ЭДВАРД БУЛЬВЕР-ЛИТТОН

THE CAXTONS: A FAMILY PICTURE — COMPLETE

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Содержание

Baron Edward Bulwer Lytton
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PREFACE

If it be the good fortune of this work to possess any interest for the Novel reader, that interest, perhaps, will be but little derived from the customary elements of fiction. The plot is extremely slight, the incidents are few, and with the exception of those which involve the fate of Vivian, such as may be found in the records of ordinary life.

Regarded as a Novel, this attempt is an experiment somewhat apart from the previous works of the author. It is the first of his writings in which Humor has been employed, less for the purpose of satire than in illustration of amiable characters; it is the first, too, in which man has been viewed, less in his active relations with the world, than in his repose at his own hearth, —in a word, the greater part of the canvas has been devoted to the completion of a simple Family Picture. And thus, in any appeal to the sympathies of the human heart, the common household affections occupy the place of those livelier or larger passions which usually (and not unjustly) arrogate the foreground

in Romantic composition.

In the Hero whose autobiography connects the different characters and events of the work, it has been the Author's intention to imply the influences of Home upon the conduct and career of youth; and in the ambition which estranges Pisistratus for a time from the sedentary occupations in which the man of civilized life must usually serve his apprenticeship to Fortune or to Fame, it is not designed to describe the fever of Genius conscious of superior powers and aspiring to high destinies, but the natural tendencies of a fresh and buoyant mind, rather vigorous than contemplative, and in which the desire of action is but the symptom of health.

Pisistratus in this respect (as he himself feels and implies) becomes the specimen or type of a class the numbers of which are daily increasing in the inevitable progress of modern civilization. He is one too many in the midst of the crowd; he is the representative of the exuberant energies of youth, turning, as with the instinct of nature for space and development, from the Old World to the New. That which may be called the interior meaning of the whole is sought to be completed by the inference that, whatever our wanderings, our happiness will always be found within a narrow compass, and amidst the objects more immediately within our reach, but that we are seldom sensible of this truth (hackneyed though it be in the Schools of all Philosophies) till our researches have spread over a wider area. To insure the blessing of repose, we require a brisker excitement

than a few turns up and down our room. Content is like that humor in the crystal, on which Claudian has lavished the wonder of a child and the fancies of a Poet,—

"Vivis gemma tumescit aquis."

E. B. L.

October, 1849.

THE CAXTONS

PART I

CHAPTER I

"Sir—sir, it is a boy!"

"A boy," said my father, looking up from his book, and evidently much puzzled: "what is a boy?"

Now my father did not mean by that interrogatory to challenge philosophical inquiry, nor to demand of the honest but unenlightened woman who had just rushed into his study, a solution of that mystery, physiological and psychological, which has puzzled so many curious sages, and lies still involved in the question, "What is man?" For as we need not look further than Dr. Johnson's Dictionary to know that a boy is "a male child,"—i.e., the male young of man,—so he who would go to the depth of things, and know scientifically what is a boy, must be able to ascertain "what is a man." But for aught I know, my father may have been satisfied with Buffon on that score, or he may have sided with Monboddo. He may have agreed with Bishop Berkeley; he may have contented himself with Professor Combe; he may have regarded the genus spiritually, like Zeno,

or materially, like Epicurus. Grant that boy is the male young of man, and he would have had plenty of definitions to choose from. He might have said, "Man is a stomach,—ergo, boy a male young stomach. Man is a brain,—boy a male young brain. Man is a bundle of habits,—boy a male young bundle of habits. Man is a machine,—boy a male young machine. Man is a tail-less monkey,—boy a male young tail-less monkey. Man is a combination of gases,—boy a male young combination of gases. Man is an appearance,—boy a male young appearance," etc., etc., and etcetera, ad infinitum! And if none of these definitions had entirely satisfied my father, I am perfectly persuaded that he would never have come to Mrs. Primmins for a new one.

But it so happened that my father was at that moment engaged in the important consideration whether the Iliad was written by one Homer, or was rather a collection of sundry ballads, done into Greek by divers hands, and finally selected, compiled, and reduced into a whole by a Committee of Taste, under that elegant old tyrant Pisistratus; and the sudden affirmation, "It is a boy," did not seem to him pertinent to the thread of the discussion. Therefore he asked, "What is a boy?" vaguely, and, as it were, taken by surprise.

"Lord, sir!" said Mrs. Primmins, "what is a boy? Why, the baby!"

"The baby!" repeated my father, rising. "What, you don't mean to say that Mrs. Caxton is—eh?"

"Yes, I do," said Mrs. Primmins, dropping a courtesy; "and as

fine a little rogue as ever I set eyes upon."

"Poor dear woman," said my father, with great compassion. "So soon, too—so rapidly," he resumed, in a tone of musing surprise. "Why, it is but the other day we were married!"

"Bless my heart, sir," said Mrs. Primmins, much scandalized, "it is ten months and more."

"Ten months!" said my father with a sigh. "Ten months! and I have not finished fifty pages of my refutation of Wolfe's monstrous theory! In ten months a child! and I'll be bound complete,—hands, feet, eyes, ears, and nose!—and not like this poor Infant of Mind," and my father pathetically placed his hand on the treatise, "of which nothing is formed and shaped, not even the first joint of the little finger! Why, my wife is a precious woman! Well, keep her quiet. Heaven preserve her, and send me strength—to support this blessing!"

"But your honor will look at the baby? Come, sir!" and Mrs. Primmins laid hold of my father's sleeve coaxingly.

"Look at it,—to be sure," said my father, kindly; "look at it, certainly: it is but fair to poor Mrs. Caxton, after taking so much trouble, dear soul!"

Therewith my father, drawing his dressing-robe round him in more stately folds, followed Mrs. Primmins upstairs into a room very carefully darkened.

"How are you, my dear?" said my father, with compassionate tenderness, as he groped his way to the bed.

A faint voice muttered: "Better now, and so happy!" And at

the same moment Mrs. Primmins pulled my father away, lifted a coverlid from a small cradle, and holding a candle within an inch of an undeveloped nose, cried emphatically, "There—bless it!"

"Of course, ma'am, I bless it," said my father, rather peevishly. "It is my duty to bless it—Bless It! And this, then, is the way we come into the world!—red, very red,—blushing for all the follies we are destined to commit."

My father sat down on the nurse's chair, the women grouped round him. He continued to gaze on the contents of the cradle, and at length said, musingly, "And Homer was once like this!"

At this moment—and no wonder, considering the propinquity of the candle to his visual organs—Homer's infant likeness commenced the first untutored melodies of nature.

"Homer improved greatly in singing as he grew older," observed Mr. Squills, the accoucheur, who was engaged in some mysteries in a corner of the room.

My father stopped his ears. "Little things can make a great noise," said he, philosophically; "and the smaller the thing; the greater noise it can make."

So saying, he crept on tiptoe to the bed, and clasping the pale hand held out to him, whispered some words that no doubt charmed and soothed the ear that heard them, for that pale hand was suddenly drawn from his own and thrown tenderly round his neck. The sound of a gentle kiss was heard through the stillness.

"Mr. Caxton, sir," cried Mr. Squills, in rebuke, "you agitate my patient; you must retire."

My father raised his mild face, looked round apologetically, brushed his eyes with the back of his hand, stole to the door, and vanished.

"I think," said a kind gossip seated at the other side of my mother's bed, "I think, my dear, that Mr. Caxton might have shown more joy,—more natural feeling, I may say,—at the sight of the baby: and Such a baby! But all men are just the same, my dear,—brutes,—all brutes, depend upon it!"

"Poor Austin!" sighed my mother, feebly; "how little you understand him!"

"And now I shall clear the room," said Mr. Squills. "Go to sleep, Mrs. Caxton."

"Mr. Squills," exclaimed my mother, and the bed-curtains trembled, "pray see that Mr. Caxton does not set himself on fire. And, Mr. Squills, tell him not to be vexed and miss me,—I shall be down very soon,—sha' n't I?"

"If you keep yourself easy, you will, ma'am."

"Pray, say so. And, Primmins—"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Every one, I fear, is neglecting your master. Be sure," and my mother's lips approached close to Mrs. Primmins' ear, "be sure that you—air his nightcap yourself."

"Tender creatures those women," soliloquized Mr. Squills as, after clearing the room of all present save Mrs. Primmins and the nurse, he took his way towards my father's study. Encountering the footman in the passage, "John," said he, "take supper into

your master's room, and make us some punch, will you,—stiffish!"

CHAPTER II

"Mr. Caxton, how on earth did you ever come to marry?" asked Mr. Squills, abruptly, with his feet on the hob, while stirring up his punch.

That was a home question, which many men might reasonably resent; but my father scarcely knew what resentment was.

"Squills," said he, turning round from his books, and laying one finger on the surgeon's arm confidentially,—"Squills," said he, "I myself should be glad to know how I came to be married."

Mr. Squills was a jovial, good-hearted man,—stout, fat, and with fine teeth, that made his laugh pleasant to look at as well as to hear. Mr. Squills, moreover, was a bit of a philosopher in his way,—studied human nature in curing its diseases; and was accustomed to say that Mr. Caxton was a better book in himself than all he had in his library. Mr. Squills laughed, and rubbed his hands.

My father resumed thoughtfully, and in the tone of one who moralizes:—

"There are three great events in life, sir,—birth, marriage, and death. None know how they are born, few know how they die; but I suspect that many can account for the intermediate phenomenon—I cannot."

"It was not for money, it must have been for love," observed Mr. Squills; "and your young wife is as pretty as she is good."

"Ha!" said my father, "I remember."

"Do you, sir?" exclaimed Squills, highly amused. "How was it?"

My father, as was often the case with him, protracted his reply, and then seemed rather to commune with himself than to answer Mr. Squills.

"The kindest, the best of men," he murmured,—"Abyssus Eruditionis. And to think that he bestowed on me the only fortune he had to leave, instead of to his own flesh and blood, Jack and Kitty,—all, at least, that I could grasp, deficiente manu, of his Latin, his Greek, his Orientals. What do I not owe to him?"

"To whom?" asked Squills. "Good Lord! what's the man talking about?"

"Yes, sir," said my father, rousing himself, "such was Giles Tibbets, M. A., Sol Scientiarum, tutor to the humble scholar you address, and father to poor Kitty. He left me his Elzevirs; he left me also his orphan daughter."

"Oh! as a wife—"

"No, as a ward. So she came to live in my house. I am sure there was no harm in it. But my neighbors said there was, and the widow Weltraum told me the girl's character would suffer. What could I do?—Oh, yes, I recollect all now! I married her, that my old friend's child might have a roof to her head, and come to no harm. You see I was forced to do her that injury; for, after all,

poor young creature, it was a sad lot for her. A dull bookworm like me,—cochlea vitam agens, Mr. Squills,—leading the life of a snail! But my shell was all I could offer to my poor friend's orphan."

