VARIOUS

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Содержание

THE CAXTONS. – PART VII 5
CHAPTER XXVI 5
CHAPTER XXVII 10
CHAPTER XXVIII 14
CHAPTER XXIX 16
CHAPTER XXX. 17
CHAPTER XXXI. 20
CHAPTER XXXII. 22
CHAPTER XXXIII 25
CHAPTER XXXIV 26
POLITICAL ECONOMY, BY J. S. MILL. 4 27
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. 38

Various
Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Vol. 64 No. 396 October 1848

THE CAXTONS. – PART VII

CHAPTER XXVI

Saith Dr Luther, "When I saw Dr Gode begin to tell his puddings hanging in the chimney, I told him he would not live long!"

I wish I had copied that passage from "The Table Talk" in large round hand, and set it before my father at breakfast, the morn preceding that fatal eve in which Uncle Jack persuaded him to tell his puddings.

Yet, now I think of it, Uncle Jack hung the puddings in the chimney, – but he did not persuade my father to tell them.

Beyond a vague surmise that half the suspended "tomacula" would furnish a breakfast to Uncle Jack, and that the youthful appetite of Pisistratus would despatch the rest, my father did not give a thought to the nutritious properties of the puddings, – in other words, to the two thousand pounds which, thanks to Mr Tibbets, dangled down the chimney. So far as the great work was concerned, my father only cared for its publication, not its profits. I will not say that he might not hunger for praise, but I am quite sure that he did not care a button for pudding. Nevertheless, it was an infaust and sinister augury for Augustine Caxton, the very appearance, the very suspension and danglement of any puddings whatsoever, right over his ingle-nook, when those puddings were made by the sleek hands of Uncle Jack! None of the puddings which he, poor man, had all his life been stringing, whether from his own chimneys, or the chimneys of other people, had turned out to be real puddings, – they had always been the *eidola*, the *erscheinungen*, the phantoms and semblances of puddings. I question if Uncle Jack knew much about Democritus of Abdera. But he was certainly tainted with the philosophy of that fanciful sage. He peopled the air with images of colossal stature, which impressed all his dreams and divinations, and from whose influences came his very sensations and thoughts. His whole being, asleep or waking, was thus but the reflection of great phantom puddings!

As soon as Mr Tibbets had possessed himself of the two volumes of the "History of Human Error," he had necessarily established that hold upon my father which hitherto those lubricate hands of his had failed to effect. He had found what he had so long sighed for in vain, his *point d'appui*, wherein to fix the Archimedean screw. He fixed it tight in the "History of Human Error," and moved the Caxtonian world.

A day or two after the conversation recorded in my last chapter, I saw Uncle Jack coming out of the mahogany doors of my father's banker; and, from that time, there seemed no reason why Mr Tibbets should not visit his relations on week-days as well as Sundays. Not a day, indeed, passed but what he held long conversations with my father. He had much to report of his interviews with the publishers. In these conversations he naturally recurred to that grand idea of the "Literary Times" which had so dazzled my poor father's imagination; and having heated the iron, Uncle Jack was too knowing a man not to strike while it was hot.

When I think of the simplicity my wise father exhibited in this crisis of his life, I must own that I am less moved by pity than admiration for that poor great-hearted student. We have seen that out of the learned indolence of twenty years, the ambition which is the instinct of a man of genius

had emerged; the serious preparation of the great book for the perusal of the world, had insensibly restored the charms of that noisy world on the silent individual. And therewith came a noble remorse that he had hitherto done so little for his species. Was it enough to write quartos upon the past history of Human Error? Was it not his duty, when the occasion was fairly presented, to enter upon that present, daily, hourly, war with Error – which is the sworn chivalry of Knowledge? St George did not dissect dead dragons, he fought the live one. And London, with that magnetic atmosphere which in great capitals fills the breath of life with stimulating particles, had its share in quickening the slow pulse of the student. In the country, he read but his old authors, and lived with them through the gone ages. In the city, my father, during the intervals of repose from the great book, and still more now that the great book had come to a pause, – inspected the literature of his own time. It had a prodigious effect upon him. He was unlike the ordinary run of scholars, and, indeed, of readers for that matter – who, in their superstitious homage to the dead, are always willing enough to sacrifice the living. He did justice to the marvellous fertility of intellect which characterises the authorship of the present age. By the present age, I do not only mean the present day, I commence with the century. "What," said my father one day in dispute with Trevanion – "what characterises the literature of our time is – its *human interest*. It is true that we do not see scholars addressing scholars, but men addressing men, – not that scholars are fewer, but that the reading public is more large. Authors in all ages address themselves to what interests their readers; the same things do not interest a vast community which interested half a score of monks or bookworms. The literary *polis* was once an oligarchy, it is now a republic. It is the general brilliancy of the atmosphere which prevents your noticing the size of any particular star. Do you not see, that with the cultivation of the masses has awakened the Literature of the Affections? Every sentiment finds an expositor, every feeling an oracle. Like Epimenides, I have been sleeping in a cave; and, waking, I see those whom I left children are bearded men; and towns have sprung up in the landscapes which I left as solitary wastes."

Thence, the reader may perceive the causes of the change which had come over my father. As Robert Hall says, I think, of Dr Kippis, "he had laid so many books at the top of his head, that the brains could not move." But the electricity had now penetrated the heart, and the quickened vigour of that noble organ enabled the brain to stir. Meanwhile, I leave my father to these influences, and to the continuous conversations of Uncle Jack, and proceed with the thread of my own egotism.

Thanks to Mr Trevanion, my habits were not those which favour friendships with the idle; but I formed some acquaintances amongst young men a few years older than myself, who held subordinate situations in the public offices, or were keeping their terms for the bar. There was no want of ability amongst these gentlemen; but they had not yet settled into the stern prose of life. Their busy hours only made them more disposed to enjoy the hours of relaxation. And when we got together, a very gay, light-hearted set we were! We had neither money enough to be very extravagant, nor leisure enough to be very dissipated; but we amused ourselves notwithstanding. My new friends were wonderfully erudite in all matters connected with the theatres. From an opera to a ballet, from Hamlet to the last farce from the French, they had the literature of the stage at the finger-ends of their straw-coloured gloves. They had a pretty large acquaintance with actors and actresses, and were perfect *Walpoluli* in the minor scandals of the day. To do them justice, however, they were not indifferent to the more masculine knowledge necessary in "this wrong world." They talked as familiarly of the real actors of life as of the sham ones. They could adjust to a hair the rival pretensions of contending statesmen. They did not profess to be deep in the mysteries of foreign cabinets, (with the exception of one young gentleman connected with the Foreign Office, who prided himself on knowing exactly what the Russians meant to do with India – when they got it!); but to make amends, the majority of them had penetrated the closest secrets of our own. It is true that, according to a proper subdivision of labour, each took some particular member of the government for his special observation; just as the most skilful surgeons, however profoundly versed in the general structure of our frame, rest their anatomical fame on the light they throw on particular parts of it, – one man taking the brain,

another the duodenum, a third the spinal cord, while a fourth, perhaps, is a master of all the symptoms indicated by a pensile finger. Accordingly, one of my friends appropriated to himself the Home Department; another the Colonies; and a third, whom we all regarded as a future Talleyrand, (or a de Retz at least,) had devoted himself to the special study of Sir Robert Peel, and knew, by the way in which that profound and inscrutable statesman threw open his coat, every thought that was passing in his breast! Whether lawyers or officials, they all had a great idea of themselves – high notions of what they were to *be*, rather than what they were to *do*, some day. As the king of modern fine gentlemen said of himself, in paraphrase of Voltaire, "they had letters in their pockets addressed to Posterity, – which the chances were, however, that they might forget to deliver." Something "priggish" there might be about some of them; but, on the whole, they were far more interesting than mere idle men of pleasure. There was about them, as features of a general family likeness, a redundant activity of life – a gay exuberance of ambition – a light-hearted earnestness when at work – a schoolboy's enjoyment of the hours of play.

A great contrast to these young men was Sir Sedley Beaudesert, who was pointedly kind to me, and whose bachelor's house was always open to me after noon; Sir Sedley was visible to no one, but his valet, before that hour. A perfect bachelor's house it was, too – with its windows opening on the Park, and sofas niched into the windows, on which you might loll at your ease, like the philosopher in Lucretius, —

> "Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre,
> Errare," —

And see the gay crowds ride to and fro Rotten Row – without the fatigue of joining them, especially if the wind was in the east.

There was no affectation of costliness, or what the French and the upholsterers call *recherché*, about the rooms, but a wonderful accumulation of comfort. Every patent chair that proffered a variety in the art of lounging, found its place there; and near every chair a little table, on which you might deposit your book or your coffee-cup, without the trouble of moving more than your hand. In winter, nothing warmer than the quilted curtains and Axminster carpets can be conceived. In summer, nothing airier and cooler than the muslin draperies and the Indian mattings. And I defy a man to know to what perfection dinner may be brought, unless he had dined with Sir Sedley Beaudesert. Certainly, if that distinguished personage had but been an egotist, he had been the happiest of men. But, unfortunately for him, he was singularly amiable and kind-hearted. He had the *bonne digestion*, but not the other requisite for worldly felicity – the *mauvais cœur*. He felt a sincere pity for every one else who lived in rooms without patent chairs and little coffee tables – whose windows did not look on the Park, with sofas niched into their recesses. As Henry IV. wished every man to have his *pot au feu*, so Sir Sedley Beaudesert, if he could have had his way, would have every man served with an early cucumber for his fish, and a caraffe of iced water by the side of his bread and cheese. He thus evinced on politics a naïve simplicity, which delightfully contrasted his acuteness on matters of taste. I remember his saying, in a discussion on the Beer Bill, "The poor ought not to be allowed to drink beer, it is so particularly rheumatic! The best drink in hard work is dry champagne – (not *mousseux*.) I found that out when I used to shoot on the moors."

Indolent as Sir Sedley was, he had contrived to open an extraordinary number of drains on his great wealth.

First, as a landed proprietor, there was no end to applications from distressed farmers, aged poor, benefit societies, and poachers he had thrown out of employment by giving up his preserves to please his tenants.

Next, as a man of pleasure, the whole race of womankind had legitimate demands on him. From a distressed duchess, whose picture lay *perdu* under a secret spring of his snuff-box, to a decayed

laundress, to whom he might have paid a compliment on the perfect involutions of a frill, it was quite sufficient to be a daughter of Eve to establish a just claim on Sir Sedley's inheritance from Adam.

Again, as an amateur of art, and a respectful servant of every muse, all whom the public had failed to patronise – painter, actor, poet, musician – turned, like dying sun-flowers to the sun, towards the pitying smile of Sir Sedley Beaudesert. Add to these the general miscellaneous multitude, who 'had heard of Sir Sedley's high character for benevolence,' and one may well suppose what a very costly reputation he had set up. In fact, though Sir Sedley could not spend on what might fairly be called "himself," a fifth part of his princely income, I have no doubt that he found it difficult to make both ends meet at the close of the year. That he did so, he owed perhaps to two rules which his philosophy had peremptorily adopted. He never made debts, and he never gambled. For both these admirable aberrations from the ordinary routine of fine gentlemen, I believe he was indebted to the softness of his disposition. He had a great compassion for a wretch who was dunned. "Poor fellow!" he would say, "it must be so painful to him to pass his life in saying No." So little did he know about that class of promisers, – as if a man dunned ever said No! As Beau Brummell, when asked if he was fond of vegetables, owned that he had once eaten a pea, so Sir Sedley Beaudesert owned that he had once played high at piquet. "I was so unlucky as to win," said he, referring to that indiscretion, "and I shall never forget the anguish on the face of the man who paid me. Unless I could always lose, it would be a perfect purgatory to play."

Now nothing could be more different in their kinds of benevolence than Sir Sedley and Mr Trevanion. Mr Trevanion had a great contempt for individual charity. He rarely put his hand into his purse – he drew a great cheque on his bankers. Was a congregation without a church, or a village without a school, or a river without a bridge, Mr Trevanion set to work on calculations, found out the exact sum required by an algebraic $x–y$, and paid it as he would have paid his butcher. It must be owned that the distress of a man, whom he allowed to be deserving, did not appeal to him in vain. But it is astonishing how little he spent in that way. For it was hard, indeed, to convince Mr Trevanion that a deserving man ever was in such distress as to want charity.

