes, yes; good-by" – and the woman, who was dressed with a quiet neatness, that seemed to stamp her profession as that of an abigail, (black cloak, with long cape – of that peculiar silk which seems spun on purpose for ladies'-maids – bonnet to match, with red and black ribbons,) hastened once more away, and in another moment the cab drove off furiously.

What could all this mean? By this time the waiter brought Mr Peacock the half-and-half. He despatched it hastily, and then strode on towards a neighbouring stand of cabriolets. I followed him; and just as, after beckoning one of the vehicles from the stand, he had ensconced himself therein, I sprang up the steps and placed myself by his side. "Now, Mr Peacock," said I, "you will tell me at once how you come to wear that livery, or I shall order the cabman to drive to Lady Ellinor Trevanion's, and ask her that question myself."

"And who the devil! – Ah, you're the young gentleman that came to me behind the scenes – I remember."

"Where to, sir?" asked the cabman.

"To – to London Bridge," said Mr Peacock.

The man mounted the box, and drove on.

"Well, Mr Peacock, I wait your answer. I guess by your face that you are about to tell me a lie; I advise you to speak the truth."

"I don't know what business you have to question me," said Mr Peacock sullenly; and, raising his glance from his own clenched fists, he suffered it to wander over my form with so vindictive a significance that I interrupted the survey by saying, "Will you encounter the house? as the Swan interrogatively puts it – shall I order the cabman to drive to St James's Square?"

"Oh, you know my weak point, sir; any man who can quote Will – sweet Will – has me on the hip," rejoined Mr Peacock, smoothing his countenance, and spreading his palms on his knees. "But if a man does fall in the world, and, after keeping

servants of his own, is obliged to be himself a servant,

> – 'I will not shame
> To tell you what I am.'"

"The Swan says, 'To tell you what I *was*,' Mr Peacock. But enough of this trifling: who placed you with Mr Trevanion?"

Mr Peacock looked down for a moment, and then, fixing his eyes on me, said – "Well, I'll tell you: you asked me, when we met last, about a young gentleman – Mr – Mr Vivian."

Pisistratus. – Proceed.

Peacock. – I know you don't want to harm him. Besides, "He hath a prosperous art," and one day or other, – mark my words, or rather my friend Will's —

> "He will bestride this narrow world
> Like a Colossus."

Upon my life he will – like a Colossus,

> "And we petty men – "

Pisistratus (*savagely*.) – Go on with your story.

Peacock (*snappishly*.) – I am going on with it! You put me out; where was I – oh – ah yes. I had just been sold up – not a penny in my pocket; and if you could have seen my coat – yet that was better than the small-clothes! Well, it was in Oxford Street – no, it was in the Strand, near the Lowther —

> "The sun was in the heavens; and the proud day
> Attended, with the pleasures of the world."

Pisistratus, (*lowering the glass.*) – To St James's Square?

Peacock. – No, no; to London Bridge.

"How use doth breed a habit in a man!"

I will go on – honour bright. So I met Mr Vivian, and as he had known me in better days, and has a good heart of his own, he says —

"Horatio, – or I do forget myself."

Pisistratus puts his hand on the check-string.

Peacock. – I mean, (*correcting himself*) – "Why, Johnson, my good fellow."

Pisistratus. – Johnson! – oh that's your name – not Peacock.

Peacock. – Johnson and Peacock both, (*with dignity.*) When you know the world as I do, sir, you will find that it is ill travelling this "naughty world" without a change of names in your portmanteau.

"Johnson," says he, "my good fellow," and he pulled out his purse. "Sir," said I, "if, 'exempt from public haunt,' I could get something to do when this dross is gone. In London there are sermons in stones, certainly, but not 'good in everything,' – an observation I should take the liberty of making to the Swan, if he were not now, alas! 'the baseless fabric of a vision.'"

Pisistratus. – Take care!

Peacock – (*hurriedly.*) – Then says Mr Vivian, "If you don't mind wearing a livery, till I can provide for you more suitably, my old friend, there's a vacancy in the establishment of Mr

Trevanion." Sir, I accepted the proposal, and that's why I wear this livery.

Pisistratus. – And, pray, what business had you with that young woman, whom I take to be Miss Trevanion's maid? – and why should she come from Oxton to see you?