"Mr. Caxton, I honor you," said Squills, emphatically, jumping up, and spilling half a tumblerful of scalding punch over my father's legs. "You have a heart, sir; and I understand why your wife loves you. You seem a cold man, but you have tears in your eyes at this moment."

"I dare say I have," said my father, rubbing his shins; "it was boiling!"

"And your son will be a comfort to you both," said Mr. Squills, reseating himself, and, in his friendly emotion, wholly abstracted from all consciousness of the suffering he had inflicted; "he will be a dove of peace to your ark."

"I don't doubt it," said my father, ruefully; "only those doves, when they are small, are a very noisy sort of birds—non talium avium cantos somnum reducent. However, it might have been worse. Leda had twins."

"So had Mrs. Barnabas last week," rejoined the accoucheur. "Who knows what may be in store for you yet? Here's a health to Master Caxton, and lots of brothers and sisters to him."

"Brothers and sisters! I am sure Mrs. Caxton will never think of such a thing, sir," said my father, almost indignantly; "she's much too good a wife to behave so. Once in a way it is all very well; but twice—and as it is, not a paper in its place, nor a pen

mended the last three days: I, too, who can only write cuspide duriuscula,—and the baker coming twice to me for his bill, too! The Ilithyiae, are troublesome deities, Mr. Squills."

"Who are the Ilithyiae?" asked the accoucheur.

"You ought to know," answered my father, smiling,—"the female daemons who presided over the Neogilos, or New-born. They take the name from Juno. See Homer, Book XI. By the by, will my Neogilos be brought up like Hector, or Astyanax—videlicet, nourished by its mother, or by a nurse?"

"Which do you prefer, Mr. Caxton?" asked Mr. Squills, breaking the sugar in his tumbler. "In this I always deem it my duty to consult the wishes of the gentleman."

"A nurse by all means, then," said my father. "And let her carry him upo kolpo, next to her bosom. I know all that has been said about mothers nursing their own infants, Mr. Squills; but poor Kitty is so sensitive that I think a stout, healthy peasant woman will be the best for the boy's future nerves, and his mother's nerves, present and future too. Heigh-ho! I shall miss the dear woman very much. When will she be up, Mr. Squills?"

"Oh, in less than a fortnight!"

"And then the Neogilos shall go to school,—upo kolpo,—the nurse with him, and all will be right again," said my father, with a look of sly, mysterious humor which was peculiar to him.

"School! when he's just born?"

"Can't begin too soon," said my father, positively; "that's Helvetius' opinion, and it is mine too!"

CHAPTER III

That I was a very wonderful child, I take for granted; but nevertheless it was not of my own knowledge that I came into possession of the circumstances set down in my former chapters. But my father's conduct on the occasion of my birth made a notable impression upon all who witnessed it; and Mr. Squills and Mrs. Primmins have related the facts to me sufficiently often to make me as well acquainted with them as those worthy witnesses themselves. I fancy I see my father before me, in his dark-gray dressing-gown, and with his odd, half-sly, half-innocent twitch of the mouth, and peculiar puzzling look, from two quiet, abstracted, indolently handsome eyes, at the moment he agreed with Helvetius on the propriety of sending me to school as soon as I was born. Nobody knew exactly what to make of my father,—his wife excepted. The people of Abdera sent for Hippocrates to cure the supposed insanity of Democritus, "who at that time," saith Hippocrates, dryly, "was seriously engaged in philosophy." That same people of Abdera would certainly have found very alarming symptoms of madness in my poor father; for, like Democritus, "he esteemed as nothing the things, great or small, in which the rest of the world were employed." Accordingly, some set him down as a sage, some as a fool. The neighboring clergy respected him as a scholar, "breathing libraries;" the ladies despised him as an absent pedant who had

no more gallantry than a stock or a stone. The poor loved him for his charities, but laughed at him as a weak sort of man, easily taken in. Yet the squires and farmers found that, in their own matters of rural business, he had always a fund of curious information to impart; and whoever, young or old, gentle or simple, learned or ignorant, asked his advice, it was given with not more humility than wisdom. In the common affairs of life he seemed incapable of acting for himself; he left all to my mother; or, if taken unawares, was pretty sure to be the dupe. But in those very affairs, if another consulted him, his eye brightened, his brow cleared, the desire of serving made him a new being,—cautious, profound, practical. Too lazy or too languid where only his own interests were at stake, touch his benevolence, and all the wheels of the clock-work felt the impetus of the master-spring. No wonder that, to others, the nut of such a character was hard to crack! But in the eyes of my poor mother, Augustine (familiarly Austin) Caxton was the best and the greatest of human beings; and she ought to have known him well, for she studied him with her whole heart, knew every trick of his face, and, nine times out of ten, divined what he was going to say before he opened his lips. Yet certainly there were deeps in his nature which the plummet of her tender woman's wit had never sounded; and certainly it sometimes happened that, even in his most domestic colloquialisms, my mother was in doubt whether he was the simple, straightforward person he was mostly taken for. There was, indeed, a kind of suppressed, subtle irony about him, too

unsubstantial to be popularly called humor, but dimly implying some sort of jest, which he kept all to himself; and this was only noticeable when he said something that sounded very grave, or appeared to the grave very silly and irrational.

That I did not go to school—at least to what Mr. Squills understood by the word "school"—quite so soon as intended, I need scarcely observe. In fact, my mother managed so well—my nursery, by means of double doors, was so placed out of hearing—that my father, for the most part, was privileged, if he pleased, to forget my existence. He was once vaguely recalled to it on the occasion of my christening. Now, my father was a shy man, and he particularly hated all ceremonies and public spectacles. He became uneasily aware that a great ceremony, in which he might be called upon to play a prominent part, was at hand. Abstracted as he was, and conveniently deaf at times, he had heard such significant whispers about "taking advantage of the bishop's being in the neighborhood," and "twelve new jelly-glasses being absolutely wanted," as to assure him that some deadly festivity was in the wind. And when the question of godmother and godfather was fairly put to hire, coupled with the remark that this was a fine opportunity to return the civilities of the neighborhood, he felt that a strong effort at escape was the only thing left. Accordingly, having, seemingly without listening, heard the day fixed and seen, as they thought, without observing, the chintz chairs in the best drawing-room uncovered (my dear mother was the tidiest woman in the world), my father suddenly

discovered that there was to be a great book-sale, twenty miles off, which would last four days, and attend it he must. My mother sighed; but she never contradicted my father, even when he was wrong, as he certainly was in this case. She only dropped a timid intimation that she feared "it would look odd, and the world might misconstrue my father's absence,—had not she better put off the christening?"

"My dear," answered my father, "it will be my duty, by and by, to christen the boy,—a duty not done in a day. At present, I have no doubt that the bishop will do very well without me. Let the day stand, or if you put it off, upon my word and honor I believe that the wicked auctioneer will put off the book-sale also. Of one thing I am quite sure, that the sale and the christening will take place at the same time." There was no getting over this; but I am certain my dear mother had much less heart than before in uncovering the chintz chairs in the best drawing-room. Five years later this would not have happened. My mother would have kissed my father and said, "Stay," and he would have stayed. But she was then very young and timid; and he, wild man, not of the woods, but the cloisters, not yet civilized into the tractabilities of home. In short, the post-chaise was ordered and the carpetbag packed.

"My love," said my mother, the night before this Hegira, looking up from her work, "my love, there is one thing you have quite forgot to settle,—I beg pardon for disturbing you, but it is important!—baby's name: sha' n't we call him Augustine?"

"Augustine," said my father, dreamily,—"why that name's mine."

"And you would like your boy's to be the same?"

"No," said my father, rousing himself. "Nobody would know which was which. I should catch myself learning the Latin accidence, or playing at marbles. I should never know my own identity, and Mrs. Primmins would be giving me pap."

My mother smiled; and putting her hand, which was a very pretty one, on my father's shoulder, and looking at him tenderly, she said: "There's no fear of mistaking you for any other, even your son, dearest. Still, if you prefer another name, what shall it be?"

"Samuel," said my father. "Dr. Parr's name is Samuel."

"La, my love! Samuel is the ugliest name—"

My father did not hear the exclamation; he was again deep in his books. Presently he started up: "Barnes says Homer is Solomon. Read Omeros backward, in the Hebrew manner—"

"Yes, my love," interrupted my mother. "But baby's Christian name?"

"Omeros—Soremo—Solemo—Solomo!"

"Solomo,—shocking!" said my mother.

"Shocking indeed," echoed my father; "an outrage to common-sense." Then, after glancing again over his books, he broke out musingly: "But, after all, it is nonsense to suppose that Homer was not settled till his time."

"Whose?" asked my mother, mechanically. My father lifted

up his finger.

My mother continued, after a short pause., "Arthur is a pretty name. Then there 's William—Henry—Charles—Robert. What shall it be, love?"

"Pisistratus!" said my father (who had hung fire till then), in a tone of contempt,—"Pisistratus, indeed!"

"Pisistratus! a very fine name," said my mother, joyfully, —"Pisistratus Caxton. Thank you, my love: Pisistratus it shall be."

"Do you contradict me? Do you side with Wolfe and Heyne and that pragmatical fellow Vico? Do you mean to say that the Rhapsodists—"

"No, indeed," interrupted my mother. "My dear, you frighten me."

My father sighed, and threw himself back in his chair. My mother took courage and resumed.

"Pisistratus is a long name too! Still, one could call him Sisty."

"Siste, Viator," muttered my father; "that's trite!"

"No, Sisty by itself—short. Thank you, my dear."

Four days afterwards, on his return from the book-sale, to my father's inexpressible bewilderment, he was informed that Pisistratus was "growing the very image of him."

When at length the good man was made thoroughly aware of the fact that his son and heir boasted a name so memorable in history as that borne by the enslaver of Athens and the disputed arranger of Homer,—and it was asserted to be a name that he

himself had suggested,—he was as angry as so mild a man could be. “But it is infamous!” he exclaimed. “Pisistratus christened! Pisistratus, who lived six hundred years before Christ was born! Good heavens, madam! you have made me the father of an Anachronism.”

My mother burst into tears. But the evil was irremediable. An anachronism I was, and an anachronism I must continue to the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER IV

“Of course, sir, you will begin soon to educate your son yourself?” said Mr. Squills.

“Of course, sir,” said my father, “you have read Martinus Scriblerus?”

“I don’t understand you, Mr. Caxton.”