That Trevanion, nevertheless, did infinitely more real good than Sir Sedley, I believe; but he did it as a mental operation – by no means as an impulse from the heart. I am sorry to say that the main difference was this, – distress always seemed to accumulate round Sir Sedley, and vanish from the presence of Trevanion. Where the last came, with his busy, active, searching mind, energy woke, improvement sprang up. Where the first came, with his warm kind heart, a kind of torpor spread under its rays; people lay down and basked in the liberal sunshine. Nature in one broke forth like a brisk sturdy winter, in the other like a lazy Italian summer. Winter is an excellent invigorator, no doubt, but we all love summer better.

Now, it is a proof how loveable Sir Sedley was, that I loved him, and yet was jealous of him. Of all the satellites round my fair Cynthia, Fanny Trevanion, I dreaded most this amiable luminary. It was in vain for me to say with the insolence of youth that Sir Sedley Beaudesert was of the same age as Fanny's father; – to see them together he might have passed for Trevanion's son. No one amongst the younger generation was half so handsome as Sir Sedley Beaudesert. He might be eclipsed at first sight by the showy effect of more redundant locks and more brilliant bloom. But he had but to speak, to smile, in order to throw a whole cohort of dandies into the shade. It was the expression of his countenance that was so bewitching; there was something so kindly in its easy candour, its benign good-nature. And he understood women so well! He flattered their foibles so insensibly; he commanded their affection with so gracious a dignity. Above all, what with his accomplishments, his peculiar reputation, his long celibacy, and the soft melancholy of his sentiments, he always contrived to *interest* them. There was not a charming woman by whom this charming man did not seem just on the point of being caught! It was like the sight of a splendid trout in a transparent stream, sailing pensively to and fro your fly, in a will and a won't sort of way. Such a trout! it would be a thousand pities to leave him, when evidently so well disposed! That trout, fair maid, or gentle widow, would

have kept you – whipping the stream and dragging the fly – from morn to dewy eve. Certainly I don't wish worse to my bitterest foe of five-and-twenty than such a rival as Sedley Beaudesert at seven-and-forty.

Fanny, indeed, perplexed me horribly. Sometimes I fancied she liked me; but the fancy scarce thrilled me with delight before it vanished in the frost of a careless look, or the cold beam of a sarcastic laugh. Spoiled darling of the world as she was, she seemed so innocent in her exuberant happiness, that one forgot all her faults in that atmosphere of joy which she diffused around her. And despite her pretty insolence, she had so kind a woman's heart below the surface! When she once saw that she had pained you, she was so soft, so winning, so humble, till she had healed the wound. But *then*, if she saw she had pleased you too much, the little witch was never easy till she had plagued you again. As heiress to so rich a father, or rather, perhaps, mother, (for the fortune came from Lady Ellinor,) she was naturally surrounded with admirers not wholly disinterested. She did right to plague *them*– but ME! Poor boy that I was, why should I seem more disinterested than others! how should she perceive all that lay hid in my young deep heart? Was I not in all worldly pretensions the least worthy of her suitors, and might I not seem, therefore, the most mercenary? I who never thought of her fortune, or, if that thought did come across me, it was to make me start and turn pale! And then it vanished at her first glance, as a ghost from the dawn. How hard it is to convince youth, that sees all the world of the future before it, and covers that future with golden palaces, of the inequalities of life! In my fantastic and sublime romance, I looked out into that Great Beyond, saw myself orator, statesman, minister, ambassador – Heaven knows what; laying laurels, which I mistook for rent-rolls, at Fanny's feet.

Whatever Fanny might have discovered as to the state of my heart, it seemed an abyss not worth prying into by either Trevanion or Lady Ellinor. The first, indeed, as may be supposed, was too busy to think of such trifles. And Lady Ellinor treated me as a mere boy – almost like a boy of her own, she was so kind to me. But she did not notice much the things that lay immediately around her. In brilliant conversation with poets, wits, and statesmen – in sympathy with the toils of her husband – or proud schemes for his aggrandisement, Lady Ellinor lived a life of excitement. Those large eager shining eyes of hers, bright with some feverish discontent, looked far abroad as if for new worlds to conquer – the world at her feet escaped from her vision. She loved her daughter, she was proud of her, trusted in her with a superb repose – she did not watch over her. Lady Ellinor stood alone on a mountain, and amidst a cloud.

CHAPTER XXVII

One day the Trevanions had all gone into the country, on a visit to a retired minister, distantly related to Lady Ellinor, and who was one of the few persons Trevanion himself condescended to consult. I had almost a holiday. I went to call on Sir Sedley Beaudesert. I had always longed to sound him on one subject, and had never dared. This time I resolved to pluck up courage.

"Ah, my young friend!" said he, rising from the contemplation of a villanous picture by a young artist, which he had just benevolently purchased, "I was thinking of you this morning – Wait a moment, Summers, (this to the valet.) Be so good as to take this picture, let it be packed up, and go down into the country. It is a sort of picture," he added, turning to me, "that requires a large house. I have an old gallery with little casements that let in no light. It is astonishing how convenient I have found it!" As soon as the picture was gone, Sir Sedley drew a long breath as if relieved; and resumed more gaily —

"Yes, I was thinking of you; and if you will forgive any interference in your affairs – from your father's old friend – I should be greatly honoured by your permission to ask Trevanion what he supposes is to be the ultimate benefit of the horrible labours he inflicts upon you – "

"But, my dear Sir Sedley, I like the labours; I am perfectly contented – "

"Not to remain always secretary to one who, if there were no business to be done among men, would set about teaching the ants to build hills upon better architectural principles! My dear sir, Trevanion is an awful man, a stupendous man, one *catches fatigue* if one is in the same room with him three minutes! At your age, an age that ought to be so happy," continued Sir Sedley, with a compassion perfectly angelic, "it is sad to see so little enjoyment!"

"But, Sir Sedley, I assure you that you are mistaken. I thoroughly enjoy myself; and have I not heard even you confess that one may be idle and not happy?"

"I did not confess that till I was on the wrong side of forty," said Sir Sedley, with a slight shade on his brow.

"Nobody would ever think you were on the wrong side of forty!" said I with artful flattery, winding into my subject. "Miss Trevanion for instance – "

I paused – Sir Sedley, looked hard at me, from his bright dark-blue eyes. "Well, Miss Trevanion for instance? – "

"Miss Trevanion, who has all the best-looking fellows in London round her, evidently prefers you to any of them." I said this with a great gulp. I was obstinately bent on plumbing the depth of my own fears.

Sir Sedley rose; he laid his hand kindly on mine and said, "Do not let Fanny Trevanion torment you even more than her father does! – "

"I don't understand you, Sir Sedley!"

"But if I understand you, that is more to the purpose. A girl like Miss Trevanion is cruel till she discovers she has a heart. It is not safe to risk one's own with any woman till she has ceased to be a coquette. My dear young friend, if you took life less in earnest, I should spare you the pain of these hints. Some men sow flowers, some plant trees – you are planting a tree under which you will soon find that no flower will grow. Well and good, if the tree could last to bear fruit and give shade; but beware lest you have to tear it up one day or other, for then – what then? why, you will find your whole life plucked away with its roots!"

Sir Sedley said these last words with so serious an emphasis, that I was startled from the confusion I had felt at the former part of his address. He paused long, tapped his snuff-box, inhaled a pinch slowly, and continued with his more accustomed sprightliness.

"Go as much as you can into the world – again I say 'enjoy yourself.' And again I ask, what is all this labour to do for you? On some men, far less eminent than Trevanion, it would impose a duty

to aid you in a practical career, to secure you a public employment – not so on him. He would not mortgage an inch of his independence by asking a favour from a minister. He so thinks occupation the delight of life, that he occupies you out of pure affection. He does not trouble his head about your future. He supposes your father will provide for *that*, and does not consider that meanwhile your work leads to nothing! Think over all this. I have now bored you enough."

I was bewildered – I was dumb: these practical men of the world, how they take us by surprise! Here had I come to *sound* Sir Sedley, and here was I plumbed, gauged, measured, turned inside out, without having got an inch beyond the surface of that smiling, *debonnair*, unruffled ease. Yet with his invariable delicacy, in spite of all this horrible frankness, Sir Sedley had not said a word to wound what he might think the more sensitive part of my *amour propre*– not a word as to the inadequacy of my pretensions to think seriously of Fanny Trevanion. Had we been the Celadon and Chloé of a country village, he could not have regarded us as more equal, so far as the world went. And for the rest, he rather insinuated that poor Fanny, the great heiress, was not worthy of me, than that I was not worthy of Fanny.

I felt that there was no wisdom in stammering and blushing out denials and equivocations; so I stretched my hand to Sir Sedley, took up my hat, – and went. Instinctively I bent my way to my father's house. I had not been there for many days. Not only had I had a great deal to do in the way of business, but I am ashamed to say that pleasure itself had so entangled my leisure hours, and Miss Trevanion especially so absorbed them, that, without even uneasy foreboding, I had left my father fluttering his wings more feebly and feebly in the web of Uncle Jack. When I arrived in Russell Street, I found the fly and the spider cheek by jowl together. Uncle Jack sprang up at my entrance, and cried, "Congratulate your father, congratulate *him*. No; congratulate the world!"

"What, Uncle!" said I, with a dismal effort at sympathising liveliness, "is the 'Literary Times' launched at last?"

"Oh, that is all settled – settled long since. Here's a specimen of the type we have chosen for the leaders." And Uncle Jack, whose pocket was never without a wet sheet of some kind or other, drew forth a steaming papyral monster, which in point of size was to the political "Times" as a mammoth may be to an elephant. "That is all settled. We are only preparing our contributors, and shall put out our programme next week or the week after. No, Pisistratus, I mean the Great Work."

"My dear father, I am so glad. What! it is really sold then?"

"Hum!" said my father.

"Sold!" burst forth Uncle Jack. "Sold – no, sir, we would not sell it! No; if all the booksellers fell down on their knees to us, as they will some day, that book should not be sold! Sir, that book is a revolution – it is an era – it is the emancipator of genius from mercenary thraldom; – THAT BOOK! – "

I looked inquiringly from uncle to father, and mentally retracted my congratulations. Then Mr Caxton, slightly blushing, and shyly rubbing his spectacles, said, "You see, Pisistratus, that though poor Jack has devoted uncommon pains to induce the publishers to recognise the merit he has discovered in the 'History of Human Error,' he has failed to do so."

"Not a bit of it; they all acknowledge its miraculous learning – its – "

"Very true; but they don't think it will sell, and therefore most selfishly refuse to buy it. One bookseller, indeed, offered to treat for it if I would leave out all about the Hottentots and Caffres, the Greek philosophers and Egyptian priests, and, confining myself solely to polite society, entitle the work 'Anecdotes of the Courts of Europe, ancient and modern.'"

"The wretch!" groaned Uncle Jack.

"Another thought it might be cut up into little essays, leaving out the quotations, entitled 'Men and Manners.'"

"A third was kind enough to observe, that though this particular work was quite unsaleable, yet as I appeared to have some historical information, he should be happy to undertake a historical romance from 'my graphic pen' – that was the phrase, was it not, Jack?"

Jack was too full to speak. – "Provided I would introduce a proper love-plot, and make it into three volumes post octavo, twenty-three lines in a page, neither more nor less. One honest fellow at last was found, who seemed to me a very respectable and indeed enterprising person. And after going through a list of calculations, which showed that no possible profit could arise, he generously offered to give me half of those no-profits, provided I would guarantee half the very visible expenses. I was just meditating the prudence of accepting this proposal, when your uncle was seized with a sublime idea, which has whisked up my book in a whirlwind of expectation."

"And that idea?" said I despondently.

"That idea," quoth Uncle Jack, recovering himself, "is simply and shortly this. From time immemorial authors have been the prey of the publishers. Sir, authors have lived in garrets, nay, have been choked in the street by an unexpected crumb of bread, like the man who wrote the play, poor fellow!"

"Otway," said my father. "The story is not true – no matter."

"Milton, sir, as every body knows, sold Paradise Lost for ten pounds – ten pounds, sir! In short, instances of a like nature are too numerous to quote. But the booksellers, sir, – they are leviathans – they roll in seas of gold. They subsist upon authors as vampires upon little children. But at last endurance has reached its limit – the fiat has gone forth – the tocsin of liberty has resounded – authors have burst their fetters. And we have just inaugurated the institution of 'The Grand Anti-Publisher Confederate Authors' Society,' by which, Pisistratus – by which, mark you, every author is to be his own publisher; that is, every author who joins the Society. No more submission of immortal works to mercenary calculators, to sordid tastes – no more hard bargains and broken hearts! – no more crumbs of bread choking great tragic poets in the streets – no more Paradises Lost sold at £10 a-piece! The author brings his book to a select committee appointed for the purpose; men of delicacy, education, and refinement – authors themselves – they read it, the Society publish; and after a modest commission towards the funds of the Society, the treasurer hands over the profits to the author."