I had expected that these questions would confound Mr Peacock, but if there really were anything in them to cause embarrassment, the *ci-devant* actor was too practised in his profession to exhibit it. He merely smiled, and smoothing jauntily a very tumbled shirt-front, he said, "Oh sir, fie!

> 'Of this matter,
> Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made.'

If you must know my love affairs, that young woman is, as the vulgar say, my sweetheart."

"Your sweetheart!" I exclaimed, greatly relieved, and acknowledging at once the probability of the statement. "Yet," I added suspiciously – "yet, if so, why should she expect Mr Gower to write to her?"

"You're quick of hearing, sir; but though

> 'All adoration, duty, and observance;
> All humbleness, and patience, and impatience,'

the young woman will not marry a livery servant – proud creature, very proud! – and Mr Gower, you see, knowing how it was, felt for me, and told her, if I may take such liberty with the

Swan, that she should

> – 'Never lie by Johnson's side
> With an unquiet soul,'

for that he would get me a place in the Stamps! The silly girl said she would have it in black and white – as if Mr Gower would write to her!"

"And now, sir," continued Mr Peacock, with a simpler gravity, "you are at liberty, of course, to say what you please to my lady, but I hope you'll not try to take the bread out of my mouth because I wear a livery, and am fool enough to be in love with a waiting-woman – I, sir, who could have married ladies who have played the first parts in life – on the metropolitan stage."

I had nothing to say to these representations – they seemed plausible; and though at first I had suspected that the man had only resorted to the buffoonery of his quotations in order to gain time for invention, or to divert my notice from any flaw in his narrative, yet at the close, as the narrative seemed probable, so I was willing to believe that the buffoonery was merely characteristic. I contented myself therefore with asking —

"Where do you come from now?"

"From Mr Trevanion, in the country, with letters to Lady Ellinor?"

"Oh, and so the young woman knew you were coming to town?"

"Yes, sir; some days ago. Mr Trevanion told me the day I should have to start."

"And what do you and the young woman propose doing to-morrow, if there is no change of plan?"

Here I certainly thought there was a slight, scarce perceptible, alteration in Mr Peacock's countenance, but he answered readily, "To-morrow? a little assignation, if we can both get out; —

> 'Woo me, now I am in a holiday humour,
> And like enough to consent.'

Swan again, sir!"

"Humph! – so then Mr Gower and Mr Vivian are the same person."

Peacock hesitated. "That's not *my* secret, sir; 'I am combined by a sacred vow.' You are too much the gentleman to peep through the blanket of the dark, and to ask me, who wear the whips and stripes – I mean the plush small-clothes and shoulder-knots – the secrets of another gent, to whom 'my services are bound.'"

How a man past thirty foils a man scarcely twenty! – what superiority the mere fact of living-on gives to the dullest dog! I bit my lip, and was silent.

"And," pursued Mr Peacock, "if you knew how the Mr Vivian you inquired after loves you"! When I told him incidentally, how a young gentleman had come behind the scenes to inquire after him, he made me describe you, and then said, quite mournfully, 'If ever I am what I hope to become, how happy I shall be to shake that kind hand once more,' – very words, sir! – honour bright!

'I think there's ne'er a man in Christendom
Can lesser hide his hate or love than he.'

And if Mr Vivian has some reason to keep himself concealed still – if his fortune or ruin depend on your not divulging his secret for awhile – I can't think you are the man he need fear. 'Pon my life, as the Swan touchingly exclaims. I dare swear that was a wish often on the Swan's lips in the privacy of his domestic life!"

'I wish I was as sure of a good dinner,'

My heart was softened, not by the pathos of the much profaned and desecrated Swan, but by Mr Peacock's unadorned repetition of Vivian's words; I turned my face from the sharp eyes of my companion – the cab now stopped at the foot of London Bridge.

I had no more to ask, yet still there was some uneasy curiosity in my mind, which I could hardly define to myself, – was it not jealousy? Vivian, so handsome and so daring —*he* at least might see the great heiress; Lady Ellinor perhaps thought of no danger there. But – I – I was a lover still, and – nay, such thoughts were folly indeed!

"My man," said I to the ex-comedian, "I neither wish to harm Mr Vivian (if I am so to call him,) nor you who imitate him in the variety of your names. But I tell you, fairly, that I do not like your being in Mr Trevanion's employment, and I advise you to get out of it as soon as possible. I say nothing more as yet, for I

shall take time to consider well what you have told me."