“Then you have not read Martinus Scriblerus, Mr. Squills!”

“Consider that I have read it; and what then?”

“Why, then, Squills,” said my father, familiarly, “you would know that though a scholar is often a fool, he is never a fool so supreme, so superlative, as when he is defacing the first unsullied page of the human history by entering into it the commonplaces of his own pedantry. A scholar, sir,—at least one like me,—is of all persons the most unfit to teach young children. A mother, sir,—a simple, natural, loving mother,—is the infant’s true guide to knowledge.”

"Egad! Mr. Caxton,—in spite of Helvetius, whom you quoted the night the boy was born,—egad! I believe you are right."

"I am sure of it," said my father,—"at least as sure as a poor mortal can be of anything. I agree with Helvetius, the child should be educated from its birth; but how? There is the rub: send him to school forthwith! Certainly, he is at school already with the two great teachers,—Nature and Love. Observe, that childhood and genius have the same master-organ in common,—inquisitiveness. Let childhood have its way, and as it began where genius begins, it may find what genius finds. A certain Greek writer tells us of some man who, in order to save his bees a troublesome flight to Hymettus, cut their wings, and placed before them the finest flowers he could select. The poor bees made no honey. Now, sir, if I were to teach my boy, I should be cutting his wings and giving him the flowers he should find himself. Let us leave Nature alone for the present, and Nature's loving proxy, the watchful mother."

Therewith my father pointed to his heir sprawling on the grass and plucking daisies on the lawn, while the young mother's voice rose merrily, laughing at the child's glee.

"I shall make but a poor bill out of your nursery, I see," said Mr. Squills.

Agreeably to these doctrines, strange in so learned a father, I thrived and flourished, and learned to spell, and make pot-hooks, under the joint care of my mother and Dame Primmins. This last was one of an old race fast dying away,—the race of

old, faithful servants; the race of old, tale-telling nurses. She had reared my mother before me; but her affection put out new flowers for the new generation. She was a Devonshire woman; and Devonshire women, especially those who have passed their youth near the sea-coast, are generally superstitious. She had a wonderful budget of fables. Before I was six years old, I was erudite in that primitive literature in which the legends of all nations are traced to a common fountain,—Puss in Boots, Tom Thumb, Fortunio, Fortunatus, Jack the Giant-Killer; tales, like proverbs, equally familiar, under different versions, to the infant worshippers of Budh and the hardier children of Thor. I may say, without vanity, that in an examination in those venerable classics I could have taken honors!

My dear mother had some little misgivings as to the solid benefit to be derived from such fantastic erudition, and timidly consulted my father thereon.

"My love," answered my father, in that tone of voice which always puzzled even my mother to be sure whether he was in jest or earnest, "in all these fables certain philosophers could easily discover symbolic significations of the highest morality. I have myself written a treatise to prove that Puss in Boots is an allegory upon the progress of the human understanding, having its origin in the mystical schools of the Egyptian priests, and evidently an illustration of the worship rendered at Thebes and Memphis to those feline quadrupeds of which they make both religious symbols and elaborate mummies."

"My dear Austin," said my mother, opening her blue eyes, "you don't think that Sisty will discover all those fine things in Puss in Boots!"

"My dear Kitty," answered my father, "you don't think, when you were good enough to take up with me, that you found in me all the fine things I have learned from books. You knew me only as a harmless creature who was happy enough to please your fancy. By and by you discovered that I was no worse for all the quartos that have transmigrated into ideas within me,—ideas that are mysteries even to myself. If Sisty, as you call the child (plague on that unlucky anachronism! which you do well to abbreviate into a dissyllable),—if Sisty can't discover all the wisdom of Egypt in Puss in Boots, what then? Puss in Boots is harmless, and it pleases his fancy. All that wakes curiosity is wisdom, if innocent; all that pleases the fancy now, turns hereafter to love or to knowledge. And so, my dear, go back to the nursery."

But I should wrong thee, O best of fathers! if I suffered the reader to suppose that because thou didst seem so indifferent to my birth, and so careless as to my early teaching, therefore thou wert, at heart, indifferent to thy troublesome Neogilos. As I grew older, I became more sensibly aware that a father's eye was upon me. I distinctly remember one incident, that seems to me, in looking back, a crisis in my infant life, as the first tangible link between my own heart and that calm great soul.

My father was seated on the lawn before the house, his straw hat over his eyes (it was summer), and his book on his lap.

Suddenly a beautiful delf blue-and-white flower-pot, which had been set on the window-sill of an upper story, fell to the ground with a crash, and the fragments spluttered up round my father's legs. Sublime in his studies as Archimedes in the siege, he continued to read,—*Impavidum ferient ruinae!*

"Dear, dear!" cried my mother, who was at work in the porch, "my poor flower-pot that I prized so much! Who could have done this? Primmins, Primmins!"

Mrs. Primmins popped her head out of the fatal window, nodded to the summons, and came down in a trice, pale and breathless.

"Oh!" said my mother, Mournfully, "I would rather have lost all the plants in the greenhouse in the great blight last May,—I would rather the best tea-set were broken! The poor geranium I reared myself, and the dear, dear flower-pot which Mr. Caxton bought for me my last birthday! That naughty child must have done this!"

Mrs. Primmins was dreadfully afraid of my father,—why, I know not, except that very talkative social persons are usually afraid of very silent shy ones. She cast a hasty glance at her master, who was beginning to evince signs of attention, and cried promptly, "No, ma'am, it was not the dear boy, bless his flesh, it was I!"

"You? How could you be so careless? and you knew how I prized them both. Oh, Primmins!" Primmins began to sob.

"Don't tell fibs, nursey," said a small, shrill voice; and Master

Sisty, coming out of the house as bold as brass, continued rapidly —"don't scold Primmins, mamma: it was I who pushed out the flower-pot."

"Hush!" said nurse, more frightened than ever, and looking aghast towards my father, who had very deliberately taken off his hat, and was regarding the scene with serious eyes wide awake. "Hush! And if he did break it, ma'am, it was quite an accident; he was standing so, and he never meant it. Did you, Master Sisty? Speak!" this in a whisper, "or Pa will be so angry."

"Well," said my mother, "I suppose it was an accident; take care in future, my child. You are sorry, I see, to have grieved me. There's a kiss; don't fret."

"No, mamma, you must not kiss me; I don't deserve it. I pushed out the flower-pot on purpose."

"Ha! and why?" said my father, walking up.

Mrs. Primmins trembled like a leaf.

"For fun!" said I, hanging my head,—"just to see how you'd look, papa; and that's the truth of it. Now beat me, do beat me!"

My father threw his book fifty yards off, stooped down, and caught me to his breast. "Boy," he said, "you have done wrong: you shall repair it by remembering all your life that your father blessed God for giving him a son who spoke truth in spite of fear! Oh! Mrs. Primmins, the next fable of this kind you try to teach him, and we part forever!"

From that time I first date the hour when I felt that I loved my father, and knew that he loved me; from that time, too, he

began to converse with me. He would no longer, if he met me in the garden, pass by with a smile and nod; he would stop, put his book in his pocket, and though his talk was often above my comprehension, still somehow I felt happier and better, and less of an infant, when I thought over it, and tried to puzzle out the meaning; for he had a way of suggesting, not teaching, putting things into my head, and then leaving them to work out their own problems. I remember a special instance with respect to that same flower-pot and geranium. Mr. Squills, who was a bachelor, and well-to-do in the world, often made me little presents. Not long after the event I have narrated, he gave me one far exceeding in value those usually bestowed on children,—it was a beautiful large domino-box in cut ivory, painted and gilt. This domino-box was my delight. I was never weary of playing, at dominos with Mrs. Primmins, and I slept with the box under my pillow.

"Ah!" said my father one day, when he found me ranging the ivory parallelograms in the parlor, "ah! you like that better than all your playthings, eh?"

"Oh, yes, papa!"

"You would be very sorry if your mamma were to throw that box out of the window and break it for fun." I looked beseechingly at my father, and made no answer.

"But perhaps you would be very glad," he resumed, "if suddenly one of those good fairies you read of could change the domino-box into a beautiful geranium in a beautiful blue-and-white flower-pot, and you could have the pleasure of putting it

on your mamma's window-sill."

"Indeed I would!" said I, half-crying.

"My dear boy, I believe you; but good wishes don't mend bad actions: good actions mend bad actions."

So saying, he shut the door and went out. I cannot tell you how puzzled I was to make out what my father meant by his aphorism. But I know that I played at dominos no more that day. The next morning my father found me seated by myself under a tree in the garden; he paused, and looked at me with his grave bright eyes very steadily.

"My boy," said he, "I am going to walk to ——," a town about two miles off: "will you come? And, by the by, fetch your domino-box. I should like to show it to a person there." I ran in for the box, and, not a little proud of walking with my father upon the high-road, we set out.

"Papa," said I by the way, "there are no fairies now."

"What then, my child?"

"Why, how then can my domino-box be changed into a geranium and a blue-and-white flower-pot?"

"My dear," said my father, leaning his hand on my shoulder, "everybody who is in earnest to be good, carries two fairies about with him,—one here," and he touched my heart, "and one here," and he touched my forehead.

"I don't understand, papa."

"I can wait till you do, Pisistratus. What a name!"

My father stopped at a nursery gardener's, and after looking

over the flowers, paused before a large double geranium. "Ah! this is finer than that which your mamma was so fond of. What is the cost, sir?"

"Only 7s. 6d.," said the gardener.

My father buttoned up his pocket. "I can't afford it to-day," said he, gently, and we walked out.

On entering the town, we stopped again at a china warehouse. "Have you a flower-pot like that I bought some months ago? Ah! here is one, marked 3s. 6d. Yes, that is the price. Well; when your mamma's birthday comes again, we must buy her another. That is some months to wait. And we can wait, Master Sisty. For truth, that blooms all the year round, is better than a poor geranium; and a word that is never broken, is better than a piece of delf."

My head, which had drooped before, rose again; but the rush of joy at my heart almost stifled me.

"I have called to pay your little bill," said my father, entering the shop of one of those fancy stationers common in country towns, and who sell all kinds of pretty toys and knick-knacks. "And by the way," he added, as the smiling shopman looked over his books for the entry, "I think my little boy here can show you a much handsomer specimen of French workmanship than that work-box which you enticed Mrs. Caxton into raffling for, last winter. Show your domino-box, my dear."

I produced my treasure, and the shopman was liberal in his commendations. "It is always well, my boy, to know what a thing is worth, in case one wishes to part with it. If my young

gentleman gets tired of his plaything, what will you give him for it?"