"So that in fact, Uncle, every author who can't find a publisher any where else, will of course come to the Society. The fraternity will be numerous!"

"It will indeed."

"And the speculation – ruinous?"

"Ruinous, why?"

"Because in all mercantile negotiations it is ruinous to invest capital in supplies which fail of demand. You undertake to publish books that booksellers will not publish. Why? because booksellers can't sell them! It is just probable that you'll not sell them any better than the booksellers. Ergo, the more your business the larger your deficit. And the more numerous your society, the more disastrous your condition. Q.E.D."

"Pooh! The select committee will decide what books are to be published."

"Then where the deuce is the advantage to the authors? I would as lief submit my work to a publisher as I would to a select committee of authors. At all events, the publisher is not my rival; and I suspect he is the best judge, after all, of a book – as an accoucheur ought to be of a baby."

"Upon my word, nephew, you pay a bad compliment to your father's great work, which the booksellers will have nothing to do with."

That was artfully said, and I was posed; when Mr Caxton observed, with an apologetic smile —

"The fact is, my dear Pisistratus, that I want my book published without diminishing the little fortune I keep for you some day. Uncle Jack starts a society so to publish it. – Health and long life to Uncle Jack's society! One can't look a gift-horse in the mouth."

Here my mother entered, rosy from a shopping expedition with Mrs Primmins; and in her joy at hearing that I could stay dinner, all else was forgotten. By a wonder, which I did not regret, Uncle Jack really was engaged to dine out. He had other irons in the fire besides the "Literary Times" and the "Confederate Authors' Society;" he was deep in a scheme for making house-tops of felt, (which, under other hands, has, I believe, since succeeded;) and he had found a rich man (I suppose a hatter) who seemed well inclined to the project, and had actually asked him to dine and expound his views!

CHAPTER XXVIII

Here we three are seated round the open window – after dinner – familiar as in the old happy time – and my mother is talking low that she may not disturb my father, who seems in thought. —

Cr-cr-crrr-cr-cr! I feel it – I have it. – Where! What! Where! Knock it down – brush it off! For Heaven's sake, see to it! – Crrrr-crrrrr – there – here – in my hair – in my sleeve – in my ear. – Cr-cr.

I say solemnly, and on the word of a Christian, that, as I sate down to begin this chapter, being somewhat in a brown study, the pen insensibly slipt from my hand, and, leaning back in my chair, I fell to gazing into the fire. It is the end of June, and a remarkably cold evening – even for that time of year. And while I was so gazing, I felt something crawling, just by the nape of the neck, ma'am. Instinctively and mechanically, and still musing, I put my hand there, and drew forth – What? That *what* it is which perplexes me. It was a thing – a dark thing – a much bigger thing than I had expected. And the sight took me so by surprise that I gave my hand a violent shake, and the thing went – where I know not. The what and the where are the knotty points in the whole question! No sooner had it gone than I was seized with repentance not to have examined it more closely – not to have ascertained what the creature was. It might have been an earwig – a very large motherly earwig – an earwig far gone in that way in which earwigs wish to be who love their lords. I have a profound horror of earwigs – I firmly believe that they do get into the ear. That is a subject on which it is useless to argue with me upon philosophical grounds. I have a vivid recollection of a story told me by Mrs Primmins – How a lady for many years suffered under the most excruciating headaches; how, as the tombstones say, "physicians were in vain;" how she died; how her head was opened, and how such a nest of earwigs – ma'am – such a nest! – Earwigs are the prolifickest things, and so fond of their offspring! They sit on their eggs like hens – and the young, as soon as they are born, creep under them for protection – quite touchingly! Imagine such an establishment domesticated at one's tympanum!

But the creature was certainly larger than an earwig. It might have been one of that genus in the family of *Forficulidæ*, called *Labidoura*– monsters whose antennæ have thirty joints! There is a species of this creature in England, but, to the great grief of naturalists, and to the great honour of Providence, very rarely found, infinitely larger than the common earwig or *Forficulida auriculana*. Could it have been an early hornet? It had certainly a black head, and great feelers. I have a greater horror of hornets, if possible, than I have of earwigs. Two hornets will kill a man, and three a carriage-horse sixteen hands high. However, the creature was gone. – Yes, but where? Where had I so rashly thrown it? It might have got into a fold of my dressing-gown – or into my slippers – or, in short, any where, in the various recesses for earwigs and hornets which a gentleman's habiliments afford. I satisfy myself at last, as far as I can, seeing that I am not alone in the room – that it is not upon me. I look upon the carpet – the rug – the chair – under the fender. It is *non inventus*. I barbarously hope it is frizzing behind that great black coal in the grate. I pluck up courage – I prudently remove, to the other end of the room. I take up my pen – I begin my chapter – very nicely, too, I think upon the whole. I am just getting into my subject, when – cr-cr-cr-cr-cr-crawl – crawl – crawl – creep – creep – creep. Exactly, my dear ma'am, in the same place it was before! Oh, by the Powers! I forgot all my scientific regrets at not having scrutinised its genus before, whether *Forficulida* or *Labidoura*. I made a desperate lunge with both hands, something between thrust and cut, ma'am. The beast is gone. Yes, but again where? I say that that where is a very horrible question. Having come twice, in spite of all my precautions – and exactly on the same spot, too – it shows a confirmed disposition to habituate itself to its quarters – to effect a parochial settlement upon me; there is something awful and preternatural in it. I assure you that there is not a part of me that has not gone cr-cr-cr! – that has not crept, crawled, and forficulated ever since; and I just put it to you what sort of a chapter I can make after such a – My good little girl, will you just take the candle, and look carefully under the table? – that's a dear! Yes, my love, very black indeed, with two horns, and inclined to be corpulent.

Gentlemen and ladies who have cultivated an acquaintance with the Phœnician language, are aware that Belzebub, examined etymologically and entomologically, is nothing more nor less than Baal-zebub – "the Jupiter-Fly" – an emblem of the Destroying Attribute, which attribute, indeed, is found in all the insect tribes, more or less. Wherefore, as Mr Payne Knight, in his *Inquiry into Symbolical Languages*, hath observed – the Egyptian priests shaved their whole bodies, even to their eyebrows, lest unaware they should harbour any of the minor Zebubs of the great Baal. If I were the least bit more persuaded that that black cr-cr were about me still, and that the sacrifice of my eyebrows would deprive him of shelter, by the souls of the Ptolemies! I would, – and I will, too. Ring the bell, my little dear! John, – my – my cigar-box! There is not a cr in the world that can abide the fumes of the Havannah! Pshaw, sir, I am not the only man who lets his first thoughts upon cold steel end, like this chapter, in – Pff – pff – pff – !

CHAPTER XXIX

Every thing in this world is of use, even a black thing crawling over the nape of one's neck! Grim unknown, I shall make of thee – a simile!

I think, ma'am, you will allow that if an incident such as I have described had befallen yourself, and you had a proper and ladylike horror of earwigs (however motherly and fond of their offspring,) and also of early hornets, and indeed of all unknown things of the insect tribe with black heads and two great horns, or feelers or forceps, just by your ear – I think, ma'am, you will allow that you would find it difficult to settle back to your former placidity of mood and innocent stitch-work. You would feel a something that grated on your nerves – and cr'd – cr'd "all over you like," as the children say. And the worst is, that you would be ashamed to say it. You would feel obliged to look pleased and join in the conversation, and not fidget too much, nor always be shaking your flounces, and looking into a dark corner of your apron. Thus it is with many other things in life besides black insects. One has a secret care – an abstraction – a something between the memory and the feeling, of a dark crawling cr, which one has never dared to analyse. So I sate by my mother, trying to smile and talk as in the old time, – but longing to move about and look around, and escape to my own solitude, and take the clothes off my mind, and see what it was that had so troubled and terrified me – for trouble and terror were upon me. And my mother, who was always (heaven bless her!) inquisitive enough in all that concerned her darling Anachronism, was especially inquisitive that evening. She made me say where I had been, and what I had done, and how I had spent my time, – and Fanny Trevanion, (whom she had seen, by the way, three or four times, and whom she thought the prettiest person in the world) – oh, she must know exactly what I thought of Fanny Trevanion!

And all this while my father seemed in thought; and so, with my arm over my mother's chair, and my hand in hers – I answered my mother's questions, sometimes by a stammer, sometimes by a violent effort at volubility, when, at some interrogatory that went tingling right to my heart, I turned uneasily, and there were my father's eyes fixed on mine. Fixed, as they had been – when, and none knew why, I pined and languished, and my father said "he must go to school." Fixed, with quiet watchful tenderness. Ah no! – his thought had not been on the great work – he had been deep in the pages of that less worthy one for which he had yet more an author's paternal care. I met those eyes, and yearned to throw myself on his heart – and tell him all. Tell him what? Ma'am, I no more knew what to tell him, than I know what that black thing was which has so worried me all this blessed evening!

"Pisistratus," said my father softly, "I fear you have forgotten the saffron bag."

"No, indeed, sir," said I smiling.

"He," resumed my father – "he who wears the saffron bag has more cheerful, settled spirits than you seem to have, my poor boy."

"My dear Austin, his spirits are very good, I think," said my mother anxiously.

My father shook his head – then he took two or three turns about the room.

"Shall I ring for candles, sir, it is getting dark: you will wish to read?"

"No, Pisistratus, it is you who shall read, and this hour of twilight best suits the book I am about to open to you."

So saying, he drew a chair between me and my mother, and seated himself gravely, looking down a long time in silence – then turning his eyes to each of us alternately.

"My dear wife," said he at length, almost solemnly, "I am going to speak of myself as I was before I knew you."

Even in the twilight I saw that my mother's countenance changed.

"You have respected my secrets, Katherine, tenderly – honestly. Now the time is come when I can tell them to you and to our son."

CHAPTER XXX.
MY FATHER'S FIRST LOVE

"I lost my mother early; my father, (a good man, but who was so indolent that he rarely stirred from his chair, and who often passed whole days without speaking, like an Indian dervish,) left Roland and myself to educate ourselves much according to our own tastes. Roland shot, and hunted, and fished, – read all the poetry and books of chivalry to be found in my father's collection, which was rich in such matters, and made a great many copies of the old pedigree; – the only thing in which my father ever evinced much of the vital principle. Early in life I conceived a passion for graver studies, and by good luck I found a tutor in Mr Tibbets, who, but for his modesty, Kitty, would have rivalled Porson. He was a second Budæus for industry, and, by the way, he said exactly the same thing that Budæus did, viz. 'that the only lost day in his life was that in which he was married; for on that day he had only had six hours for reading!' Under such a master I could not fail to be a scholar. I came from the university with such distinction as led me to look sanguinely on my career in the world.

"I returned to my father's quiet rectory to pause and look about me, and consider what path I should take to fame. The rectory was just at the foot of the hill, on the brow of which were the ruins of the castle Roland has since purchased. And though I did not feel for the ruins the same romantic veneration as my dear brother, (for my day-dreams were more coloured by classic than feudal recollections,) I yet loved to climb the hill, book in hand, and build my castles in the air amidst the wrecks of that which time had shattered on the earth.

"One day, entering the old weed-grown court, I saw a lady, seated on my favourite spot, sketching the ruins. The lady was young – more beautiful than any woman I had yet seen, at least to my eyes. In a word, I was fascinated, and, as the trite phrase goes, 'spell-bound.' I seated myself at a little distance, and contemplated her without desiring to speak. By-and-by, from another part of the ruins, which were then uninhabited, came a tall, imposing, elderly gentleman, with a benignant aspect; and a little dog. The dog ran up to me, barking. This drew the attention of both lady and gentleman to me. The gentleman approached, called off the dog, and apologised with much politeness. Surveying me somewhat curiously, he then began to ask questions about the old place and the family it had belonged to, with the name and antecedents of which he was well acquainted. By degrees it came out that I was the descendant of that family, and the younger son of the humble rector who was now its representative. The gentleman then introduced himself to me as the Earl of Rainsforth, the principal proprietor in the neighbourhood, but who had so rarely visited the county during my childhood and earlier youth, that I had never before seen him. His only son, however, a young man of great promise, had been at the same college with me in my first year at the university. The young lord was a reading man and a scholar; and we had become slightly acquainted when he left for his travels.