With that I hastened away, and Mr Peacock continued his solitary journey over London Bridge.

CHAPTER LXXVIII

Amidst all that lacerated my heart, or tormented my thoughts, that eventful day, I felt at least one joyous emotion, when, on entering our little drawing-room, I found my uncle seated there.

The Captain had placed before him on the table a large Bible, borrowed from the landlady. He never travelled, to be sure, without his own Bible, but the print of that was small, and the Captain's eyes began to fail him at night. So this was a Bible with large type; and a candle was placed on either side of it; and the Captain leant his elbows on the table, and both his hands were tightly clasped upon his forehead – tightly, as if to shut out the tempter, and *force* his whole soul upon the page.

He sate, the image of iron courage; in every line of that rigid form there was resolution. "I will *not* listen to my heart; I *will* read the Book, and learn to suffer as becomes a Christian man."

There was such a pathos in the stern sufferer's attitude, that it spoke those words as plainly as if his lips had said them.

Old soldier! thou hast done a soldier's part in many a bloody field; but if I could make visible to the world thy brave soldier's soul, I would paint thee as I saw thee then! – Out on this tyro's hand!

At the movement I made, the Captain looked up, and the strife he had gone through was written upon his face.

"It has done me good," said he simply, and he closed the book.

I drew my chair near to him, and hung my arm over his shoulder.

"No cheering news then?" asked I in a whisper.

Roland shook his head, and gently laid his finger on his lips.

CHAPTER LXXIX

It was impossible for me to intrude upon Roland's thoughts, whatever their nature, with a detail of those circumstances which had roused in me a keen and anxious interest in things apart from his sorrow.

Yet, as "restless I roll'd around my weary bed," and revolved the renewal of Vivian's connexion with a man of character so equivocal as Peacock, the establishment of an able and unscrupulous tool of his own in the service of Trevanion, the care with which he had concealed from me his change of name, and his intimacy at the very house to which I had frankly offered to present him; the familiarity which his creature had contrived to effect with Miss Trevanion's maid, the words that had passed between them – plausibly accounted for, it is true, yet still suspicious – and, above all, my painful recollections of Vivian's reckless ambition, and unprincipled sentiments – nay, the effect that a few random words upon Fanny's fortune, and the luck of winning an heiress, had sufficed to produce upon his heated fancy and audacious temper: when all these thoughts came upon me, strong and vivid, in the darkness of night, I longed for some confidant, more experienced in the world than myself, to advise me as to the course I ought to pursue. Should I warn Lady Ellinor? But of what? – the character of a servant, or the designs of the fictitious Gower? Against the first I could say, if

nothing very positive, still enough to make it prudent to dismiss him. But of Gower or Vivian, what could I say without, not indeed betraying his confidence – for that he had never given me – but without belying the professions of friendship that I myself had lavishly made to him? Perhaps, after all, he might have disclosed whatever were his real secrets to Trevanion; and, if not, I might indeed ruin his prospects by revealing the aliases he assumed. But wherefore reveal, and wherefore warn? Because of suspicions that I could not myself analyse – suspicions founded on circumstances most of which had already been seemingly explained away? Still, when morning came, I was irresolute what to do; and after watching Roland's countenance, and seeing on his brow so great a weight of care, that I had no option but to postpone the confidence I pined to place in his strong understanding and unerring sense of honour, I wandered out, hoping that in the fresh air I might re-collect my thoughts, and solve the problem that perplexed me. I had enough to do in sundry small orders for my voyage, and commissions for Bolding, to occupy me some hours. And, this business done, I found myself moving westward; mechanically, as it were, I had come to a kind of half-and-half resolution to call upon Lady Ellinor, and question her, carelessly and incidentally, both about Gower and the new servant admitted to the household.

Thus I found myself in Regent Street, when a carriage, borne by post-horses, whirled rapidly over the pavement – scattering to the right and left all humbler equipages – and hurried, as if on an

errand of life and death, up the broad thoroughfare leading into Portland Place. But, rapidly as the wheels dashed by, I had seen distinctly the face of Fanny Trevanion in the carriage, and that face wore a strange expression, which seemed to me to speak of anxiety and grief; and, by her side – was not that the woman I had seen with Peacock? I did not see the face of the woman, but I thought I recognised the cloak, the bonnet, and peculiar turn of the head. If I could be mistaken there, I was not mistaken at least as to the servant on the seat behind. Looking back at a butcher's boy, who had just escaped being run over, and was revenging himself by all the imprecations the Diræ of London slang could suggest, the face of Mr Peacock was exposed in full to my gaze.