"Why, sir," said the shopman, "I fear we could not afford to give more than eighteen shillings for it, unless the young gentleman took some of these pretty things in exchange."

"Eighteen shillings!" said my father; "you would give that sum! Well, my boy, whenever you do grow tired of your box, you have my leave to sell it."

My father paid his bill and went out. I lingered behind a few moments, and joined him at the end of the street.

"Papa, papa," I cried, clapping my hands, "we can buy the geranium; we can buy the flower-pot." And I pulled a handful of silver from my pockets.

"Did I not say right?" said my father, passing his handkerchief over his eyes. "You have found the two fairies!"

Oh! how proud, how overjoyed I was when, after placing vase and flower on the window-sill, I plucked my mother by the gown and made her follow me to the spot.

"It is his doing and his money!" said my father; "good actions have mended the bad."

"What!" cried my mother, when she had learned all; "and your poor domino-box that you were so fond of! We will go back to-morrow and buy it back, if it costs us double."

"Shall we buy it back, Pisistratus?" asked my father.

"Oh, no—no—no! It would spoil all," I cried, burying my face on my father's breast.

"My wife," said my father, solemnly, "this is my first lesson to our child,—the sanctity and the happiness of self-sacrifice; undo not what it should teach to his dying day."

CHAPTER V

When I was between my seventh and my eighth year, a change came over me, which may perhaps be familiar to the notice of those parents who boast the anxious blessing of an only child. The ordinary vivacity of childhood forsook me; I became quiet, sedate, and thoughtful. The absence of play-fellows of my own age, the companionship of mature minds, alternated only by complete solitude, gave something precocious, whether to my imagination or my reason. The wild fables muttered to me by the old nurse in the summer twilight or over the winter's hearth, —the effort made by my struggling intellect to comprehend the grave, sweet wisdom of my father's suggested lessons,—tended to feed a passion for revery, in which all my faculties strained and struggled, as in the dreams that come when sleep is nearest waking. I had learned to read with ease, and to write with some fluency, and I already began to imitate, to reproduce. Strange tales akin to those I had gleaned from fairy-land, rude songs modelled from such verse-books as fell into my hands, began to mar the contents of marble-covered pages designed for the less ambitious purposes of round text and multiplication. My mind was yet more disturbed by the intensity of my home affections.

My love for both my parents had in it something morbid and painful. I often wept to think how little I could do for those I loved so well. My fondest fancies built up imaginary difficulties for them, which my arm was to smooth. These feelings, thus cherished, made my nerves over-susceptible and acute. Nature began to affect me powerfully; and, from that affection rose a restless curiosity to analyze the charms that so mysteriously moved me to joy or awe, to smiles or tears. I got my father to explain to me the elements of astronomy; I extracted from Squills, who was an ardent botanist, some of the mysteries in the life of flowers. But music became my darling passion. My mother (though the daughter of a great scholar,—a scholar at whose name my father raised his hat if it happened to be on his head) possessed, I must own it fairly, less book-learning than many a humble tradesman's daughter can boast in this more enlightened generation; but she had some natural gifts which had ripened, Heaven knows how! into womanly accomplishments. She drew with some elegance, and painted flowers to exquisite perfection. She played on more than one instrument with more than boarding-school skill; and though she sang in no language but her own, few could hear her sweet voice without being deeply touched. Her music, her songs, had a wondrous effect on me. Thus, altogether, a kind of dreamy yet delightful melancholy seized upon my whole being; and this was the more remarkable because contrary to my early temperament, which was bold, active, and hilarious. The change in my character began to act

upon my form. From a robust and vigorous infant, I grew into a pale and slender boy. I began to ail and mope. Mr. Squills was called in.

"Tonics!" said Mr. Squills; "and don't let him sit over his book. Send him out in the air; make him play. Come here, my boy: these organs are growing too large;" and Mr. Squills, who was a phrenologist, placed his hand on my forehead. "Gad, sir, here's an ideality for you; and, bless my soul, what a constructiveness!"

My father pushed aside his papers, and walked to and fro the room with his hands behind him; but he did not say a word till Mr. Squills was gone.

"My dear," then said he to my mother, on whose breast I was leaning my aching ideality—"my dear, Pisistratus must go to school in good earnest."

"Bless me, Austin!—at his age?"

"He is nearly eight years old."

"But he is so forward."

"It is for that reason he must go to school."

"I don't quite understand you, my love. I know he is getting past me; but you who are so clever—"

My father took my mother's hand: "We can teach him nothing now, Kitty. We send him to school to be taught—"

"By some schoolmaster who knows much less than you do—"

"By little schoolboys, who will make him a boy again," said my father, almost sadly. "My dear, you remember that when our Kentish gardener planted those filbert-trees, and when they were

in their third year, and you began to calculate on what they would bring in, you went out one morning, and found he had cut them down to the ground. You were vexed, and asked why. What did the gardener say? 'To prevent their bearing too soon.' There is no want of fruitfulness here: put back the hour of produce, that the plant may last."

"Let me go to school," said I, lifting my languid head and smiling on my father. I understood him at once, and it was as if the voice of my life itself answered him.

CHAPTER VI

A year after the resolution thus come to, I was at home for the holidays.

"I hope," said my mother, "that they are doing Sisty justice. I do think he is not nearly so quick a child as he was before he went to school. I wish you would examine him, Austin."

"I have examined him, my dear. It is just as I expected; and I am quite satisfied."

"What! you really think he has come on?" said my mother, joyfully.

"He does not care a button for botany now," said Mr. Squills.

"And he used to be so fond of music, dear boy!" observed my mother, with a sigh. "Good gracious, what noise is that?"

"Your son's pop-gun against the window," said my father. "It is lucky it is only the window; it would have made a less

deafening noise, though, if it had been Mr. Squills's head, as it was yesterday morning."

"The left ear," observed Squills; "and a very sharp blow it was too. Yet you are satisfied, Mr. Caxton?"

"Yes; I think the boy is now as great a blockhead as most boys of his age are," observed my father with great complacency.

"Dear me, Austin,—a great blockhead?"

"What else did he go to school for?" asked my father.

And observing a certain dismay in the face of his female audience, and a certain surprise in that of his male, he rose and stood on the hearth, with one hand in his waistcoat, as was his wont when about to philosophize in more detail than was usual to him.

"Mr. Squills," said he, "you have had great experience in families."

"As good a practice as any in the county," said Mr. Squills, proudly; "more than I can manage. I shall advertise for a partner."

"And," resumed my father, "you must have observed almost invariably that in every family there is what father, mother, uncle, and aunt pronounce to be one wonderful child."

"One at least," said Mr. Squills, smiling.

"It is easy," continued my father, "to say this is parental partiality; but it is not so. Examine that child as a stranger, and it will startle yourself. You stand amazed at its eager curiosity, its quick comprehension, its ready wit, its delicate perception. Often, too, you will find some faculty strikingly developed. The

child will have a turn for mechanics, perhaps, and make you a model of a steamboat; or it will have an ear tuned to verse, and will write you a poem like that it has got by heart from 'The Speaker;' or it will take to botany (like Pisistratus), with the old maid its aunt; or it will play a march on its sister's pianoforte. In short, even you, Squills, will declare that it is really a wonderful child."

"Upon my word," said Mr. Squills, thoughtfully, "there's a great deal of truth in what you say. Little Tom Dobbs is a wonderful child; so is Frank Stepington—and as for Johnny Styles, I must bring him here for you to hear him prattle on Natural History, and see how well he handles his pretty little microscope."

"Heaven forbid!" said my father. "And now let me proceed. These thaumata, or wonders, last till when, Mr. Squills?—last till the boy goes to school; and then, somehow or other, the thaumata vanish into thin air, like ghosts at the cockcrow. A year after the prodigy has been at the academy, father and mother, uncle and aunt, plague you no more with his doings and sayings: the extraordinary infant has become a very ordinary little boy. Is it not so, Mr. Squills?"

"Indeed you are right, sir. How did you come to be so observant? You never seem to—"

"Hush!" interrupted my father; and then, looking fondly at my mother's anxious face, he said soothingly: "Be comforted; this is wisely ordained, and it is for the best."

"It must be the fault of the school," said my mother, shaking her head.

"It is the necessity of the school, and its virtue, my Kate. Let any one of these wonderful children—wonderful as you thought Sisty himself—stay at home, and you will see its head grow bigger and bigger, and its body thinner and thinner—eh, Mr. Squills?—till the mind take all nourishment from the frame, and the frame, in turn, stint or make sickly the mind. You see that noble oak from the window. If the Chinese had brought it up, it would have been a tree in miniature at five years old, and at a hundred, you would have set it in a flowerpot on your table, no bigger than it was at five,—a curiosity for its maturity at one age; a show for its diminutiveness at the other. No! the ordeal for talent is school; restore the stunted mannikin to the growing child, and then let the child, if it can, healthily, hardily, naturally, work its slow way up into greatness. If greatness be denied it, it will at least be a man; and that is better than to be a little Johnny Styles all its life,—an oak in a pill-box."

At that moment I rushed into the room, glowing and panting, health on my cheek, vigor in my limbs, all childhood at my heart. "Oh, mamma, I have got up the kite—so high! Come and see! Do come, papa!"

"Certainly," said my father; "only don't cry so loud,—kites make no noise in rising; yet, you see how they soar above the world. Come, Kate. Where is my hat? Ah!—thank you, my boy."

"Kitty," said my father, looking at the kite, which, attached

by its string to the peg I had stuck into the ground, rested calm in the sky, “never fear but what our kite shall fly as high; only, the human soul has stronger instincts to mount upward than a few sheets of paper on a framework of lath. But observe that to prevent its being lost in the freedom of space,—we must attach it lightly to earth; and observe again, my dear, that the higher it soars, the more string we must give it.”

PART II

CHAPTER I

When I had reached the age of twelve, I had got to the head of the preparatory school to which I had been sent. And having thus exhausted all the oxygen of learning in that little receiver, my parents looked out for a wider range for my inspirations. During the last two years in which I had been at school, my love for study had returned; but it was a vigorous, wakeful, undreamy love, stimulated by competition, and animated by the practical desire to excel.

My father no longer sought to curb my intellectual aspirings. He had too great a reverence for scholarship not to wish me to become a scholar if possible; though he more than once said to me somewhat sadly, "Master books, but do not let them master you. Read to live, not live to read. One slave of the lamp is enough for a household; my servitude must not be a hereditary bondage."

My father looked round for a suitable academy; and the fame of Dr. Herman's "Philhellenic Institute" came to his ears.