"Now, on hearing my name, Lord Rainsforth took my hand cordially, and leading me to his daughter, said, 'Think, Ellinor, how fortunate; this is the Mr Caxton whom your brother so often spoke of.'

"In short, my dear Pisistratus, the ice was broken, the acquaintance made, and Lord Rainsforth, saying he was come to atone for his long absence from the county, and to reside at Compton the greater part of the year, pressed me to visit him. I did so. Lord Rainsforth's liking to me increased: I went there often."

My father paused, and seeing my mother had fixed her eyes upon him with a sort of mournful earnestness, and had pressed her hands very tightly together, he bent down and kissed her forehead.

"There is no cause, my child!" said he. It is the only time I ever heard him call my mother by that paternal name. But then, I never heard him before so grave and solemn – not a quotation, too – it was incredible: it was not my father speaking – it was another man. "Yes, I went there often. Lord Rainsforth was a remarkable person. Shyness, that was wholly without pride, (which is rare,) and a

love for quiet literary pursuits, had prevented his taking that personal part in public life for which he was richly qualified; but his reputation for sense and honour, and his personal popularity, had given him no inconsiderable influence even, I believe, in the formation of cabinets, and he had once been prevailed upon to fill a high diplomatic situation abroad, in which I have no doubt that he was as miserable as a good man can be under any infliction. He was now pleased to retire from the world, and look at it through the loopholes of retreat. Lord Rainsforth had a great respect for talent, and a warm interest in such of the young as seemed to him to possess it. By talent, indeed, his family had risen, and were strikingly characterised. His ancestor, the first peer, had been a distinguished lawyer; his father had been celebrated for scientific attainments; his children, Ellinor and Lord Pendarvis, were highly accomplished. Thus, the family identified themselves with the aristocracy of intellect, and seemed unconscious of their claims to the lower aristocracy of rank. You must bear this in mind throughout my story.

"Lady Ellinor shared her father's tastes and habits of thought – (she was not then an heiress.) Lord Rainsforth talked to me of my career. It was a time when the French Revolution had made statesmen look round with some anxiety to strengthen the existing order of things, by alliance with all in the rising generation who evinced such ability as might influence their contemporaries.

"University distinction is, or was formerly, among the popular passports to public life. By degrees Lord Rainsforth liked me so well, as to suggest to me a seat in the House of Commons. A member of Parliament might rise to any thing, and Lord Rainsforth had sufficient influence to effect my return. Dazzling prospect this to a young scholar fresh from Thucydides, and with Demosthenes fresh at his tongue's end. My dear boy, I was not then, you see, quite what I am now; in a word, I loved Ellinor Compton, and therefore I was ambitious. You know how ambitious she is still. But I could not mould my ambition to hers. I could not contemplate entering the senate of my country as a dependant on a party or a patron – as a man who must make his fortune there – as a man who, in every vote, must consider how much nearer he advanced himself to emolument. I was not even certain that Lord Rainsforth's views on politics were the same as mine would be. How could the politics of an experienced man of the world be those of an ardent young student? But had they been identical, I felt that I could not so creep into equality with a patron's daughter. No! I was ready to abandon my own more scholastic predilections – to strain every energy at the bar – to carve, or force my own way to fortune – and, if I arrived at independence, then – what then? why, the right to speak of love, and aim at power. This was not the view of Ellinor Compton. The law seemed to her a tedious, needless drudgery: there was nothing in it to captivate her imagination. She listened to me with that charm which she yet retains, and by which she seems to identify herself with those who speak to her. She would turn to me with a pleading look when her father dilated on the brilliant prospects of a parliamentary success; for he (not having gained it, yet having lived with those who had,) overvalued it, and seemed ever to wish to enjoy it through some other. But when I, in turn, spoke of independence, of the bar, Ellinor's face grew overcast. The world – the world was with her, and the ambition of the world, which is always for power or effect! A part of the house lay exposed to the east wind, 'Plant half way down the hill,' said I one day. 'Plant?' cried Lady Emily – 'it will be twenty years before the trees grow up. No, my dear father, build a wall, and cover it with creepers!' That was an illustration of her whole character. She could not wait till trees had time to grow up; a dead wall would be so much more quickly thrown up, and parasite creepers would give it a prettier effect. Nevertheless, she was a grand and noble creature. And I – in love! Not so discouraged as you may suppose; for Lord Rainsforth often hinted encouragement, which even I could scarcely misconstrue. Not caring for rank, and not wishing for fortune beyond competence for his daughter, he saw in me all he required, – a gentleman of ancient birth, and one in whom his own active mind could prosecute that kind of mental ambition which overflowed in him, and yet had never had its vent. And Ellinor! – heaven forbid I should say she loved me, – but something made me think she could do so. Under

these notions, suppressing all my hopes, I made a bold effort to master the influences round me, and to adopt that career I thought worthiest of us all. I went to London to read for the bar."

"The bar! is it possible?" cried I. My father smiled sadly.

"Every thing seemed possible to me then. I read some months. I began to see my way even in that short time; began to comprehend what would be the difficulties before me, and to feel there was that within me which could master them. I took a holiday and returned to Cumberland. I found Roland there on my return. Always of a roving adventurous temper, though he had not then entered the army, he had, for more than two years, been wandering over the Continent on foot. It was a young knight-errant whom I embraced, and who overwhelmed me with reproaches that I should be reading for the law. There had never been a lawyer in the family! It was about that time, I think, that I petrified him with the discovery of the printer! I knew not exactly wherefore, whether from jealousy, fear, foreboding – but it certainly *was* a pain that seized me – when I learned from Roland that he had become intimate at Compton Hall. Roland and Lord Rainsforth had met at the house of a neighbouring gentleman, and Lord Rainsforth had welcomed his acquaintance, at first perhaps for my sake, afterwards for his own.

"I could not for the life of me," continued my father, "ask Roland if he admired Ellinor; but, when I found that he did not put that question to me, I trembled!

"We went to Compton together, speaking little by the way. We stayed there some days."

My father here thrust his hand into his waistcoat – all men have their little ways, which denote much; and when my father thrust his hand into his waistcoat, it was always a sign of some mental effort – he was going to prove, or to argue, to moralise, or to preach. Therefore, though I was listening before with all my ears, I believe I had, speaking magnetically and mesmerically, an extra pair of ears, a new sense supplied to me, when my father put his hand into his waistcoat.

CHAPTER XXXI.
WHEREIN MY FATHER CONTINUES HIS STORY

"There is not a mystical creation, type, symbol, or poetical invention for meanings abstruse, recondite, and incomprehensible, which is not represented by the female gender," said my father, having his hand quite buried in his waistcoat. "There is the Sphynx, and the Enigma, and the Chimera, and Isis, whose veil no man had ever lifted: they are all ladies, Kitty, every one of them! And so was Persephone, who must be always either in heaven or hell – and Hecate, who was one thing by night and another by day. The Sibyls were females; and so were the Gorgons, the Harpies, the Furies, the Fates, and the Teutonic Valkyrs, Nornies, and Hela herself: in short, all representations of ideas, obscure, inscrutable, and portentous, are nouns feminine."

Heaven bless my father! Augustine Caxton was himself again! I began to fear that the story had slipped away from him, lost in that labyrinth of learning. But, luckily, as he paused for breath, his look fell on those limpid blue eyes of my mother's, and that honest open brow of hers, which had certainly nothing in common with Sphynges, Chimeras, Fates, Furies, or Valkyrs; and, whether his heart smote him, or his reason made him own that he had fallen into a very disingenuous and unsound train of assertion, I know not, but his front relaxed, and with a smile he resumed – "Ellinor was the last person in the world to deceive any one willingly. Did she deceive me and Roland that we both, though not conceited men, fancied that, if we had dared to speak openly of love, we had not so dared in vain? or do you think, Kitty, that a woman really can love (not much, perhaps, but somewhat) two or three, or half a dozen at a time?"

"Impossible," cried my mother. "And as for this Lady Ellinor, I am shocked at her – I don't know what to call it!"

"Nor I either, my dear!" said my father, slowly taking his hand from his waistcoat, as if the effort were too much for him, and the problem were insoluble. "But this, begging your pardon, I do think, that before a young woman does really, truly, and cordially centre her affections on one object, she suffers fancy, imagination, the desire of power, curiosity, or heaven knows what, to simulate, even to her own mind, pale reflexions of the luminary not yet risen – parhelia that precede the sun. Don't judge of Roland as you see him now, Pisistratus – grim, and gray, and formal; imagine a nature soaring high amongst daring thoughts, or exuberant with the nameless poetry of youthful life – with a frame matchless for bounding elasticity – an eye bright with haughty fire – a heart from which noble sentiments sprang like sparks from an anvil. Lady Ellinor had an ardent, inquisitive imagination. This bold fiery nature must have moved her interest. On the other hand, she had an instructed, full, and eager mind. Am I vain if I say, now at the lapse of so many years, that in my mind her intellect felt companionship? When a woman loves, and marries, and settles, why then she becomes – a one whole, a completed being. But a girl like Ellinor has in her many women. Various herself, all varieties please her. I do believe that, if either of us had spoken the word boldly, Lady Ellinor would have shrunk back to her own heart – examined it, tasked it, and given a frank and generous answer. And he who had spoken first might have had the better chance not to receive a 'No.' But neither of us spoke. And perhaps she was rather curious to know if she had made an impression, than anxious to create it. It was not that she willingly deceived us, but her whole atmosphere was delusion. Mists come before the sunrise. However this be, Roland and I were not long in detecting each other. And hence arose, first coldness, then jealousy, then quarrels."

"Oh, my father, your love must have been indeed powerful, to have made a breach between the hearts of two such brothers!"

"Yes," said my father; "it was amidst the old ruins of the castle, there, where I had first seen Ellinor – that, winding my arm round Roland's neck, as I found him seated amongst the weeds and stones, his face buried in his hands – it was there that I said – 'Brother, we both love this woman!

My nature is the calmer of the two, I shall feel the loss less. Brother, shake hands, and God speed you, for I go!'"

"Austin," murmured my mother, sinking her head on my father's breast.

"And therewith we quarrelled. For it was Roland who insisted, while the tears rolled down his eyes, and he stamped his foot on the ground, that he was the intruder, the interloper – that he had no hope – that he had been a fool and a madman – and that it was for him to go! Now, while we were disputing, and words began to run high, my father's old servant entered the desolate place, with a note from Lady Ellinor to me, asking for the loan of some book I had praised. Roland saw the hand-writing, and while I turned the note over and over irresolutely, before I broke the seal, he vanished.

"He did not return to my father's house. We did not know what had become of him. But I, thinking over that impulsive volcanic nature, took quick alarm. And I went in search of him; came on his track at last; and, after many days, found him in a miserable cottage amongst the most dreary of the dreary wastes which form so large a part of Cumberland. He was so altered I scarcely knew him. To be brief, we came at last to a compromise. We would go back to Compton. This suspense was intolerable. One of us at least should take courage and learn his fate. But who should speak first? We drew lots, and the lot fell on me.

"And now that I was really to pass the Rubicon, now that I was to impart that secret hope which had animated me so long – been to me a new life – what were my sensations? My dear boy, depend on it that that age is the happiest, when such feelings as I felt then can agitate us no more. They are mistakes in the serene order of that majestic life which heaven meant for thoughtful man. Our souls should be as stars on earth, not as meteors and tortured comets. What could I offer to Ellinor – to her father? What but a future of patient labour? And in either answer, what alternative of misery! – my own existence shattered, or Roland's noble heart!