My first impulse, on recovering my surprise, was to spring after the carriage; in the haste of that impulse, I cried "Stop!" But the carriage was out of sight in a moment, and my word was lost in air. After pausing for a moment, full of presentiments of some evil – I knew not what – I then altered my course, and stopped not till I found myself, panting and out of breath, in St James's Square – at the door of Trevanion's house – in the hall. The porter had a newspaper in his hand as he admitted me.

"Where is Lady Ellinor? I must see her instantly."

"No worse news of master, I hope, sir?"

"Worse news of what? – of whom? – of Mr Trevanion?"

"Did you not know he was suddenly taken ill, sir; that a servant came express to say so last night. Lady Ellinor went off at ten o'clock to join him."

"At ten o'clock last night?"

"Yes, sir; the servant's account alarmed her ladyship so much."

"The new servant, who had been recommended by Mr Gower?"

"Yes, sir – Henry," answered the porter staring at me. "Please, sir, here is an account of master's attack in the paper. I suppose Henry took it to the office before he came here, which was very wrong in him; but I am afraid he's a very foolish fellow."

"Never mind that, Miss Trevanion – I saw her just now —*she* did not go with her mother; Where was she going, then?"

"Why, sir – but pray step into the parlour."

"No, no – speak."

"Why, sir, before Lady Ellinor set out, she was afraid that there *might* be something in the papers to alarm Miss Trevanion, and so she sent Henry down to Lady Castleton's, to beg her ladyship to make as light of it as she could; but it seems that Henry blabbed the worst to Mrs Mole, – "

"Who is Mrs Mole?"

"Miss Trevanion's maid, sir – a new maid; and Mrs Mole blabbed to my young lady, and so she took fright, and insisted on coming to town. And Lady Castleton, who is ill herself in bed, could not keep her, I suppose – especially as Henry said, though he ought to have known better, 'that she would be in time to arrive before my lady set off.' Poor Miss Trevanion was so disappointed when she found her mamma gone. And then she would order fresh horses, and would go on, though Mrs Bates

(the housekeeper, you know, sir) was very angry with Mrs Mole, who encouraged Miss; and – "

"Good heavens! Why did not Mrs Bates go with her?"

"Why, sir, you know how old Mrs Bates is, and my young lady is always so kind that she would not hear of it, as she is going to travel night and day; and Mrs Mole said she had gone all over the world with her last lady, and that – "

"I see it all. Where is Mr Gower?"

"Mr Gower, sir!"

"Yes! Can't you answer?"

"Why, with Mr Trevanion, I believe, sir."

"In the north – what is the address?"

"Lord N – , C – Hall, near W – "

I heard no more.

The conviction of some villanous snare struck me as with the swiftness and force of lightning. Why, if Trevanion were really ill, had the false servant concealed it from me? Why suffered me to waste his time, instead of hastening to Lady Ellinor? How, if Mr Trevanion's *sudden* illness had brought the man to London – how had he known so long beforehand (as he himself told me, and his appointment with the waiting woman proved) the day he should arrive? Why now, if there were no design of which Miss Trevanion was the object – why so frustrate the provident foresight of her mother, and take advantage of the natural yearning of affection, the quick impulse of youth, to hurry off a girl whose very station forbade her to take such a

journey without suitable protection – against what must be the wish, and what clearly were the instructions, of Lady Ellinor? Alone, – worse than alone! Fanny Trevanion was then in the hands of two servants, who were the instruments and confidants of an adventurer like Vivian; and that conference between those servants – those broken references to the morrow, coupled with the name Vivian had assumed – needed the unerring instincts of love more cause for terror – terror the darker, because the exact shape it should assume was obscure and indistinct?

I sprang from the house.