Now, this Dr. Herman was the son of a German music-master who had settled in England. He had completed his own education at the University of Bonn; but finding learning too common a drug in that market to bring the high price at which he

valued his own, and having some theories as to political freedom which attached him to England, he resolved upon setting up a school, which he designed as an "Era in the History of the Human Mind." Dr. Herman was one of the earliest of those new-fashioned authorities in education who have, more lately, spread pretty numerously amongst us, and would have given, perhaps, a dangerous shake to the foundations of our great classical seminaries, if those last had not very wisely, though very cautiously, borrowed some of the more sensible principles which lay mixed and adulterated amongst the crotchets and chimeras of their innovating rivals and assailants.

Dr. Herman had written a great many learned works against every pre-existing method of instruction; that which had made the greatest noise was upon the infamous fiction of Spelling-Books: "A more lying, roundabout, puzzle-headed delusion than that by which we confuse the clear instincts of truth in our accursed systems of spelling, was never concocted by the father of falsehood." Such was the exordium of this famous treatise. For instance, take the monosyllable Cat. What a brazen forehead you must have when you say to an infant, c, a, t,—spell Cat: that is, three sounds, forming a totally opposite compound,—opposite in every detail, opposite in the whole,—compose a poor little monosyllable which, if you would but say the simple truth, the child will learn to spell merely by looking at it! How can three sounds, which run thus to the ear, see-eh-tee, compose the sound cat? Don't they rather compose the sound see-eh-te, or

ceaty? How can a system of education flourish that begins by so monstrous a falsehood, which the sense of hearing suffices to contradict? No wonder that the horn-book is the despair of mothers! From this instance the reader will perceive that Dr. Herman, in his theory of education, began at the beginning,—he took the bull fairly by the horns. As for the rest, upon a broad principle of eclecticism, he had combined together every new patent invention for youthful idea-shooting. He had taken his trigger from Hofwyl; he had bought his wadding from Hamilton; he had got his copper-caps from Bell and Lancaster. The youthful idea,—he had rammed it tight! he had rammed it loose! he had rammed it with pictorial illustrations! he had rammed it with the monitorial system! he had rammed it in every conceivable way, and with every imaginable ramrod! but I have mournful doubts whether he shot the youthful idea an inch farther than it did under the old mechanism of flint and steel! Nevertheless, as Dr. Herman really did teach a great many things too much neglected at schools; as, besides Latin and Greek, he taught a vast variety in that vague infinite nowadays called "useful knowledge;" as he engaged lecturers on chemistry, engineering, and natural history; as arithmetic and the elements of physical science were enforced with zeal and care; as all sorts of gymnastics were intermingled with the sports of the playground,—so the youthful idea, if it did not go farther, spread its shots in a wider direction, and a boy could not stay there five years without learning something: which is more than can be said of all schools! He learned at least

to use his eyes and his ears and his limbs; order, cleanliness, exercise, grew into habits; and the school pleased the ladies and satisfied the gentlemen,—in a word, it thrived; and Dr. Herman, at the time I speak of, numbered more than one hundred pupils. Now, when the worthy man first commenced the task of tuition, he had proclaimed the humanest abhorrence to the barbarous system of corporal punishment. But alas! as his school increased in numbers, he had proportionately recanted these honorable and anti-birchen ideas. He had—reluctantly, perhaps, honestly, no doubt; but with full determination—come to the conclusion that there are secret springs which can only be detected by the twigs of the divining-rod; and having discovered with what comparative ease the whole mechanism of his little government could be carried on by the admission of the birch-regulator, so, as he grew richer and lazier and fatter, the Philhellenic Institute spun along as glibly as a top kept in vivacious movement by the perpetual application of the lash.

I believe that the school did not suffer in reputation from this sad apostasy on the part of the head-master; on the contrary, it seemed more natural and English,—less outlandish and heretical. And it was at the zenith of its renown when, one bright morning, with all my clothes nicely mended, and a large plum-cake in my box, I was deposited at its hospitable gates.

Amongst Dr. Herman's various whimsicalities there was one to which he had adhered with more fidelity than to the anti-corporal punishment articles of his creed; and, in fact, it was

upon this that he had caused those imposing words, "Philhellenic Institute," to blaze in gilt capitals in front of his academy. He belonged to that illustrious class of scholars who are now waging war on our popular mythologies, and upsetting all the associations which the Etonians and Harrovians connect with the household names of ancient history. In a word, he sought to restore to scholastic purity the mutilated orthography of Greek appellatives. He was extremely indignant that little boys should be brought up to confound Zeus with Jupiter, Ares with Mars, Artemis with Diana,—the Greek deities with the Roman; and so rigidly did he inculcate the doctrine that these two sets of personages were to be kept constantly contradistinguished from each other, that his cross-examinations kept us in eternal confusion.

"Vat," he would exclaim to some new boy fresh from some grammar-school on the Etonian system—"Vat do you mean by dranslating Zeus Jupiter? Is dat amatory, irascible, cloud-compelling god of Olympus, vid his eagle and his aegis, in the smallest degree resembling de grave, formal, moral Jupiter Optimus Maximus of the Roman Capitol?—a god, Master Simpkins, who would have been perfectly shocked at the idea of running after innocent Fraulein dressed up as a swan or a bull! I put dat question to you vonce for all, Master Simpkins." Master Simpkins took care to agree with the Doctor. "And how could you," resumed Dr. Herman majestically, turning to some other criminal alumnus,—"how could you presume to dranslate

de Ares of Homer, sir, by the audacious vulgarism Mars?—Ares, Master Jones, who roared as loud as ten thousand men when he was hurt; or as you vill roar if I catch you calling him Mars again?—Ares, who covered seven plectra of ground? Confound Ares, the manslayer, with the Mars or Mavors whom de Romans stole from de Sabines!—Mars, de solemn and calm protector of Rome! Master Jones, Master Jones, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" And then waxing enthusiastic, and warming more and more into German gutturals and pronunciation, the good Doctor would lift up his hands, with two great rings on his thumbs, and exclaim: "Und Du! and dou, Aphrodite,—dou, whose bert de seasons vel-coined! dou, who didst put Atonis into a coffer, and den tid durn him into an anemone! dou to be called Venus by dat snivel-nosed little Master Budderfield!—Venus, who presided over Baumgartens and funerals and nasty tinking sewers!—Venus Cloacina, O mein Gott! Come here, Master Budderfield: I must flog you for dat; I must indeed, liddle boy!" As our Philhellenic preceptor carried his archaeological purism into all Greek proper names, it was not likely that my unhappy baptismal would escape. The first time I signed my exercise I wrote "Pisistratus Caxton" in my best round-hand. "And dey call your baba a scholar!" said the Doctor, contemptuously. "Your name, sir, is Greek; and, as Greek, you vill be dood enough to write it, vith vat you call an e and an o,—P,e,i,s,i,s,t,r,a,t,o,s. Vat can you expect for to come to, Master Caxton, if you don't pay de care dat is proper to your own dood name,—de e, and de o?

Ach? let me see no more of your vile corruptions! Mein Gott! Pi! ven de name is Pei!"

The next time I wrote home to my father, modestly implying that I was short of cash, that a trap-bat would be acceptable, and that the favorite goddess amongst the boys (whether Greek or Roman was very immaterial) was Diva Moneta, I felt a glow of classical pride in signing myself "your affectionate Peisistratos." The next post brought a sad damper to my scholastic exultation. The letter ran thus:—

> My Dear Son,—I prefer my old acquaintances Thucydides and Pisistratus to Thoukudides and Peisistratos. Horace is familiar to me, but Horatius is only known to me as Cocles. Pisistratus can play at trap-ball; but I find no authority in pure Greek to allow me to suppose that that game was known to Peisistratos. I should be too happy to send you a drachma or so, but I have no coins in my possession current at Athens at the time when Pisistratus was spelt Peisistratos.—Your affectionate father,
> *A. CAXTON.*

Verily, here indeed was the first practical embarrassment produced by that melancholy anachronism which my father had so prophetically deplored. However, nothing like experience to prove the value of compromise in this world. Peisistratos continued to write exercises, and a second letter from Pisistratus was followed by the trap-bat.

CHAPTER II

I was somewhere about sixteen when, on going home for the holidays, I found my mother's brother settled among the household Lares. Uncle Jack, as he was familiarly called, was a light-hearted, plausible, enthusiastic, talkative fellow, who had spent three small fortunes in trying to make a large one.

Uncle Jack was a great speculator; but in all his speculations he never affected to think of himself,—it was always the good of his fellow-creatures that he had at heart, and in this ungrateful world fellow-creatures are not to be relied upon! On coming of age, he inherited L6,000, from his maternal grandfather. It seemed to him then that his fellow-creatures were sadly imposed upon by their tailors. Those ninth parts of humanity notoriously eked out their fractional existence by asking nine times too much for the clothing which civilization, and perhaps a change of climate, render more necessary to us than to our predecessors, the Picts. Out of pure philanthropy, Uncle Jack started a "Grand National Benevolent Clothing Company," which undertook to supply the public with inexpressibles of the best Saxon cloth at 7s. 6d. a pair; coats, superfine, L1 18s.; and waistcoats at so much per dozen,—they were all to be worked off by steam. Thus the rascally tailors were to be put down, humanity clad, and the philanthropists rewarded (but that was a secondary consideration) with a clear return of thirty per cent. In spite of the evident charitableness

of this Christian design, and the irrefragable calculations upon which it was based, this company died a victim to the ignorance and unthankfulness of our fellow-creatures; and all that remained of Jack's L6,000, was a fifty-fourth share in a small steam-engine, a large assortment of ready-made pantaloons, and the liabilities of the directors.