"Well, we went to Compton. In our former visits we had been almost the only guests. Lord Rainsforth did not much affect the intercourse of country squires, less educated then than now. And in excuse for Ellinor and for us, we were almost the only men of her own age she saw when in that large dull house. But now the London season had broken up, the house was filled; there was no longer that familiar and constant approach to the mistress of the Hall, which had made us like one family. Great ladies, fine people, were round her; a look, a smile, a passing word, were as much as I had a right to expect. And the talk, too, how different! Before, I could speak on books, – I was at home there! Roland could pour forth his dreams, his chivalrous love for the past, his bold defiance of the unknown future. And Ellinor, cultivated and fanciful, could sympathise with both. And her father, scholar and gentleman, could sympathise too. But now – "

CHAPTER XXXII.
WHEREIN MY FATHER BRINGS ABOUT HIS DENOUEMENT

"It is no use in the world," said my father, "to know all the languages expounded in grammars and splintered up into lexicons, if we don't learn the language of the world. It is a talk apart, Kitty," cried my father warming up. "It is an ANAGLYPH – a spoken anaglyph, my dear! If all the hieroglyphs of the Egyptians had been A B C to you, still if you did not know the anaglyph, you would know nothing of the true mysteries of the priests.[1]

"Neither Roland nor I knew one symbol-letter of the anaglyph. Talk, talk – talk on persons we never heard of, things we never cared for. All *we* thought of importance, puerile or pedantic trifles – all we thought so trite and childish, the grand momentous business of life! If you found a little schoolboy, on his half holiday, fishing for minnows with a crooked pin, and you began to tell him of all the wonders of the deep, the laws of the tides, and the antediluvian relics of iguanodon and ichthyosaurus – nay, if you spoke but of pearl fisheries, and coral banks, or water-kelpies and naiads, would not the little boy cry out peevishly, 'Don't tease me with all that nonsense! let me fish in peace for my minnows.' I think the little boy is right after his own way – it was to fish for minnows that he came out, poor child, not to hear about iguanodons and water-kelpies!

"So the company fished for minnows, and not a word could we say about our pearl fisheries and coral banks! And as for fishing for minnows ourselves, my dear boy, we should have been less bewildered if you had asked us to fish for a mermaid! Do you see, now, one reason why I have let you go thus early into the world? Well, but amongst these minnow-fishers there was one who fished with an air that made the minnows look larger than salmons.

"Trevanion had been at Cambridge with me. We were even intimate. He was a young man like myself, with his way to make in the world. Poor as I – of a family upon a par with mine – old enough but decayed. There was, however, this difference between us. He had connexions in the great world – I had none. Like me his chief pecuniary resource was a college fellowship. Now, Trevanion had established a high reputation at the university; but less as a scholar, though a pretty fair one, than as a man to rise in life. Every faculty he had was an energy. He aimed at every thing – lost some things, gained others. He was a great speaker in a debating society, a member of some politico-economical club. He was an eternal talker – brilliant, various, paradoxical, florid – different from what he is now. For, dreading fancy, his career since has been an effort to curb it. But all his mind attached itself to something that we Englishmen call solid; it was a large mind – not, my dear Kitty, like a fine whale sailing through knowledge from the pleasure of sailing – but like a polypus, that puts forth all its feelers for the purpose of catching hold of something. Trevanion had gone at once to London from the university: his reputation and his talk dazzled his connexions, not unjustly. They made an effort – they got him into parliament: he had spoken, he had succeeded. He came to Compton with the flush of his virgin fame. I cannot convey to you, who know him now – with his care-worn face, and abrupt dry manner, – reduced by perpetual gladiatorship to the skin and bone of his former self – what that man was when he first stepped into the arena of life.

"You see, my listeners, that you have to recollect that we middle-aged folks were young then – that is to say, we were as different from what we are now, as the green bough of summer is from the dry wood, out of which we make a ship or a gate-post. Neither man nor wood comes to the uses of life till the green leaves are stripped and the sap gone. And then the uses of life transform us into strange things with other names: the tree is a tree no more – it is a gate or a ship; the youth is a

[1] The anaglyph was peculiar to the Egyptian priests – the hieroglyph generally known to the well educated.

youth no more, but a one-legged soldier; a hollow-eyed statesman; a scholar spectacled and slippered! When Micyllus – (here the hand slides into the waistcoat again!) – when Micyllus," said my father, "asked the cock that had once been Pythagoras,[2] if the affair of Troy was really as Homer told it, the cock replied scornfully, 'How could Homer know any thing about it? – at that time he was a camel in Bactria.' Pisistratus, according to the doctrine of metempsychosis, you might have been a Bactrian camel – when that which to my life was the siege of Troy saw Roland and Trevanion before the walls.

"Handsome you can see that Trevanion has been; but the beauty of his countenance then was in its perpetual play, its intellectual eagerness; and his conversation was so discursive, so various, so animated, and, above all, so full of the things of the day! If he had been a priest of Serapis for fifty years, he could not have known the Anaglyph better! Therefore he filled up every crevice and pore of that hollow society with his broken, inquisitive, petulant light. Therefore he was admired, talked of, listened to; and everybody said, 'Trevanion is a rising man.'

"Yet I did not do him then the justice I have done since – for we students and abstract thinkers are apt too much, in our first youth, to look to the *depth* of a man's mind or knowledge, and not enough to the *surface* it may cover. There may be more water in a flowing stream, only four feet deep, and certainly more force and more health, than in a sullen pool, thirty yards to the bottom! I did not do Trevanion justice. I did not see how naturally he realised Lady Ellinor's ideal. I have said that she was like many women in one. Trevanion was a thousand men in one. He had learning to please her mind, eloquence to dazzle her fancy, beauty to please her eye, reputation precisely of the kind to allure her vanity, honour and conscientious purpose to satisfy her judgment. And, above all, he was ambitious. Ambitious not as I – not as Roland was, but ambitious as Ellinor was: ambitious, not to realise some grand ideal in the silent heart, but to grasp the practical positive substances that lay without.

"Ellinor was a child of the great world, and so was he. I saw not all this, nor did Roland; and Trevanion seemed to pay no particular court to Ellinor.

"But the time approached when I ought to speak. The house began to thin. Lord Rainsforth had leisure to resume his easy conferences with me; and one day walking in his garden he gave me the opportunity. For I need not say, Pisistratus," said my father, looking at me earnestly, "that before any man of honour, especially if of inferior worldly pretensions, will open his heart seriously to the daughter, it is his duty to speak first to the parent, whose confidence has imposed that trust." I bowed my head and coloured.

"I know not how it was," continued my father, "but Lord Rainsforth turned the conversation on Ellinor. After speaking of his expectations from his son, who was returning home, he said 'But he will of course enter public life, – will, I trust, soon marry, have a separate establishment, and I shall see but little of him. My Ellinor! – I cannot bear the thought of parting wholly with her. And that, to say the selfish truth, is one reason why I have never wished her to marry a rich man, and so leave me for ever. I could hope that she will give herself to one who may be contented to reside at least a great part of the year with me – who may bless me with another son, not steal from me a daughter. I do not mean that he should waste his life in the country; his occupations would probably lead him to London. I care not where my *house* is, all I want is to keep my *home*. You know' (he added, with a smile that I thought meaning,) 'how often I have implied to you that I have no vulgar ambition for Ellinor. Her portion must be very small, for my estate is strictly entailed, and I have lived too much up to my income all my life to hope to save much now. But her tastes do not require expense; and while I live, at least, there need be no change. She can only prefer a man whose talents, congenial to hers, will win their own career, and ere I die that career may be made.' Lord Rainsforth paused, and then – how, in what words I know not, – but out all burst! – my long-suppressed, timid, anxious, doubtful, fearful love. The strange energy it had given to a nature till then so retiring and calm! My recent devotion to the law, – my confidence that, with such a prize, I could succeed, – it was but a

[2] Lucian, *The Dream of Micyllus*.

transfer of labour from one study to another. Labour could conquer all things, and custom sweeten them in the conquest. The bar was a less brilliant career than the senate. But the first aim of the poor man should be independence. In short, Pisistratus, wretched egotist that I was, I forgot Roland in that moment; and I spoke as one who felt his life was in his words.

"Lord Rainsforth looked at me, when I had done, with a countenance full of affection – but it was not cheerful.

"'My dear Caxton,' said he, tremulously, 'I own that I once wished this – wished it from the hour I knew you; but why did you so long – I never suspected that – nor I am sure did Ellinor.' He stopped short, and added quickly – 'However, go and speak, as you have spoken to me, to Ellinor. Go, it may not yet be too late. And yet – but go.'

"Too late – what meant those words? Lord Rainsforth had turned hastily down another walk, and left me alone, to ponder over an answer which concealed a riddle. Slowly I took my way towards the house, and sought Lady Ellinor, half hoping, half dreading, to find her alone. There was a little room communicating with a conservatory, where she usually sat in the morning. Thither I took my course.

"That room, I see it still! – the walls covered with pictures from her own hand, many were sketches of the haunts we had visited together – the simple ornaments, womanly but not effeminate – the very books on the table that had been made familiar by dear associations. Yes, there the *Tasso* in which we had read together the episode of *Clorinda*– there the *Æschylus* in which I translated to her the *Prometheus*. Pedantries these might seem to some: pedantries, perhaps, they were; but they were proofs of that congeniality which had knit the man of books to the daughter of the world. That room – it was the home of my heart! Such, in my vanity of spirit, methought would be the air round a home to come. I looked about me, troubled and confused, and, halting timidly, I saw Ellinor before me, leaning her face on her hand, her cheek more flushed than usual, and tears in her eyes. I approached in silence, and as I drew my chair to the table, my eye fell on a glove on the floor. It was a man's glove. Do you know," said my father, "that once, when I was very young, I saw a Dutch picture called The Glove, and the subject was of murder. There was a weed-grown marshy pool, a desolate dismal landscape, that of itself inspired thoughts of ill deeds and terror. And two men, as if walking by chance, came to this pool, the finger of one pointed to a blood-stained glove, and the eyes of both were fixed on each other, as if there were no need of words. That glove told its tale! The picture had long haunted me in my boyhood, but it never gave me so uneasy and fearful a feeling as did that real glove upon the floor. Why? My dear Pisistratus, the theory of forebodings involves one of those questions on which we may ask 'why' for ever. More chilled than I had been in speaking to her father, I took heart at last and spoke to Ellinor" —

My father stopped short; the moon had risen, and was shining full into the room and on his face. And by that light the face was changed; young emotions had brought back youth – my father looked a young man. But what pain was there! If the memory alone could raise what, after all, was but the ghost of suffering, what had been its living reality! Involuntarily I seized his hand: my father pressed it convulsively, and said, with a deep breath, "It was too late; Trevanion was Lady Ellinor's accepted, plighted, happy lover. My dear Katherine, I do not envy him now; look up, sweet wife, look up!"

CHAPTER XXXIII

"Ellinor (let me do her justice) was shocked at my silent emotion. No human lip could utter more tender sympathy, more noble self-reproach; but that was no balm to my wound. So I left the house – so I never returned to the law – so all impetus, all motive for exertion, seemed taken from my being – so I went back into books. And so, a moping, despondent, worthless mourner might I have been to the end of my days, but that heaven, in its mercy, sent thy mother, Pisistratus, across my path; and day and night I bless God and her, for I have been, and am – oh, indeed, I am, a happy man!"

My mother threw herself on my father's breast, sobbing violently, and then turned from the room without a word, – my father's eye, swimming in tears, followed her; and then, after pacing the room for some moments in silence, he came up to me, and leaning his arm on my shoulder, whispered, "Can you guess why I have now told you all this, my son?"

"Yes, partly: thank you, father," I faltered, and sate down, for I felt faint.

"Some sons," said my father, seating himself beside me, "would find in their father's follies and errors an excuse for their own: not so will you, Pisistratus."

"I see no folly, no error, sir – only nature and sorrow."

"Pause, ere you thus think," said my father. "Great was the folly, and great the error of indulging imagination that had no basis – of linking the whole usefulness of my life to the will of a human creature like myself. Heaven did not design the passion of love to be this tyrant; nor is it so with the mass and multitude of human life. We dreamers, solitary students like me, or half poets like poor Roland, make our own disease. How many years, even after I had regained serenity, as your mother gave me a home long not appreciated, have I wasted. The main-spring of my existence was snapped – I took no note of time. And therefore now, you see, late in life the Nemesis wakes. I look back with regret at powers neglected, opportunities gone. Galvanically I brace up energies half palsied by disuse, and you see me, rather than rest quiet and good for nothing, talked into what, I dare say, are sad follies, by an Uncle Jack! And now I behold Ellinor again; and I say, in wonder, All this – all this – all this agony, all this torpor for that haggard face, that worldly spirit! So is it ever in life. Mortal things fade; immortal things spring more freshly with every step to the tomb.

"Ah!" continued my father, with a sigh, "it would not have been so, if at your age I had found out the secret of the saffron bag!"

CHAPTER XXXIV

"And Roland, sir," said I; "how did he take it?"