I hastened into the Haymarket, summoned a cabriolet, drove home as fast as I could (for I had no money about me for the journey I meditated;) sent the servant of the lodging to engage a chaise-and-four, rushed into the room, where Roland fortunately still was, and exclaimed – "Uncle, come with me! – take money, plenty of money! – Some villany I know, though I cannot explain it, has been practised on the Trevanions. We may defeat it yet. I will tell you all by the way – come, come!"

"Certainly. But villany! – and to people of such a station – pooh – collect yourself. Who is the villain?"

"Oh, the man I have loved as a friend – the man whom I myself helped to make known to Trevanion. – Vivian – Vivian!"

"Vivian! – ah, the youth I have heard you speak of. But how? – villany to whom – to Trevanion?"

"You torture me with your questions. Listen – this Vivian (I know him) – he has introduced into the house, as a servant, an

agent capable of any trick and fraud; that servant has aided him to win over her maid – Fanny's – Miss Trevanion's. Miss Trevanion is an heiress, Vivian an adventurer. My head swims round, I cannot explain now. Ha! I will write a line to Lord Castleton – tell him my fears and suspicions – he will follow us, I know, or do what is best."

I drew ink and paper towards me, and wrote hastily. My uncle came round and looked over my shoulder.

Suddenly he exclaimed, seizing my arm, "Gower, Gower. What name is this? You said 'Vivian.'"

"Vivian or Gower – the same person."

My uncle hurried out of the room. It was natural that he should leave me to make our joint and brief preparations for departure.

I finished my letter, sealed it, and when, five minutes afterwards, the chaise came to the door, I gave it to the ostler who accompanied the horses, with injunctions to deliver it forthwith to Lord Castleton himself.

My uncle now descended, and walked from the threshold with a firm stride. "Comfort yourself," he said, as he entered the chaise, into which I had already thrown myself. "We may be mistaken yet."

"Mistaken! You do not know this young man. He has every quality that could entangle a girl like Fanny, and not, I fear, one sentiment of honour that would stand in the way of his ambition. I judge him now as by a revelation – too late – oh Heavens, if it be too late!"

A groan broke from Roland's lips. I heard in it a proof of his sympathy with my emotion, and grasped his hand; it was as cold as the hand of the dead.

THE ROMANCE OF RUSSIAN HISTORY.[4]

Professor Shaw, in the preface to his translation of Lajetchnikoff's striking and interesting romance, *The Heretic*, notices the shyness of English novelists in approaching Russian ground. "How happens it," he says, "that Russia, with her reminiscences of two centuries and a half of Tartar dominion – of her long and bloody struggles with the Ottoman and the Pole, whose territories stretch almost from the arctic ice to the equator, and whose semi-oriental diadem bears inscribed upon it such names as Peter and Catherine – should have been passed over as incapable of supplying rich materials for fiction and romance?" The question is hard to answer, and appears doubly so after reading the third volume of Monsieur A. Blanc's recent work on political conspiracies and executions, – a volume sufficient of itself to set those romance-writing who never wrote romance before. It is a trite remark, that romances, having history for their groundwork, derive their attraction and interest far more from the skill and genius of their authors than from the importance of the period selected, and from the historical prominence of

[4] *Histoire des Conspirations et des Executions Politiques, comprenant l'Histoire des Sociétés Secrètes depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à nos jours.* Par A. Blanc. 4 Vols. Volume the Third: Russia.

the characters introduced. It is unnecessary to name writers in whose hands a Bayard or a du Guesclin, a Cromwell or a Charles of Sweden, would appear tame and commonplace. Our readers need not to be reminded of others of a different stamp, – and of one, great amongst all, the rays of whose genius have formed a halo of grandeur, glory, or fascination around persons to whom history accords scarcely a word. But such genius is not of every-day growth; and to historical romance-writers of the calibre of most of those with whom the British public is now fain to cry content, the mere devising of a plot, uniting tolerable historical fidelity with some claim to originality, is an undertaking in which they are by no means uniformly successful. To such we recommend, as useful auxiliaries, M. Blanc's octavos, and especially the one that suggests the present article. English and Scottish histories, if not used up, have at least been very handsomely worked, and have fairly earned a little tranquillity upon their shelves: the wars of the Stuarts, in particular, have contributed more than their quota to the literary fund. The same may be said of the history of France, so fertile in striking events, and so largely made use of by purveyors to the circulating libraries. Italy and Spain, and even Poland, have not escaped; whilst the East has been disported over in every direction by the accomplished Morier, and a swarm of imitators and inferiors. But what Englishman has tried his hand at a Russian historical romance? We strive in vain to call to mind an original novel in our language founded on incidents of Russian history – although the

history of scarcely any nation in the world includes, in the same space of time, a greater number of strange and extraordinary events.