Uncle Jack disappeared, and went on his travels. The same spirit of philanthropy which characterized the speculations of his purse attended the risks of his person. Uncle Jack had a natural leaning towards all distressed communities: if any tribe, race, or nation was down in the world, Uncle Jack threw himself plump into the scale to redress the balance. Poles, Greeks (the last were then fighting the Turks), Mexicans, Spaniards, —Uncle Jack thrust his nose into all their squabbles! Heaven forbid I should mock thee, poor Uncle Jack, for those generous predilections towards the unfortunate; only, whenever a nation is in a misfortune, there is always a job going on! The Polish cause, the Greek cause, the Mexican cause, and the Spanish cause are necessarily mixed up with loans and subscriptions. These Continental patriots, when they take up the sword with one hand, generally contrive to thrust their other hand deep into their neighbor's breeches' pockets. Uncle Jack went to Greece, thence he went to Spain, thence to Mexico. No doubt he was of great service to those afflicted populations, for he came back with unanswerable proof of their gratitude in the shape of L3,000. Shortly after this appeared a prospectus of

the "New, Grand, National, Benevolent Insurance Company, for the Industrial Classes." This invaluable document, after setting forth the immense benefits to society arising from habits of providence and the introduction of insurance companies,—proving the infamous rate of premiums exacted by the existent offices, and their inapplicability to the wants of the honest artisan, and declaring that nothing but the purest intentions of benefiting their fellow-creatures, and raising the moral tone of society, had led the directors to institute a new society, founded on the noblest principles and the most moderate calculations,—proceeded to demonstrate that twenty-four and a half per cent was the smallest possible return the shareholders could anticipate. The company began under the fairest auspices; an archbishop was caught as president, on the condition always that he should give nothing but his name to the society. Uncle Jack—more euphoniously designated as "the celebrated philanthropist, John Jones Tibbets, Esquire"—was honorary secretary, and the capital stated at two millions. But such was the obtuseness of the industrial classes, so little did they perceive the benefits of subscribing one-and-ninepence a-week from the age of twenty-one to fifty, in order to secure at the latter age the annuity of L18, that the company dissolved into thin air, and with it dissolved also Uncle Jack's L3,000. Nothing more was then seen or heard of him for three years. So obscure was his existence that on the death of an aunt, who left him a small farm in Cornwall, it was necessary to advertise that "If John Jones Tibbets, Esq., would

apply to Messrs. Blunt & Tin, Lothbury, between the hours of ten and four, he would hear of something to his advantage." But even as a conjurer declares that he will call the ace of spades, and the ace of spades, that you thought you had safely under your foot, turns up on the table,—so with this advertisement suddenly turned up Uncle Jack. With inconceivable satisfaction did the new landowner settle himself in his comfortable homestead. The farm, which was about two hundred acres, was in the best possible condition, and saving one or two chemical preparations, which cost Uncle Jack, upon the most scientific principles, thirty acres of buckwheat, the ears of which came up, poor things, all spotted and speckled as if they had been inoculated with the small-pox, Uncle Jack for the first two years was a thriving man. Unluckily, however, one day Uncle Jack discovered a coal-mine in a beautiful field of Swedish turnips; in another week the house was full of engineers and naturalists, and in another month appeared; in my uncle's best style, much improved by practice, a prospectus of the "Grand National Anti-Monopoly Coal Company, instituted on behalf of the poor householders of London, and against the Monster Monopoly of the London Coal Wharves.

"A vein of the finest coal has been discovered on the estates of the celebrated philanthropist, John Jones Tibbets, Esq. This new mine, the Molly Wheel, having been satisfactorily tested by that eminent engineer, Giles Compass, Esq., promises an inexhaustible field to the energies of the benevolent and the

wealth of the capitalist. It is calculated that the best coals may be delivered, screened, at the mouth of the Thames for 18s. per load, yielding a profit of not less than forty-eight per cent to the shareholders. Shares L50, to be paid in five instalments. Capital to be subscribed, one million. For shares, early application must be made to Messrs. Blunt & Tin, solicitors, Lothbury."

Here, then, was something tangible for fellow-creatures to go on: there was land, there was a mine, there was coal, and there actually came shareholders and capital. Uncle Jack was so persuaded that his fortune was now to be made, and had, moreover, so great a desire to share the glory of ruining the monster monopoly of the London wharves, that he refused a very large offer to dispose of the property altogether, remained chief shareholder, and removed to London, where he set up his carriage and gave dinners to his fellow-directors. For no less than three years did this company flourish, having submitted the entire direction and working of the mines to that eminent engineer, Giles Compass. Twenty per cent was paid regularly by that gentleman to the shareholders, and the shares were at more than cent per cent, when one bright morning Giles Compass, Esq., unexpectedly removed himself to that wider field for genius like his, the United States; and it was discovered that the mine had for more than a year run itself into a great pit of water, and that Mr. Compass had been paying the shareholders out of their own capital. My uncle had the satisfaction this time of being ruined in very good company; three doctors of divinity,

two county members, a Scotch lord, and an East India director were all in the same boat,—that boat which went down with the coal-mine into the great water-pit!

It was just after this event that Uncle Jack, sanguine and light-hearted as ever, suddenly recollected his sister, Mrs. Caxton, and not knowing where else to dine, thought he would repose his limbs under my father's trabes citrea, which the ingenious W. S. Landor opines should be translated "mahogany." You never saw a more charming man than Uncle Jack.

All plump people are more popular than thin people. There is something jovial and pleasant in the sight of a round face! What conspiracy could succeed when its head was a lean and hungry-looking fellow, like Cassius? If the Roman patriots had had Uncle Jack amongst them, perhaps they would never have furnished a tragedy to Shakspeare. Uncle Jack was as plump as a partridge,—not unwieldy, not corpulent, not obese, not vastus, which Cicero objects to in an orator, but every crevice comfortably filled up. Like the ocean, "time wrote no wrinkles on his glassy [or brassy] brow." His natural lines were all upward curves, his smile most ingratiating, his eye so frank, even his trick of rubbing his clean, well-fed, English-looking hands, had something about it coaxing and debonnaire, something that actually decoyed you into trusting your money into hands so prepossessing. Indeed, to him might be fully applied the expression—Sedem animce in extremis digitis habet,—"He had his soul's seat in his finger-ends." The critics observe that few

men have ever united in equal perfection the imaginative with the scientific faculties. "Happy he," exclaims Schiller, "who combines the enthusiast's warmth with the worldly man's light:" light and warmth, Uncle Jack had them both. He was a perfect symphony of bewitching enthusiasm and convincing calculation. Dicaeopolis in the "Aeharnenses," in presenting a gentleman called Nicharchus to the audience, observes: "He is small, I confess, but, there is nothing lost in him: all is knave that is not fool." Parodying the equivocal compliment, I may say that though Uncle Jack was no giant, there was nothing lost in him. Whatever was not philanthropy was arithmetic, and whatever was not arithmetic was philanthropy. He would have been equally dear to Howard and to Cocker. Uncle Jack was comely too,—clear-skinned and florid, had a little mouth, with good teeth, wore no whiskers, shaved his beard as close as if it were one of his grand national companies; his hair, once somewhat sandy, was now rather grayish, which increased the respectability of his appearance; and he wore it flat at the sides and raised in a peak at the top; his organs of constructiveness and ideality were pronounced by Mr. Squills to be prodigious, and those freely developed bumps gave great breadth to his forehead. Well-shaped, too, was Uncle Jack, about five feet eight,—the proper height for an active man of business. He wore a black coat; but to make the nap look the fresher, he had given it the relief of gilt buttons, on—which were wrought a small crown and anchor; at a distance this button looked like the king's button,

and gave him the air of one who has a place about Court. He always wore a white neckcloth without starch, a frill, and a diamond pin, which last furnished him with observations upon certain mines of Mexico, which he had a great, but hitherto unsatisfied, desire of seeing worked by a grand National United Britons Company. His waistcoat of a morning was pale buff—of an evening, embroidered velvet; wherewith were connected sundry schemes of an "association for the improvement of native manufactures." His trousers, matutinally, were of the color vulgarly called "blotting-paper;" and he never wore boots,—which, he said, unfitted a man for exercise,—but short drab gaiters and square-toed shoes. His watch-chain was garnished with a vast number of seals; each seal, indeed, represented the device of some defunct company, and they might be said to resemble the scalps of the slain worn by the aboriginal Iroquois,—concerning whom, indeed, he had once entertained philanthropic designs, compounded of conversion to Christianity on the principles of the English Episcopal Church, and of an advantageous exchange of beaver-skins for Bibles, brandy, and gunpowder.

That Uncle Jack should win my heart was no wonder; my mother's he had always won, from her earliest recollection of his having persuaded her to let her great doll (a present from her godmother) be put up to a raffle for the benefit of the chimney-sweepers. "So like him,—so good!" she would often say pensively. "They paid sixpence apiece for the raffle,—twenty

tickets,—and the doll cost L2. Nobody was taken in, and the doll, poor thing (it had such blue eyes!) went for a quarter of its value. But Jack said nobody could guess what good the ten shillings did to the chimney-sweepers." Naturally enough, I say, my mother liked Uncle Jack; but my father liked him quite as well,—and that was a strong proof of my uncle's powers of captivation. However, it is noticeable that when some retired scholar is once interested in an active man of the world, he is more inclined to admire him than others are. Sympathy with such a companion gratifies at once his curiosity and his indolence; he can travel with him, scheme with him, fight with him, go with him through all the adventures of which his own books speak so eloquently, and all the time never stir from his easy-chair. My father said "that it was like listening to Ulysses to hear Uncle Jack!" Uncle Jack, too, had been in Greece and Asia Minor, gone over the site of the siege of Troy, eaten figs at Marathon, shot hares in the Peloponnesus, and drunk three pints of brown stout at the top of the Great Pyramid.

Therefore, Uncle Jack was like a book of reference to my father. Verily at times he looked on him as a book, and took him down after dinner as he would a volume of Dodwell or Pausanias. In fact, I believe that scholars who never move from their cells are not the less an eminently curious, bustling, active race, rightly understood. Even as old Burton saith of himself —"Though I live a collegiate student, and lead a monastic life, sequestered from those tumults and troubles of the world, I hear and see what is done abroad, how others run, ride, turmoil,

and macerate themselves in town and country,"—which citation sufficeth to show that scholars are naturally the most active men of the world; only that while their heads plot with Augustus, fight with Julius, sail with Columbus, and change the face of the globe with Alexander, Attila, or Mahomet, there is a certain mysterious attraction, which our improved knowledge of mesmerism will doubtless soon explain to the satisfaction of science, between that extremer and antipodal part of the human frame, called in the vulgate "the seat of honor," and the stuffed leather of an armed chair. Learning somehow or other sinks down to that part into which it was first driven, and produces therein a leaden heaviness and weight, which counteract those lively emotions of the brain that might otherwise render students too mercurial and agile for the safety of established order. I leave this conjecture to the consideration of experimentalists in the physics.

I was still more delighted than my father with Uncle Jack. He was full of amusing tricks, could conjure wonderfully, make a bunch of keys dance a hornpipe, and if ever you gave him half-a-crown, he was sure to turn it into a halfpenny.

He was only unsuccessful in turning my halfpennies into half-crowns.

We took long walks together, and in the midst of his most diverting conversation my uncle was always an observer. He would stop to examine the nature of the soil, fill my pockets (not his own) with great lumps of clay, stones, and rubbish, to analyze when he got home, by the help of some chemical

apparatus he had borrowed from Mr. Squills. He would stand an hour at a cottage door, admiring the little girls who were straw-platting, and then walk into the nearest farmhouses, to suggest the feasibility of "a national straw-plat association." All this fertility of intellect was, alas! wasted in that ingrata terra into which Uncle Jack had fallen. No squire could be persuaded into the belief that his mother-stone was pregnant with minerals; no farmer talked into weaving straw-plat into a proprietary association. So, even as an ogre, having devastated the surrounding country, begins to cast a hungry eye on his own little ones, Uncle Jack's mouth, long defrauded of juicier and more legitimate morsels, began to water for a bite of my innocent father.