"With all the indignation of a proud unreasonable man. More indignant, poor fellow, for me than himself. And so did he wound and gall me by what he said of Ellinor, – and so did he rage against me because I would not share his rage, – that again we quarrelled. We parted, and did not meet for many years. We came into sudden possession of our little fortunes. His he devoted (as you may know) to the purchase of the old ruins, and the commission in the army, which had always been his dream – and so went his way, wrathful. My share gave me an excuse for indolence, – it satisfied all my wants; and when my old tutor died, and his young child became my ward, and, somehow or other, from my ward my wife, it allowed me to resign my fellowship, and live amongst my books – still as a book myself. One comfort, long before my marriage, I had conceived; and that, too, Roland has since said was comfort to him. Ellinor became an heiress – her poor brother died; and all of the estate that did not pass in the male line devolved on her. That fortune made a gulf between us almost as wide as her marriage. For Ellinor, poor and portionless, in spite of her rank, I could have worked, striven, slaved. But Ellinor RICH! it would have crushed me. This was a comfort. But still, still the past – that perpetual aching sense of something that had seemed the essential of life withdrawn from life, evermore, evermore. What was left was not sorrow, it was a void. Had I lived more with men, and less with dreams and books, I should have made my nature large enough to bear the loss of a single passion. But in solitude we shrink up. No plant so much as man needs the sun and the air. I comprehend now why most of our best and wisest men have lived in capitals; and therefore again I say, that one scholar in a family is enough. Confiding in your sound heart and strong honour, I turn you thus betimes on the world. Have I done wrong? Prove that I have not, my child. Do you know what a very good man has said – Listen and follow my precept, not example.

"The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that every thing seems to say aloud to every man, 'Do something – do it – do it!'"[3] I was profoundly touched, and I rose refreshed and hopeful, when suddenly the door opened, and who or what in the world should come in; but certainly he, she, it, or they, shall not come into this chapter! – On that point I am resolved. No, my dear young lady, I am extremely flattered; – I feel for your curiosity; but really not a peep – not one! And yet – well then, if you will have it, and look so coaxingly – who, or what I say, should come in abrupt, unexpected – taking away one's breath, not giving one time to say, "By your leave, or with your leave," but making one's mouth stand open with surprise, and one's eyes fix in a big round stupid stare, but —

THE END OF THE CHAPTER

[3] *Remains of the Rev. Richard Cecil*, p. 349.

POLITICAL ECONOMY, BY J. S. MILL. [4]

In the old feud between the man of experience and the man of theory, it sometimes happens that the former obtains a triumph by the mere activity of the latter. Cases have been known where the theorist, in the clarifying and perfecting his own theory, has argued himself round to those very truths which his empirical antagonist had held to with a firm though less reasoning faith. He stood to his post; the stream of knowledge seemed to be flowing past him, and those who floated on it laughed at his stationary figure as they left him behind. Nevertheless he stood still; and by-and-by this meandering stream, with the busy crew that navigated it, after many a turn and many a curve, have returned to the very spot where he had made his obstinate halt.

This has been illustrated, and we venture to say will be illustrated still further, in the progress of the science of political economy. The man of experience has been taunted for his obstinacy and blindness in adhering to something which he called common sense and matter of fact; and behold! the scientific economist, in the course of his own theorising, is returning to those very positions from which he has been endeavouring to drive his opponent. The present work of Mr J. S. Mill, the latest and most complete exposition of the most advanced doctrines of the political economists, manifests, on more than one occasion, this *retrograde progress*, – demolishing, on the ground of still more scientific principles – the value of which time, however, must test – those arguments by which his scientific predecessors had attempted to mislead the man of experience or of empirical knowledge.

When, moreover, we consider, that the errors of the political economist are not allowed to remain mere errors of theory, but are pushed forward into practice, thrust immediately into the vital interests of the community, we must admit that never was the man of experience and common sense more fully justified in holding back and looking long before he yielded assent to his new teachers. Stranger paradoxes were never broached than some that have lived their day in this science; and paradoxes as they were, they claimed immediately their share of influence in our legislative measures. A learned professor, a luminary of the science, demonstrated that absenteeism could have nothing whatever to do with the poverty of Ireland. So the Greek sophist demonstrated that Achilles could never catch the tortoise. But the Greek was the more reasonable of the two: he required of no one to stake his fortune on the issue of the race. The professor of political economy not only teaches his sophism – he would have us *back his tortoise*.

Although it has been our irksome task to oppose the application to practice of half-formed theories, ill made up, and most dangerously incomplete, yet we surely need not say that we take a genuine interest in the approximation to a sound and trustworthy state of the science of political economy. That, notwithstanding its obliquities, the new science has rendered a substantial service to mankind, and is calculated, when thoroughly understood, to render still greater service – that it embraces topics of the widest and most permanent interest, and that intellects of the highest order have been worthily occupied in their investigation – this, let no strain of observation in which from time to time we have indulged, be thought to deny or controvert. To explain the complicate machinery of a modern commercial state, is assuredly one of the most useful tasks, and by no means the most easy, to which a reflective mind could address itself. When Adam Smith, leaving the arena of metaphysical inquiry, in which he had honourably distinguished himself, turned his analytic powers to the examination of the common-place yet intricate affairs of that commercial community in which he lived, he acted in the same enlightened spirit which led Bacon to demand of philosophy, that she should leave listening to the echoes of the school-room, and walk abroad into nature, amongst things and realities. The author of *The Wealth of Nations*, like him of the *Novum Organum*, struck out a

[4] *Principles of Political Economy, with some of their applications to Social Philosophy.* By John Stuart Mill. 2 vols.

new path of wisely utilitarian thinking. If the one led philosophy into the real world of nature and her daily phenomena, the other conducted her into a world still more novel to her footsteps – the world of commerce, of buying and selling, of manufacture and exchange. It may, indeed, be said of both these men, that in their leading and most valuable tenets, they were but announcing the claims of common sense; and that, in doing this, they had from time to time, and in utterances more or less distinct, been anticipated by others. But the cause of common sense is, after all, the very last which obtains a fair and potent advocacy; and the philosophy of one age is always destined, if it be true, to become the common sense of succeeding ages; and it detracts very little from the merit of an eminent writer who has been the means of impressing any great truth upon the minds of men, either at home or abroad, that others had obtained a view of it also, and given to it an imperfect and less effective enunciation. Let due honour, therefore, be paid to our countryman Adam Smith, the founder, on this side of the Channel at least, of the science of political economy – honour to him who turned a most keen intellect, sharpened by those metaphysical studies for which his fragmentary Essays, as well as and still more than his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, prove him to have been eminently qualified – turned it from these captivating subtleties to inquiries into the causes, actually in operation, of the prosperity of a commercial people. He left these regions of mazy labyrinthine thought, which, if not as beautiful as the enchanted gardens in which Tasso imprisoned his knight, are, to a certain order of spirits, quite as ensnaring, to look into the mystery of bills of exchange, of systems of banking, customs, and the currency. Be it admitted at once, and ungrudgingly, that Adam Smith and some of his successors have done a substantial service in assisting to explain the machinery of society – the organisation, so to speak, of a commercial body. Until this is done, and done thoroughly, no proposed measure of legislation, and no course of conduct voluntarily adopted by the people, can be seen in all its bearings; the true causes of the most immediate and pressing evils can never be certainly known, and, of course, the efficient remedies can never be applied. Our main quarrel – though we have many – with the political economists is on this ground – that, having constructed a theory explanatory of the *wealth* of nations, they have wished to enforce this upon our legislature, as if it had embraced all the causes which conspire to the *wellbeing* of nations; as if wealth and wellbeing were synonymous. Having determined the state of things best fitted to procure, in general, the greatest aggregate amount of riches, they have proceeded to deal with a people as if it were a corporate body, whose sole object was to increase the total amount of its possessions. They have overlooked the equally vital questions concerning the distribution of these possessions, and of the *various employments* of mankind. Full of their leading idea, and accustomed to abstractions and generalities, they forget the *individual*, and appear to treat their subject as if the aggregate wealth of a community were to be enjoyed in some aggregate manner, and a sum-total of possessions would represent the comforts and enjoyments of its several members. To know what measures tend to increase the national wealth is undoubtedly of great importance, but it is not *all*; the theory of riches, or of commerce, is not the theory of society.

As political economy arose with a metaphysician, and has been prosecuted by men of the same abstract turn of mind, it very soon aspired to the philosophical character of a science. It laid down its *laws*. But it has not always been seen that the harmonious and systematic form it has been able to assume was owing to an arbitrary division of social topics, which in their nature, and in their operation on human welfare, are inextricably combined. They laid down laws, which could only be considered such by obstinately refusing to look beyond a certain number of isolated facts; and they persisted in governing mankind according to laws obtained by this imperfect generalisation.

With regard to the main doctrine of the political economists, that of free-trade – their advocacy of unfettered industry, whether working for the home or foreign market – one sees plainly that there is a truth here. Looking at the matter abstractedly from other considerations, what doctrine could be more reasonable or more benign than that which instructs the separate communities of mankind to throw aside all commercial jealousies, all unnecessary heartburnings – to throw down their barriers, their custom-houses, their preventive stations – to let the commerce and industry of the world be

free, so that the peace of the world, as well as the wealth of nations, would be secured and advanced? What better doctrine could be taught than this? Did not Fénélon, mildest and best of archbishops, reasoning from the dictates of his own Christian conscience, arrive at the same conclusion as the philosophical economist? What better, we repeat, could be taught than a doctrine which tends to make all nations as one people, and the most wealthy people possible? But hold a while. Take the microscope, and deign to look somewhat closer at the little interests of the many little men that constitute a nation. Condescend to inquire, before you change the currents of wealth and industry, (though to increase both,) into what hands the wealth is to flow, and what the class of labourers you diminish or multiply. Industry free! Good. But is the capitalist to be permitted, at all times, to gather round him and his machinery what multitudes of workmen he pleases – workmen who are to breed up families dependent for their subsistence on the success of some gigantic and hazardous enterprise? Is he to be allowed, under all circumstances, to do this, and give the state no guarantee for the lives of these men and women and children, but what it obtains from his perhaps too sanguine calculations of his own profit and loss? Is it any consolation that he bankrupts himself in ruining others, and adding immensely to a pauper population? Commerce free! Good. It will increase your imports, and multiply by an advantageous exchange the products of your industry. But what if your measure to promote this freedom of commerce foster a mode of industry at home essentially of a precarious nature, and attended with fearful political and social dangers, at the expense of other modes of industry of a more permanent, stable, peaceful character – must nothing still be heard of but free commerce? Must the utmost amount of products, at all hazard, be obtained, whatever the mode of industry that earn it, or the fate of those called into existence by the overgrown manufacture you encourage? Is it no matter how won, or who enjoys? Is the only question that the wealth be there? What if England, by carrying out, without pause or exception, the doctrine of free-trade, should aggravate the most alarming symptoms of her present social condition – must this *law* of the political economist be still, with unmitigated strictness, urged upon her? She pleads for exception, for delay; but the political economist will not see the grounds of her plea – will not recognise her reasons for exception: full of his partial science, which has been made to occupy too large a portion of his field of vision, he *cannot* see them.

England, by a series of well-known mechanical inventions, extended in a surprising manner her manufacture of cotton, and with it her foreign commerce in this article. It is unnecessary to repeat figures that we have given before, or which may be found in any statistical tables. Enough that her operations here have been on a quite gigantic scale. Recollect that *this* is the channel into which must run the industry and capital which your measures of free-trade may drive from their old accustomed course. Look for a moment at the nature of this species of industry, and ask whether it would be wise to foster and augment it at the expense of other more ordinary and less precarious modes of earning a subsistence. An enormous population is brought together, educated, so far as their industrial habits are concerned, in no independent labour, but taught merely to perform a part in the great machinery of a cotton-mill, themselves a part of that machinery, and trusting, they and their families, for their necessary bread, to the successful sale of the great stock of goods, the annual amount of which they are annually increasing. Although the home market may absorb the greatest portion of these goods, yet the foreign market takes so considerable a share, that any derangement of the external commerce throws a large number of this densely-congregated multitude out of employment. Is there nothing peculiarly hazardous in this condition of things? Granted that nothing can, or ought to be done to restrain the enterprising capitalist from speculating too freely with the lives of men, is it a state of things to be aggravated? Now, at this juncture comes the apostle of free-trade, and demands (for illustration's sake) that French boots and shoes be admitted duty-free. He employs the well-known, and, to its own legitimate extent, unanswerable argument of the political economist. He tells us that, by so doing, we shall purchase better and cheaper boots and shoes, and sell more of our cotton; that, in short, by manufacturing more cotton goods, in which we marvellously excel, we shall procure better

boots and shoes than by the old process of making them ourselves. We are evidently the gainers. Let us see the gain. The gentleman pays something less for his shoes, and is somewhat more luxuriously shod. The owner of the cotton-mill, too, finds that trade is *looking up*. To balance this, we have so many shoemakers driven from their employment – the very steady one of making shoes for their own countrymen – and added to the number of men working at cotton-mills for the foreign market, – a mode of industry which we know, by painful experience, to be precarious in the extreme. We describe the superfluous shoemaker as going over directly to the artisans of the factory: we say nothing of the miseries of the *middle passage*; though in truth this transition is accomplished with pain and difficulty, and after much struggle, and is rather done in the second generation than the first, it being rather the children of the shoemaker that are added to the population of the factory than the shoemaker himself.