M. Blanc's book, notwithstanding a certain air of pretension in the style of its getting up, in the very mediocre illustrations, and in the tone of the introductory pages, is substantially an unassuming performance. It is a compilation, and contains little that is not to be found printed elsewhere. At the same time, perhaps in no other work are the same events and details thrown together in so compact and entertaining a form. The author troubles us with few comments of his own, and his reserve in this respect enhances the merit of his book, for when he departs from it his views are somewhat strained and ultra-French. But his narrative is spiritedly put together; and although it will be found, upon comparison, that he has, for the most part, faithfully adhered to high historical authorities, to the exclusion of mere traditionary matter and of imaginative embellishment, yet the dramatic interest of the subject is itself so vivid, that the book reads like a romance.

The Russian history, even to our own day, is a sanguinary and cruel chronicle. Its brevity is its best excuse. The youth of the country extenuates the crimes of its children. For if the strides of Russia have been vast and rapid in the paths of civilisation, we must bear in mind that it is but very recently the progress began. "At the commencement of the eighteenth century," says M. Blanc, "it had certainly been very difficult to foresee that fifty

years later a magnificent and polite court would be established on the Gulf of Finland; that soldiers raised on the banks of the Volga and the Don would rank with the best disciplined troops; and that an empire, of itself larger than all the rest of Europe, would have passed from a state of barbarism to one of civilisation as advanced as that of the most favoured European states." This is overshooting the mark, and is an exaggeration even a hundred years after the date assigned. If the civilisation of St Petersburg has for some time vied with that of London or Paris, Russia, as a country, has even now much to do before she can be placed on a footing with England or France in refinement and intellectual cultivation. It is difficult to institute a comparison in a case where the nature of the countries, the characters of the nations, and the circumstances of their rise, are, and have been, so dissimilar. The investigation might easily entail a disquisition of a length that would leave very little room for an examination of the book in hand. And all that we seek in the present instance to establish will be readily conceded – namely, that in the throes of a country accomplishing with unprecedented rapidity the passage, usually so gradual, from barbarism to civilisation, some palliation is to be found for the faults and vices of her nobles and rulers, and for the blood-stains disfiguring her annals.

The early history of Russia, from the foundation of the empire by Rurik to the reign of Ivan IV. – that is to say from the middle of the ninth to the middle of the sixteenth century – is a chaos of traditions and uncertainties, which M. Blanc has deemed

unfavourable to the project of his book, and which he accordingly passes over in an introductory chapter. His business, as may be gathered from his title-page, is with the internal convulsions of the country; and these are difficult to trace, until Ivan Vassilivitch threw off the Tartar yoke, and his grandson Ivan IV., surnamed the Tyrant, or the Terrible, began, with an iron hand, it is true, to labour at the regeneration of his country. A bloodthirsty despot, Russia yet owes him much. The people, demoralised by Tartar rule, needed rigid laws and severe treatment. Ivan promulgated a code far superior to any previously in use. He invited to Russia foreign mechanics, artists, and men of science; established the first printing-press seen in the country; and laid the foundation of Russian trade, by a treaty of commerce with our own Elizabeth. By the conquest of Kazan, of the kingdom of Astracan, and of districts adjacent to the Caucasus, he extended the limits of the Russian empire. But his wise enactments and warlike successes were sullied by atrocious acts of cruelty. In Novogorod, which had offended him by its desires for increased liberty, he raged for six weeks like an incensed tiger. Sixty thousand human beings, according to some historians, fell victims on that occasion. Similar scenes of butchery were enacted in Tver, Moscow, and other cities. His cruel disposition was evident at a very early age. He was but thirteen years old when he assembled his boyarins to inform them that he needed not their guidance, and would no longer submit to their encroachments on his royal prerogative. "I ought to punish you all," he said, "for all of you

have been guilty of offences against my person; but I will be indulgent, and the weight of my anger shall fall only on Andrew Schusky, who is the worst amongst you." Schusky, the head of a family which had seized the reins of government during the Czar's minority, endeavoured to justify himself. Ivan would not hear him. "Seize and bind him," cried the boy-despot, "and throw him to my dogs. They have a right to the repast." A pack of ferocious hounds, which Ivan took pleasure in rearing, were brought under the window, and irritated by every possible means. When they were sufficiently exasperated, Andrew Schusky was thrown amongst them. His cries increased their fury, and his body was torn to shreds and devoured.