CHAPTER III

At this time we were living in what may be called a very respectable style for people who made no pretence to ostentation. On the skirts of a large village stood a square red-brick house, about the date of Queen Anne. Upon the top of the house was a balustrade,—why, Heaven knows, for nobody, except our great tom-cat, Ralph, ever walked upon the leads; but so it was, and so it often is in houses from the time of Elizabeth, yea, even to that of Victoria. This balustrade was divided by low piers, on each of which was placed a round ball. The centre of the house was distinguishable by an architrave in the shape of a

triangle, under which was a niche,—probably meant for a figure; but the figure was not forthcoming. Below this was the window (encased with carved pilasters) of my dear mother's little sitting-room; and lower still, raised on a flight of six steps, was a very handsome-looking door, with a projecting porch. All the windows, with smallish panes and largish frames, were relieved with stone copings; so that the house had an air of solidity and well-to-do-ness about it,—nothing tricky on the one hand, nothing decayed on the other. The house stood a little back from the garden gates, which were large, and set between two piers surmounted with vases. Many might object that in wet weather you had to walk some way to your carriage; but we obviated that objection by not keeping a carriage. To the right of the house the enclosure contained a little lawn, a laurel hermitage, a square pond, a modest greenhouse, and half-a-dozen plots of mignonette, heliotrope, roses, pinks, sweet-William, etc. To the left spread the kitchen-garden, lying screened by espaliers yielding the finest apples in the neighborhood, and divided by three winding gravel-walks, of which the extremest was backed by a wall, whereon, as it lay full south, peaches, pears, and nectarines sunned themselves early into well-remembered flavor. This walk was appropriated to my father. Book in hand, he would, on fine days, pace to and fro, often stopping, dear man, to jot down a pencil-note, gesticulate, or soliloquize. And there, when not in his study, my mother would be sure to find him. In these deambulations, as he called them, he had generally

a companion so extraordinary that I expect to be met with a hillalu of incredulous contempt when I specify it. Nevertheless I vow and protest that it is strictly true, and no invention of an exaggerating romancer. It happened one day that my mother had coaxed Mr. Caxton to walk with her to market. By the way they passed a sward of green, on which sundry little boys were engaged upon the lapidation of a lame duck. It seemed that the duck was to have been taken to market, when it was discovered not only to be lame, but dyspeptic,—perhaps some weed had disagreed with its ganglionic apparatus, poor thing. However that be, the good-wife had declared that the duck was good for nothing; and upon the petition of her children, it had been consigned to them for a little innocent amusement, and to keep them out of harm's way. My mother declared that she never before saw her lord and master roused to such animation. He dispersed the urchins, released the duck, carried it home, kept it in a basket by the fire, fed it and physicked it till it recovered; and then it was consigned to the square pond. But lo! the duck knew its benefactor; and whenever my father appeared outside his door, it would catch sight of him, flap from the pond, gain the lawn, and hobble after him (for it never quite recovered the use of its left leg) till it reached the walk by the peaches; and there sometimes it would sit, gravely watching its master's deambulations, sometimes stroll by his side, and, at all events, never leave him till, at his return home, he fed it with his own hands; and, quacking her peaceful adieus, the nymph then retired

to her natural element.

With the exception of my mother's favorite morning-room, the principal sitting-rooms—that is, the study, the diningroom, and what was emphatically called "the best drawing-room," which was only occupied on great occasions—looked south. Tall beeches, firs, poplars, and a few oaks backed the house, and indeed surrounded it on all sides but the south; so that it was well sheltered from the winter cold and the summer heat. Our principal domestic, in dignity and station, was Mrs. Primmins, who was waiting gentlewoman, housekeeper, and tyrannical dictatrix of the whole establishment. Two other maids, a gardener, and a footman, composed the rest of the serving household. Save a few pasture-fields, which he let, my father was not troubled with land. His income was derived from the interest of about L15,000, partly in the Three per Cents, partly on mortgage; and what with my mother and Mrs. Primmins, this income always yielded enough to satisfy my father's single hobby for books, pay for my education, and entertain our neighbors, rarely indeed at dinner, but very often at tea. My dear mother boasted that our society was very select. It consisted chiefly of the clergyman and his family; two old maids who gave themselves great airs; a gentleman who had been in the East India service, and who lived in a large white house at the top of the hill; some half-a-dozen squires and their wives and children; Mr. Squills, still a bachelor; and once a year cards were exchanged —and dinners too—with certain aristocrats who inspired my

mother with a great deal of unnecessary awe, since she declared they were the most good-natured, easy people in the world, and always stuck their cards in the most conspicuous part of the looking-glass frame over the chimney-piece of the best drawing-room. Thus you perceive that our natural position was one highly creditable to us, proving the soundness of our finances and the gentility of our pedigree,—of which last more hereafter. At present I content myself with saying on that head that even the proudest of the neighboring squirearchs always spoke of us as a very ancient family. But all my father ever said, to evince pride of ancestry, was in honor of William Caxton, citizen and printer in the reign of Edward IV.,—Clarum et venerabile nomen! an ancestor a man of letters might be justly vain of.

"Heus," said my father, stopping short, and lifting his eyes from the Colloquies of Erasmus, "salve multum, jucundissime."

Uncle Jack was not much of a scholar, but he knew enough Latin to answer, "Salve tantundem, mi frater."

My father smiled approvingly. "I see you comprehend true urbanity, or politeness, as we phrase it. There is an elegance in addressing the husband of your sister as brother. Erasmus commends it in his opening chapter, under the head of Salutandi formuloe. And indeed," added my father, thoughtfully, "there is no great difference between politeness and affection. My author here observes that it is polite to express salutation in certain minor distresses of nature. One should salute a gentleman in yawning, salute him in hiccuping, salute him in sneezing, salute

him in coughing,—and that evidently because of your interest in his health; for he may dislocate his jaw in yawning, and the hiccup is often a symptom of grave disorder, and sneezing is perilous to the small blood-vessels of the head, and coughing is either a tracheal, bronchial, pulmonary, or ganglionic affection."

"Very true. The Turks always salute in sneezing, and they are a remarkably polite people," said Uncle Jack. "But, my dear brother, I was just looking with admiration at these apple-trees of yours. I never saw finer. I am a great judge of apples. I find, in talking with my sister, that you make very little profit by them. That's a pity. One might establish a cider orchard in this county. You can take your own fields in hand; you can hire more, so as to make the whole, say a hundred acres. You can plant a very extensive apple-orchard on a grand scale. I have just run through the calculations; they are quite startling. Take 40 trees per acre —that's the proper average—at 1s. 6d. per tree; 4,000 trees for 100 acres, L300; labor of digging, trenching, say L10 an acre, —total for 100 acres, L1,000. Pave the bottoms of the holes to prevent the tap-root striking down into the bad soil,—oh! I am very close and careful you see, in all minutiae; always was,— pave 'em with rubbish and stones, 6d. a hole; that for 4,000 trees the 100 acres is L100. Add the rent of the land, at 30s. an acre, —L150. And how stands the total?" Here Uncle Jack proceeded rapidly ticking off the items with his fingers:—

"Trees..... 300
Labor..... 1,000

Paving holes.... 100
Rent..... 150

Total..... L1,550

"That's your expense. Mark! Now to the profit. Orchards in Kent realize L100 an acre, some even L150; but let's be moderate, say only L50 an acre, and your gross profit per year, from a capital of L1,550, will be L5,000,—L5,000 a-year. Think of that, brother Caxton! Deduct 10 per cent, or L500 a-year, for gardeners' wages, manure, etc., and the net product is L4,500. Your fortune's made, man,—it is made; I wish you joy!" And Uncle Jack rubbed his hands.

"Bless me, father," said eagerly the young Pisistratus, who had swallowed with ravished ears every syllable and figure of this inviting calculation, "why, we should be as rich as Squire Rollick; and then, you know, sir, you could keep a pack of fox-hounds."

"And buy a large library," added Uncle Jack, with more subtle knowledge of human nature as to its appropriate temptations. "There's my friend the archbishop's collection to be sold."

Slowly recovering his breath, my father gently turned his eyes from one to the other; and then, laying his left hand on my head, while with the right he held up Erasmus rebukingly to Uncle Jack, said,—

"See how easily you can sow covetousness and avidity in the youthful mind. Ah, brother!"

"You are too severe, sir. See how the dear boy hangs his head!

Fie! natural enthusiasm of his years,—'gay hope by fancy fed,' as the poet says. Why, for that fine boy's sake you ought not to lose so certain an occasion of wealth, I may say, untold. For observe, you will form a nursery of crabs; each year you go on grafting and enlarging your plantation, renting,—nay, why not buying, more land? Gad, sir! in twenty years you might cover half the county; but say you stop short at 2,000 acres, why the net profit is L90,000 a-year. A duke's income,—a duke's; and going a-begging, as I may say."

"But stop," said I, modestly; "the trees don't grow in a year. I know when our last apple-tree was planted—it is five years ago —it was then three years old, and it only bore one half-bushel last autumn."

"What an intelligent lad it is! Good head there. Oh, he'll do credit to his great fortune, brother," said Uncle Jack, approvingly. "True, my boy. But in the mean while we could fill the ground, as they do in Kent, with gooseberries and currants, or onions and cabbages. Nevertheless, considering we are not great capitalists, I am afraid we must give up a share of our profits to diminish our outlay. So harkye, Pisistratus—look at him, brother, simple as he stands there, I think he is born with a silver spoon in his mouth —harkye, now to the mysteries of speculation. Your father shall quietly buy the land, and then, presto! we will issue a prospectus and start a company. Associations can wait five years for a return. Every year, meanwhile, increases the value of the shares. Your father takes, we say, fifty shares at L50 each, paying only an

instalment of L2 a share. He sells 35 shares at cent per cent. He keeps the remaining 15, and his fortune's made all the same; only it is not quite so large as if he had kept the whole concern in his own hands. What say you now, brother Caxton? Visne edere pomum? as we used to say at school."

"I don't want a shilling more than I have got," said my father, resolutely. "My wife would not love me better; my food would not nourish me more; my boy would not, in all probability, be half so hardy, or a tenth part so industrious; and—"

"But," interrupted Uncle Jack, pertinaciously, and reserving his grand argument for the last, "the good you would confer on the community; the progress given to the natural productions of your country; the wholesome beverage of cider brought within cheap reach of the laboring classes. If it was only for your sake, should I have urged this question? Should I now? Is it in my character? But for the sake of the public! mankind! of our fellow-creatures! Why, sir, England could not get on if gentlemen like you had not a little philanthropy and speculation."