We see here that the mere calculation of profit and loss, such as it might figure in a debtor and creditor account, would justify the extreme advocate of free-trade. But there are, surely, other considerations which may properly rank a little higher than such a tradesman's balance of profit and loss; we are surely allowed to follow our inquiries a little further, and ask who is enriched, and how? and what branch of industry is promoted, and what destroyed or curtailed? It is not our object here to contend against what is called the factory system – we accept it with its evil and its good; we are not calling for measures directly hostile to it; but we certainly should exclaim against the sacrifice of a branch of household, stable, permanent industry, to be compensated by an increase in this already enormous system of factory labour, which, together with much good, brings with it so dreadfully precarious a condition of thousands and tens of thousands of men. The political economist has proved that free-trade is the condition under which the industry of man, so far as the amount of its products is concerned, can be exercised with the greatest advantage: he has established this principle; it is an important one, and we thank him for its lucid exposition; but he shall be no legislator of ours until he has learned to submit his principle to wise exceptions, until he has learned to estimate the first necessity of steady and well-remunerated employment to the labourer, until he is prepared, in short, to give their due weight to other considerations besides that of multiplying the gross products of human industry.

We have been viewing the question of free-trade from the position of an opulent manufacturing people – from the position of England, in short – and we see that there may be ground even here for exception. But the case is much stronger, and the claim for exception still plainer, which might be made out by a less opulent nation, desirous of fostering its own rising manufactures. These wisely refuse a reciprocity of free-trade measures. Even on the mere ground of the increase of national wealth, and without considering the advantage derived from a variety of employments, and a *due* admixture of a manufacturing population, they are fully justified in their protective policy. The economist will tell them that they deprive themselves of the opportunity of purchasing cheaper and better goods than they can produce. We admit that, for a season, they must forego an advantage of this description; but at the end of a few years how will the account stand? If the protective duty has fostered a home manufactory that would not otherwise have existed, (and this is an assumption which the political economist himself is compelled to admit,) then is there in that country a new industry – then amongst that people is there more *labour* and less idleness, and therefore more of the fruits of labour. It has created for itself what it otherwise would have had to purchase with its corn and oil.

The political economists love an extreme case. In order to test the universality of the principle of free-trade, we give them the following: – There is a little island somewhere in the Pacific, and it grows corn, and grapes, and the cotton plant. Two or three great ships come annually to this island, bringing a store of Manchester goods, and taking away a portion of the corn and the wine. But the wise men of the island meet and say, Let us learn to make our own cotton into stuff for raiment; so shall we have clothes without parting with our corn and wine. Would the people of the island be very foolish if they consented to wear, for a time, a much coarser raiment, in order that they might practise this new industry, and thus provide themselves with raiment, and keep their provender? We

suppose that the same unequal distribution of property is found in our island as in the rest of the world – that there are rich and poor. Now, when a people exchanges its articles of food for articles of clothing, it rarely, if ever, parts with what, *to the whole of the people*, is a superfluous quantity of food. Those who own large portions of the land have a superfluity of produce, which they exchange for other articles either at home or abroad; but probably no people ever grew a greater quantity of corn, or other grain for food, than it could very willingly have consumed itself, could we conceive it distributed amongst all who had mouths to consume, and half-filled stomachs to stow it away in. Judge, therefore, whether our little island would not, in a few years, be much better off for refusing the visit of the great ships, and setting to work to weave its own cotton into garments. The political economists always talk of so much labour diverted from one employment to another; they seem to have forgotten that there is such a thing as so much idleness converted into so much labour.

In the work of John Stuart Mill, to which we have now to call the attention of our readers, the science of political economy has received its latest and most complete exposition. Nor, as the title itself will inform us, is the work limited to a formal enunciation of abstract principles, (as was the case with the brief compendium of Mr Mill, senior,) but it proceeds to apply those principles to the discussion of some of the most vital and momentous questions with which public opinion is at present occupied. There are things in these volumes, as may easily be conceived, in which we do not concur – views are supported, on some subjects, to which we have been long and notoriously opposed; but there is, in the exposition of its tenets, so accurate a statement, so severe and lucid a reasoning, and, withal, so genuine and manly an interest in the great cause of humanity, that we cannot hesitate a moment in awarding to it a high rank amongst the sterling literature of our country. This magazine has never been slow – it has been second to none – in its hearty recognition of great talent and ability, from whatever quarter of the political horizon these have made their appearance. We were amongst the first to give notice to all whom it concerned of the addition to the students' shelf of the profound and elaborate work, *The System of Logic*, by the same author. The present is a work of more general interest, yet it has the same severe character. In this, as in his logic, the author has sacrificed nothing deemed by him essential to his task, to the desire of being popular, or the fear of being pronounced *dry*– the word of most complete condemnation in the present day. Dry, however, no person who takes an interest in the actual condition and prospects of society, can possibly find the greater portion of this work. For, as we have already intimated, that which honourably distinguishes it from other professed treatises of political economy is the perpetual, earnest, never-forgotten interest, which accompanies the writer throughout, in the great questions at present mooted with respect to the social condition of man. Mr Mill very wisely refused to limit himself to the mere abstract principles of his science; he descends from them, sometimes as from a vantage ground, into the discussions which most concern and agitate the public mind at the present day; and, if his conclusions are not always, or even generally, such as we can wholly coincide with, there is so penetrating an intelligence in his remarks, and so grave and serious a philanthropy pervading his book, that it would be impossible for the most complete opponent of the work not to rise a gainer from its perusal. From what else can we gain, if not from intercourse with a keen, and full, and sincere mind, whether we have to struggle with it, or to acquiesce in its guidance? There are passages in this work, didactic as its style generally is, which have had on us all the effect of the most thrilling eloquence, from the fine admixture of severe reasoning and earnestness of feeling.

For instance – to give at once an idea of the more elevated tone this utilitarian science has assumed in the work of Mr Mill – it is no little novelty to hear a political economist speak in the following manner of the mere elements of national wealth. The author has been discoursing on that stationary state to which all opulent nations are supposed to tend, wherein, by the diminution of profits, there is little means and no temptation to further accumulation of capital: —

> "I cannot," he says, "regard the stationary state of capital and wealth with the unaffected aversion so generally manifested towards it by political economists, of the

> old school. I am inclined to believe that it would be, on the whole, a very considerable improvement on our present condition. I confess I am not charmed with the ideal of life held out by those who think that the normal state of human beings is that of struggling to get on; that the trampling, crushing, elbowing, and treading on each other's heels, which form the existing type of social life, are the most desirable lot of humankind, or any thing but one of the disagreeable symptoms of one of the phases of industrial progress. The northern and middle states of America are a specimen of this stage of civilisation in very favourable circumstances; having apparently got rid of all social injustices and inequalities that affect persons of Caucasian race and of the male sex, while the proportion of population to capital and land is such as to insure abundance to every able-bodied member of the community who does not forfeit it by misconduct. They have the six points of Chartism, and no poverty; and all that these advantages do for them is, that the life of the whole of one sex is devoted to dollar-hunting, and of the other to breeding dollar-hunters. This is not a kind of social perfection which philanthropists to come will feel any very eager desire to assist in realising…
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> "That the energies of mankind should be kept in employment by the struggle for riches, as they were formerly by the struggle of war, until the better minds succeed in educating the others into better things, is undoubtedly more desirable than that they should rust and stagnate. While minds are coarse, they require coarse stimuli, and let them have them. In the mean time, those who do not accept the present very early stage of human improvement as its ultimate type, may be excused for being comparatively indifferent to the kind of economical progress which usually excites the congratulations of politicians – the mere increase of production and accumulation. For the safety of national independence, it is essential that a country should not fall much behind its neighbours in these things. But in themselves they are of little importance, so long as either the increase of population, or any thing else, prevents the mass of the people from reaping any part of the benefit of them. I know not why it should be matter of congratulation, that persons who are already richer than any one needs to be, should have doubled their means of consuming things which give little or no pleasure, except as representative of wealth; or that numbers of individuals should pass over every year from the middle classes into a richer class, or from the class of the occupied rich to that of the unoccupied. It is only in the backward countries of the world that increased production is still an important object; in those most advanced, what is economically needed is a better distribution, of which an indispensable means is a stricter restraint on population. Levelling institutions, either of a just or an unjust kind, cannot alone accomplish it; they may lower the heights of society, but they cannot raise the depths." – (Vol. ii. p. 308.)

It will be already seen, from even this brief extract, that the too rapid increase of population presents itself to Mr Mill as the chief, or one of the chief obstacles to human improvement. Without attempting to repeat all that we have at different times urged upon this head, we may at once say here that, in the first place, we never denied, or dreamt of denying, that it was one of the first and most imperative duties of every human being, to be assured that he could provide for a family before he called one into existence. This has been at all times a plain, unquestionable duty, though it has not at all times been clearly understood as such. But, in the second place, we have combated the Malthusian alarm, precisely because we believe that the moral checks to population will be found a sufficient balance to the physical law of increase. We have repudiated the idea that there is, in the shape of the law of population, a constant enemy to human improvement, convinced that this law will be found

to be in perfect harmony with all other laws that regulate the destiny of man. A certain pressure of population on the means of subsistence has been always recognised as an element necessary to the progress of society – especially at that early stage when bare subsistence is the sole motive for industry. When not only to live, but to live well, becomes the ruling motive of men, then come into play the various moral checks arising from prudence, vanity, and duty. But the mere thinness of population will not, in the first place, induce a high standard of comfortable subsistence. It is a delusion to suppose that the low standard of comfort and enjoyment prevailing amongst the multitude is the result of excessive population. If Neapolitan lazzaroni are contented with macaroni and sunshine, it matters not whether their numbers are five hundred or five thousand, they will labour for nothing beyond their macaroni. We would challenge the political economist to prove that in England, at this present time, or in any country of Europe, the prevailing standard of comfort amongst the working classes has been permanently determined by the amount of population. This standard is slowly rising, from better education, mechanical inventions, and other causes, and *it* will ultimately control the increase of population. That wages occasionally suffer a lamentable depression, owing to the numbers of any one class of workmen, is a fact which does not touch the point at issue. We say that, whether a population be dense or rare, you must first excite, by education and the example of a higher class, a certain taste for comfort, for a cleanly and orderly mode of life, amongst the mass of labouring men; that until this taste is called forth, it would be in vain to offer high wages, for men would only work one half the week, and spend the other half in idleness and coarse intemperance; and that, this taste once called forth, there will be no fear of the class of men who possess it being permanently degraded by over-population, unless the excess of population were derived from some neighbouring country, unhappily far behind it in the race of civilisation.

We now continue our quotation.

> "There is room in the world, no doubt, and even in old countries, for an immense increase of population, supposing the arts of life to go on improving and capital to increase. But, although it may be innocuous, I confess I see very little reason for desiring it. The density of population necessary to enable mankind to obtain, in the greatest degree, all the advantages both of co-operation and of social intercourse, has, in all the more populous countries, been attained. A population may be too crowded, though all be amply supplied with food and raiment. It is not good for man to be kept perforce at all times in the presence of his species. A world from which solitude is extirpated is a very poor ideal. Solitude, in the sense of being often alone, is essential to any depth of meditation or of character; and solitude, in the presence of natural beauty and grandeur, is the cradle of thoughts and aspirations which are not only good for the individual, but which society could ill do without. Nor is there much satisfaction in contemplating the world, with nothing left to the spontaneous activity of nature – with every rood of land brought into cultivation which is capable of growing food for human beings – every flowery waste or natural pasture ploughed up – all quadrupeds or birds, which are not domesticated for man's use, exterminated as his rivals for food – every hedgerow or superfluous tree rooted out, and scarcely a place left where a shrub or flower could grow, without being eradicated as a weed in the name of improved agriculture. If the earth must lose that great portion of its pleasantness which it owes to things that the unlimited increase of wealth and population would extirpate from it, for the mere purpose of enabling it to support a larger, but not a better or a happier population, I sincerely hope, for the sake of posterity, that they will be content to be stationary long before necessity compels them to it.
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> "It is scarcely necessary to remark, that a stationary condition of capital and population implies no stationary state of human improvement. There would be as

> much scope as ever for all kinds of mental culture, and moral and social progress; as much room for improving the Art of Living, and much more likelihood of its being improved, when minds ceased to be engrossed by the art of getting on. Even the industrial arts might be as earnestly and as successfully cultivated, with this sole difference – that, instead of serving no purpose but the increase of wealth, industrial improvements would produce their legitimate effect, that of abridging labour. Hitherto it is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the daily toil of any human being. They have enabled a greater population to live the same life of drudgery and imprisonment, and an increased number of manufacturers and others to make large fortunes. They have increased the comforts of the middle classes; but they have not yet begun to effect those great changes in human destiny which it is in their nature and in their futurity to accomplish. Only when, in addition to just institutions, the increase of mankind shall be under the deliberate guidance of a judicious foresight, can the conquests made from the powers of nature, by the intellect and energy of scientific discoverers, become the common property of the species, and the means of improving and elevating the universal lot." – (Vol. ii. p. 311.)