Ivan dead, his son Feodor, who should have been surnamed the Feeble, as his father was the Terrible, ascended the Russian throne. He was the last of Rurik's descendants who occupied it. Even during his reign he recognised as regent of the empire his brother-in-law, the insolent and ambitious Boris Godunof. Possessed of the real power, this man coveted the external pomp of royalty. The crown was his aim, and to its possession after the death of Feodor, who, as weak of body as of mind, was not likely to be long-lived, only one obstacle existed. This was a younger son of Ivan IV., a child of a few years old, named Dmitri or Demetrius. The existence of this infant was a slight bar to one so unscrupulous as Godunof, a bar which a poniard soon removed. Feodor died, and his brother-in-law accepted, with much show of reluctance, the throne he had so

long desired to fill. For the first time for many years he breathed freely; his end was attained; he thought not of the many crimes that had led to it, of the spilt blood of his child-victim, or of that of two hundred of the inhabitants of Ouglitch, judicially murdered by his orders in revenge of the death of Demetrius' assassins, whom the people had risen upon and slain; the tears of Ivan's widow, now childless and confined in a convent, and of her whole family, condemned to a horrible captivity, troubled not his repose or his dreams of future prosperity. But whilst he exulted in security and splendour, his joy was suddenly troubled by a strange retribution. Demetrius was dead; of that there could be no doubt; his emissary's dagger had done the work too surely – but the name of the rightful heir survived to make the usurper tremble. It is curious to observe in how many details Godunof's own crimes contributed to his punishment. His manœuvres to suppress the facts of Demetrius' death, by stopping couriers and falsifying despatches, so as to make it appear that the young prince had killed himself with a knife in a fit of epilepsy, had thrown a sort of mystery and ambiguity over the whole transaction, favourable to the designs and pretensions of impostors. One of the many dark deeds by which he had paved his way to the supreme power was the removal of the metropolitan of the Russian church, who was deposed and shut up in a convent, where it was pretty generally believed he met a violent death. In lieu of this dignitary, previously the sole chief of the Russian church, Godunof created a patriarchate, and

Jeremiah of Constantinople went to Moscow to install the first patriarch, whose name was Job. This prelate, whilst visiting the convent of Tchudof, was struck by the intelligence of a young monk named Gregory Otrepief or Atrepief, who could read, then a rare accomplishment, and who showed great readiness of wit. The patriarch took this youth into his service as secretary, and often carried him with him when he went to visit the Czar. Dazzled by the brilliancy of the court, and perceiving the ignorance and incapacity of many high personages, Otrepief conceived the audacious design of elevating himself above those to whom he felt himself already far superior in ability. He was acquainted with the details of the death of young Demetrius; and from some old servants of the Czarina Mary he obtained particulars of the character, qualities, and tastes of the deceased prince, all of which he carefully noted down, as well as the names and titles of the officers and attendants who had been attached to his person. Having prepared and studied his part, he asked leave to return to his convent. This was granted. His fellow-monks wondered to see him thus abandon the advantageous prospects held out to him by the favour of the patriarch.

"What should I become by remaining at court?" replied Otrepief, with a laugh: "a bishop at most, and I mean to be Czar of Moscow."

At first this passed as a joke; but Otrepief, either through bravado, or because it formed part of his scheme, repeated it so often, that it at last came to the ears of the Czar himself,