These are not the times when truth is to be withheld because it is disagreeable. There is a morality connected with wealth, its uses and abuses, not enough taught, certainly not enough understood. The rich man, who will not learn that there is a *duty* inseparable from his riches, is no better fitted for the times that are coming down upon us, than the poor man who has not learned that patience is a duty peculiarly imposed upon him, and that the ruin of others, and the general panic which his violence may create, will inevitably add to the hardships and privations he already has to endure. If society demands of the poor man that he endure these evils of his lot, rather than desperately bring down ruin upon all, himself included; surely society must also demand of the rich man that he make the best use possible of his wealth, so that his weaker brother be not driven to madness and despair. It demands of him that he exert himself manfully for that safety of the whole in which he has so much more evident an interest. For, be it known – prescribe whatever remedies you will, political, moral, or religious – that it is by securing a certain indispensable amount of wellbeing to the multitude of mankind that the only security can be found for the social fabric, for life, and property, and civilisation. If men are allowed to sink into a wretchedness that savours of despair, it is in vain that you show them the ruins of the nation, and themselves involved in those ruins. What interest have they any longer in the preservation of your boasted state of civilisation? What to them how soon it be all a ruin? You have lost all hold of them as reasonable beings. As well preach to the winds as to men thoroughly and bitterly discontented. Those, therefore, to whom wealth, or station, or intelligence, has given power of any kind, must do their utmost to prevent large masses of mankind from sinking into this condition. If they will not learn this duty from the Christian teaching of their church, they must learn it from the stern exposition of the economist and the politician.

Political economists have some of them wasted much time, and produced no little ennui, by unprofitable discussions on the definition of terms. These Mr Mill wisely spares us: an accurate writer, by a cautious use of ordinary expressions, will make his meaning more evident and precise than he will be able to do by any laboured definitions, or the introduction of purely technical terms. Such have been the discussions on the strict limits of the science of political economy, and the propriety of the title it has so long borne; whether intellectual efforts shall be classed amongst productive or unproductive labour, and the precise and invariable meaning to be given to such terms as *wealth*, *value*, and the like. These will generally be found to be unprofitable controversies, tending more to confusion of ideas than to precision of language. Let a writer think steadily and clearly upon his subject, and ordinary language will be faithful to him; distinctions between the several meanings of the same term will be made as they are wanted. He who *begins* by making such distinctions is only

laying a snare for his own feet; he will hamper himself and perplex his reader. And with regard especially to the range of topics which an author thinks fit to embrace in his treatise upon this science, surely he may permit himself some liberty of choice, without resolving to mete out new boundaries to which all who follow him are to conform. If M. Dunoyer, for instance, in his able and, in many respects, valuable work, *De la Liberté du Travail*, chooses to write a treatise which embraces in fact the whole of human life, all the energies and activities of man, mental as well as physical, he could surely have done this without assailing old distinctions and old titles with so needless a violence. Of what avail to call in the etymologist at this time of day, to determine the meaning, or criticise the application of so familiar a term as political economy?[5]

But there is another class of discussions which, although to the general reader, who is mostly an impatient one, they will appear at first sight to be of a purely technical character, must not be so hastily dismissed. These will be often found to have a direct bearing on the most important questions that can occupy the mind of the statesman. They are in fact explanatory of that great machine, a commercial society, upon which he has to practise – which he has to keep in order, or to learn to leave alone – and therefore as necessary a branch of knowledge to him as anatomy or physiology to one who undertakes to medicine the body. Such are some of the intricate discussions which concern the nature of *capital*– a subject to which we shall in the first place and at once turn our attention. It is a subject which Mr Mill has treated throughout in a most masterly manner. We may safely say, that there is now no other work to which a student could be properly directed for obtaining a complete insight into all the intricacies of this great branch of political economy. The exposition lies scattered, indeed, through the two volumes; he must read the entire work to obtain it. This scattering of the several parts of a subject is inevitable in treating such a science as political economy, where every topic has to be discussed in relation to every other topic. We do not think that Mr Mill has been particularly happy in his arrangement of topics, but, aware as we are of the extreme difficulty, under such circumstances, of making *any arrangement at all*, we forbear from any criticism. A man must write himself out the best way he can; and the reader, after obtaining all the materials put at his disposition, may pack them up in what bundles may best suit his own convenience.

We must premise that on this subject – the nature and employment of capital – there appears to be in one part of Mr Mill's exposition – not an error – but a temporary forgetfulness of an old and familiar truth, which ought to have found its place there. Its very familiarity has occasioned it to be overlooked, in the keen inquiry after truth of a more recondite nature. The part which the economists call "unproductive consumption," the self-indulgent luxurious expenditure of the rich – the part this plays in a system of society based on individual effort and individual possession, is not fully stated.

He who spends his money, and lives to do little else, however idle he may be himself, has always had the consolation that he was, at least, setting other people to work. Mr Mill *seems* to deny him utterly this species of consolation; for in contending against a statement, made by political economists as well as others, that unproductive consumption is necessary, in a strictly *economical* sense, to the employment of the workmen, and as the indispensable relative to productive consumption, or capital spent in industrial pursuits, he has overlooked that *moral* necessity there is, in the present system of things, that there should be those who spend to enjoy, as well as those who lay out their money for profit. "What supports and employs productive labour," says Mr Mill, (Vol. i. p. 97,) "is the capital expended in setting it to work, and not the demand of purchases for the produce of the labour when completed. Demand for commodities is not demand for labour. The demand for commodities determines in what particular branch of production the labour and capital shall be employed; it determines the *direction* of the labour, but not the more or less of the labour itself,

[5] "Mais d'abord va-t-on désigner cet ordre particulier d'investigations par le nom d'économie politique? Quoi donc! Économie politique, économie de la société, – c'est à dire – production, distribution, consommation des richesses? Mais c'est se moquer; on ne traduit pas avec une liberté pareille. Il ne faut qu'ouvrir le premier dictionnaire venu pour voir," &c. – Dunoyer, *De la Liberté du Travail*.

or of the maintenance and payment of the labour. That depends on the amount of the capital, or other funds directly devoted to the sustenance and remuneration of labour." Now, without a doubt, the man who purchases an article of luxury when it is manufactured, does not employ labour in the same sense as the manufacturer, who spends his wealth in supporting the artisan, and finding him the requisites of his art, and who, after selling the products of this industry, continues to spend the capital returned to him, together with the profit he has made, in the further sustenance of workmen. But it has been always understood, and the truth appears to be almost too trite to insist on, that unless the unproductive consumer were there to purchase, the capitalist would have had no motive to employ his wealth in this manner; and, what is of equal importance to bear in mind, unless the capitalist also calculated on being, some future day, an unproductive consumer himself, he would have no motive, by saving and toiling, to increase his wealth.

The necessity for a certain amount of unproductive consumption is not a necessity in the nature of things. All men might, if they chose, be saving, might spend upon themselves only what is needful for comfort, and set apart the residue of their funds for the employment of labour, not, of course, in the production of articles of luxury, for which there would be no purchasers, but for such articles as the labourers themselves, now paid from such ample stores, might be consumers of. The social machine might still *go on* under such a regime, and much to the benefit of the labourer. The capitalists would find their profits diminishing, it is true – they would be more rapidly approaching that *minimum* of profit, that stationary state, of which we shall by-and-by have to speak; but this diminution of profits must, at all events, sooner or later, take place, and depends ultimately, as we shall have occasion to show, on higher laws, over which man has no control. Men might, if they chose, be all saving, and all convert superfluous wealth into capital; but need we add, men would never choose any such thing. There is no necessity in the nature of things, but there is a necessity in the moral nature of man for a certain portion of this unproductive consumption. The good of others is not a motive sufficiently strong to stimulate a man to any of the steady pursuits of industry. When, therefore, his real wants are satisfied, it must be the gratification of fictitious wants that induces him to toil and accumulate, or to part with any thing he has, by way of barter or exchange. From the time when the rude possessor of the soil consents to surrender a portion of his surplus produce for some trinket or piece of gaudy apparel, to the present epoch, when men consent to live frugally and toil hard during the first period of life, in order that they or their children may afterwards live idly, luxuriously, and ostentatiously, this same unproductive expenditure has performed the part of essential stimulant to human industry. It is not enough, therefore, to say, that it gives the *direction* to a certain portion of labour: it affords the stimulant that converts idleness into industry, and saving into capital. A very much more dignified being would man undoubtedly be, if desire for the general good could replace, as a motive of industry, a selfish desire, which is often no better than what we ridicule in the savage when he manifests a most disproportionate anxiety, as it seems to us, for the possession of glass beads, or a piece of painted calico. But to this point in the cultivation of human reason we have, at all events, not yet arrived. And let this be always borne in mind – in order that the class of society designated as unproductive consumers may not fall into unmerited odium – that others, who are using their wealth in the direct and profitable employment of labour, are themselves desirous, above all things, of taking their place in the class of unproductive consumers, and are working for that very end.

"Every one can see," writes Mr Mill, "that if a benevolent government possessed all the food, and all the implements and materials of the community, it could exact productive labour from all to whom it allowed a share in the food, and could be in no danger of wanting a field for the employment of this productive labour, since, as long as there was a single want unsaturated (which material objects could supply) of any one individual, the labour of the community could be turned to the production of something capable of satisfying that want. Now, the individual possessors of capital, when they add to it by fresh accumulations, are doing precisely the same thing which we suppose to be done by our benevolent government." – (Vol. i. p. 83.) Certainly the individual capitalists could do the

same as the benevolent government, if they had its benevolence. If there are any political economists who teach otherwise, we hold them in error. We wish only to add to the statement the old moral truth long ago recognised, before political economy had a distinct place or name in the world, that as man is constituted, or rather, as he has hitherto demeaned himself, (for who knows what moral as well as other reformations may take place? – the civilised man, such as we have him at this day, postponing habitually the present enjoyment to the future, is a creature of cultivation; and who can tell but that advanced cultivation may make of man a being habitually acting for the general good, in which general good he finds his own particular interest sufficiently represented and provided for?) – that, as man has hitherto acted, this same unproductive selfish expenditure is indispensable as the motive to set that industry to work, which ultimately distributes the real necessaries and rational comforts of life to so many thousands.

Having, in justice to the class of unproductive consumers, brought out this homely truth, which, in the scientific exposition of Mr Mill, seemed in danger of being overlooked, we proceed to a branch of the subject which, if it appears at first of a very technical and abstruse description, is yet capable of very important applications. One of the most striking facts relating to the nature of capital is the tendency of profits, in wealthy and populous countries, to diminish as the amount of capital increases – a tendency to arrive at a certain *minimum* beyond which there would be no motive for saving, and little possibility of accumulating. This tendency Mr Mill explains as being the result, not of what has been somewhat vaguely called the competition of capital, over-production, or general glut in the market, but, in reality, of the physical laws of nature – of the simple fact that the products of the soil cannot be indefinitely multiplied. Manufacturing industry must be ultimately limited by the supply of the raw material it fashions, which is furnished by the soil, and the supply of food for the artisan, furnished also by the soil; it therefore is subjected, as well as agricultural industry, to the limits which have been set to the productiveness of the earth. Now, without seeking for any definite ratio, such as might be expressed in numbers, between the labour and ingenuity of man and the products of the soil, it may be stated as a simple fact, which admits of no dispute, that after the land has been fairly cultivated, additional labour and additional cost yield but a small proportionate return.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.