who said the monk must be mad. At the same time, as he knew by experience that the usurpation of the throne was not an impossible thing, he ordered, as an excessive precaution, that the boaster should be sent to a remote convent. Otrepief set out, but on the road he seduced his escort, consisting of two monks. By large promises he prevailed with them to accompany him to Lithuania, where many enemies of Godunof had taken refuge. According to the custom of the times, the travellers passed the nights in roadside monasteries, and in every cell that he occupied Otrepief wrote upon the walls – "I am Demetrius, son of Ivan IV. Although believed to be dead, I escaped from my assassins. When I am upon my father's throne I will recompense the generous men who now show me hospitality." Soon the report spread far and wide that the Czarowitz Demetrius lived, and had arrived in Lithuania. Otrepief assumed a layman's dress, left his monkish adherents – one of whom agreed to bear the name his leader now renounced – and presented himself as the son of Ivan IV. to the Zaporian Cossacks, amongst whom he soon acquired the military habits and knowledge which he deemed essential to the success of his daring schemes. After a campaign or two, which, judging from the character of his new associates, were probably mere brigand-like expeditions in quest of pillage, Otrepief resumed the cowl, and entered the service of a powerful noble named Vichnevetski, whom he knew to have been greatly attached to Ivan IV. Pretending to be dangerously ill, he asked for a confessor. After receiving absolution: "I am about to die,"

he said to the priest; "and I entreat you, holy father, to have me buried with the honours due to the son of the Czar." The priest, a Jesuit, (the Jesuits were then all-powerful in Poland) asked the meaning of these strange words, which Otrepief declined telling, but said they would be explained after his death by a letter beneath his pillow. This letter the astonished Jesuit took an opportunity to purloin, and at the same time he perceived on the sick man's breast a gold cross studded with diamonds – a present received by Otrepief when secretary to the patriarch. In all haste the Jesuit went to Vichnevetski; they opened the letter, and gathered from its contents that he who had presented himself to them as a poor monk was no other than Demetrius, son of Ivan IV. Vichnevetski had in his service two Russians who had been soldiers of Ivan. Led to the sick man's bedside, these declared that they perfectly recognised in him the Czarowitz Demetrius; first, by his features – although they had not seen him since his childhood – and afterwards by two warts upon his face, and by an inequality in the length of his arms.

The Jesuits, never negligent of opportunities to increase their power, saw in the pretender to the czardom a fit instrument for the propagation of Romanism in Russia. They enlisted Sigismund king of Poland in the cause of the false Demetrius, who was treated as a prince, and lodged in a palace. Thence he negotiated with the pope's nuncio, who gave him assurance of the support of all Catholic Europe in exchange for his promise to unite Russia to the Latin church. An army of Poles and Russian

refugees was raised, and the southern provinces of Russia were inundated with florid proclamations, in which the joys of an earthly paradise were offered to all who espoused the cause of their legitimate sovereign, Demetrius. The Don Cossacks, whose robberies had been recently checked by Godunof, flocked to the pretender's banner, and so formidable was the army thus collected, that the Czar began heartily to regret having paid such small attention to the words of the monk Otrepief. The Ukraine declared for the self-styled son of Ivan IV.; the voevóda of Sandomir, whose daughter he had promised to marry, acknowledged him as his prince; towns submitted, and fortresses opened their gates to the impostor, now in full march upon Moscow. Blinded by success, Otrepief fancied himself invincible; and, with scarcely fifteen thousand soldiers, he hurried to meet the Muscovite army, fifty thousand strong, and provided with a formidable artillery. Beaten, his undisciplined forces dispersed, and he himself escaped death by a miracle; but his courage was still undaunted. After a few days, during which he slept upon the snow, and subsisted upon a few grains of barley, he succeeded in rallying his scattered bands. These became the nucleus of a new army; and at the very moment that Godunof, rejoicing at his victory, prepared to chastise the nobles compromised in the rebellion, he heard that his enemy was again afoot, more formidable than ever. Furious at the news, the Czar addressed reproaches and menaces to his generals, whom he thus completely alienated; and thenceforth he was surrounded by

enemies. A sudden illness soon afterwards carried him off, giving him scarcely time to proclaim his son Feodor his successor. Court and clergy, people and army, paid homage to the young Czar. Amongst others, the general-in-chief of the army took the oath of fidelity; but no sooner was he again at the head of his troops, than he negotiated with Otrepief, and went over to him with all his forces. A few days afterwards the pretender was in Moscow. He strangled Feodor, and proclaimed himself Czar. Never had an impostor played his part with greater skill and such complete success. He had the art even to obtain his recognition from Ivan's widow. He recalled her relations, exiled since Godunof's usurpation, restored them their property and loaded them with honours, and then sent word to Mary that he would be to her a good son or a severe master, as she chose. The Czarina acknowledged him as her son, and was present at his coronation.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.