"*Papae!*" exclaimed my father; "to think that England can't get on without turning Austin Caxton into an apple-merchant! My dear Jack, listen. You remind me of a colloquy in this book,—wait a bit, here it is, 'Pamphagus and Cocles.' Cocles recognizes his friend, who had been absent for many years, by his eminent and remarkable nose. Pamphagus says, rather irritably, that he is not ashamed of his nose. 'Ashamed of it! no, indeed,' says Cocles; 'I never saw a nose that could be put to so many uses!'

'Ha!' says Pamphagus (whose curiosity is aroused), 'uses! what uses?' Whereon (lepidissime frater!) Cocles, with eloquence as rapid as yours, runs on with a countless list of the uses to which so vast a development of the organ can be applied. 'If the cellar was deep, it could sniff up the wine like an elephant's trunk; if the bellows were missing, it could blow the fire; if the lamp was too glaring, it could suffice for a shade; it would serve as a speaking-trumpet to a herald; it could sound a signal of battle in the field; it would do for a wedge in wood-cutting, a spade for digging, a scythe for mowing, an anchor in sailing,'—till Painphagus cries out, 'Lucky dog that I am! and I never knew before what a useful piece of furniture I carried about with me.'" My father paused and strove to whistle; but that effort of harmony failed him, and he added, smiling, "So much for my apple-trees, brother John. Leave them to their natural destination of filling tarts and dumplings."

Uncle Jack looked a little discomposed for a moment; but he then laughed with his usual heartiness, and saw that he had not yet got to my father's blind side. I confess that my revered parent rose in my estimation after that conference; and I began to see that a man may not be quite without common sense, though he is a scholar. Indeed, whether it was that Uncle Jack's visit acted as a gentle stimulant to his relaxed faculties, or that I, now grown older and wiser, began to see his character more clearly, I date from those summer holidays the commencement of that familiar and endearing intimacy which ever after existed between my

father and myself. Often I deserted the more extensive rambles of Uncle Jack, or the greater allurements of a cricket-match in the village, or a day's fishing in Squire Rollick's preserves, for a quiet stroll with my father by the old peach wall,—sometimes silent, indeed, and already musing over the future, while he was busy with the past, but amply rewarded when, suspending his lecture, he would pour forth hoards of varied learning, rendered amusing by his quaint comments, and that Socratic satire which only fell short of wit because it never passed into malice. At some moments, indeed, the vein ran into eloquence; and with some fine heroic sentiment in his old books, his stooping form rose erect, his eye flashed, and you saw that he had not been originally formed and wholly meant for the obscure seclusion in which his harmless days now wore contentedly away.

CHAPTER IV

"Egad, sir, the county is going to the dogs! Our sentiments are not represented in parliament or out of it. The 'County Mercury' has ratted, and be hanged to it! and now we have not one newspaper in the whole shire to express the sentiments of the respectable part of the community!"

This speech was made on the occasion of one of the rare dinners given by Mr. and Mrs. Caxton to the grandees of the neighborhood, and uttered by no less a person than Squire Rollick, of Rollick Hall, chairman of the quarter-sessions.

I confess that I (for I was permitted on that first occasion not only to dine with the guests, but to outstay the ladies, in virtue of my growing years and my promise to abstain from the decanters),—I confess, I say, that I, poor innocent, was puzzled to conjecture what sudden interest in the county newspaper could cause Uncle Jack to prick up his ears like a warhorse at the sound of the drum and rush so incontinently across the interval between Squire Rollick and himself. But the mind of that deep and truly knowing man was not to be plumbed by a chit of my age. You could not fish for the shy salmon in that pool with a crooked pin and a bobbin, as you would for minnows; or, to indulge in a more worthy illustration, you could not say of him, as Saint Gregory saith of the streams of Jordan, "A lamb could wade easily through that ford."

"Not a county newspaper to advocate the rights of—" here my uncle stopped, as if at a loss, and whispered in my ear; "What are his politics?" "Don't know," answered I. Uncle Jack intuitively took down from his memory the phrase most readily at hand, and added, with a nasal intonation, "the rights of our distressed fellow-creatures!"

My father scratched his eyebrow with his fore-finger, as he was apt to do when doubtful; the rest of the company—a silent set--looked up.

"Fellow-creatures!" said Mr. Rollick,—"fellow-fiddlesticks!"

Uncle Jack was clearly in the wrong box. He drew out of it cautiously,—"I mean," said he, "our respectable fellow-

creatures;" and then suddenly it occurred to him that a "County Mercury" would naturally represent the agricultural interest, and that if Mr. Rollick said that the "'County Mercury' ought to be hanged," he was one of those politicians who had already begun to call the agricultural interest "a Vampire." Flushed with that fancied discovery, Uncle Jack rushed on, intending to bear along with the stream, thus fortunately directed, all the "rubbish"[1] subsequently shot into Covent Garden and Hall of Commerce.

"Yes, respectable fellow-creatures, men of capital and enterprise! For what are these country squires compared to our wealthy merchants? What is this agricultural interest that professes to be the prop of the land?"

"Professes!" cried Squire Rollick,—"it is the prop of the land; and as for those manufacturing fellows who have bought up the 'Mercury'—"

"Bought up the 'Mercury,' have they, the villains?" cried Uncle Jack, interrupting the Squire, and now bursting into full scent. "Depend upon it, sir, it is a part of a diabolical system of buying up,—which must be exposed manfully. Yes, as I was saying, what is that agricultural interest which they desire to ruin; which they declare to be so bloated; which they call 'a Vampire!'—they the true blood-suckers, the venomous millocrats? Fellow-creatures, Sir! I may well call distressed fellow-creatures the members of that much-suffering class of which you yourself are an ornament.

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[1] "We talked sad rubbish when we first began," says Mr. Cobden, in one of his speeches.

What can be more deserving of our best efforts for relief than a country gentleman like yourself, we'll say,—of a nominal L5,000 a-year,—compelled to keep up an establishment, pay for his fox-hounds, support the whole population by contributions to the poor-rates, support the whole church by tithes; all justice, jails, and prosecutions of the county-rates; all thoroughfares by the highway-rates; ground down by mortgages, Jews, or jointures; having to provide for younger children; enormous expenses for cutting his woods, manuring his model farm, and fattening huge oxen till every pound of flesh costs him five pounds sterling in oil-cake; and then the lawsuits necessary to protect his rights, —plundered on all hands by poachers, sheep-stealers, dog-stealers, churchwardens, overseers, gardeners, gamekeepers, and that necessary rascal, his steward. If ever there was a distressed fellow-creature in the world, it is a country gentleman with a great estate."

My father evidently thought this an exquisite piece of banter, for by the corner of his mouth I saw that he chuckled inly.

Squire Rollick, who had interrupted the speech by sundry approving exclamations, particularly at the mention of poor-rates, tithes, county-rates, mortgages, and poachers, here pushed the bottle to Uncle Jack, and said, civilly: "There's a great deal of truth in what you say, Mr. Tibbets. The agricultural interest is going to ruin; and when it does, I would not give that for Old England!" and Mr. Rollick snapped his finger and thumb. "But what is to be done,—done for the county? There's the rub."

"I was just coming to that," quoth Uncle Jack. "You say that you have not a county paper that upholds your cause and denounces your enemies."

"Not since the Whigs bought the '—shire Mercury.'"

"Why, good heavens! Mr. Rollick, how can you suppose that you will have justice done you if at this time of day you neglect the Press? The Press, sir—there it is—air we breathe! What you want is a great national—no, not a national—A Provincial proprietary weekly journal, supported liberally and steadily by that mighty party whose very existence is at stake. Without such a paper you are gone, you are dead,—extinct, defunct, buried alive; with such a paper,—well conducted, well edited by a man of the world, of education, of practical experience in agriculture and human nature, mines, corn, manure, insurances, Acts of Parliament, cattle-shows, the state of parties, and the best interests of society,—with such a man and such a paper, you will carry all before you. But it must be done by subscription, by association, by co-operation,—by a Grand Provincial Benevolent Agricultural Anti-innovating Society."

"Egad, sir, you are right!" said Mr. Rollick, slapping his thigh; "and I'll ride over to our Lord-Lieutenant to-morrow. His eldest son ought to carry the county."

"And he will, if you encourage the Press and set up a journal," said Uncle Jack, rubbing his hands, and then gently stretching them out and drawing them gradually together, as if he were already enclosing in that airy circle the unsuspecting guineas of

the unborn association.

All happiness dwells more in the hope than the possession; and at that moment I dare be sworn that Uncle Jack felt a livelier rapture circum proecordia, warming his entrails, and diffusing throughout his whole frame of five feet eight the prophetic glow of the Magna Diva Moneta, than if he had enjoyed for ten years the actual possession of King Croesus's privy purse.

"I thought Uncle Jack was not a Tory," said I to my father the next day.

My father, who cared nothing for politics, opened his eyes. "Are you a Tory or a Whig, papa?"

"Um!" said my father, "there's a great deal to be said on both sides of the question. You see, my boy, that Mrs. Primmins has a great many moulds for our butter-pats: sometimes they come up with a crown on them, sometimes with the more popular impress of a cow. It is all very well for those who dish up the butter to print it according to their taste or in proof of their abilities; it is enough for us to butter our bread, say grace, and pay for the dairy. Do you understand?"

"Not a bit, sir."

"Your namesake Pisistratus was wiser than you, then," said my father. "And now let us feed the duck. Where's your uncle?"

"He has borrowed Mr. Squills's mare, sir, and gone with Squire Rollick to the great lord they were talking of."

"Oho!" said my father; "brother Jack is going to print his butter!"

And indeed Uncle Jack played his cards so well on this occasion, and set before the Lord-Lieutenant, with whom he had a personal interview, so fine a prospectus and so nice a calculation that before my holidays were over, he was installed in a very handsome office in the county town, with private apartments over it, and a salary of L500 a-year, for advocating the cause of his distressed fellow-creatures, including noblemen, squires, yeomanry, farmers, and all yearly subscribers in the New Proprietary Agricultural Anti-Innovating—Shire Weekly Gazette. At the head of his newspaper Uncle Jack caused to be engraved a crown, supported by a flail and a crook, with the motto, "Pro rege et grege." And that was the way in which Uncle Jack printed his pats of butter.

CHAPTER V

I seemed to myself to have made a leap in life when I returned to school. I no longer felt as a boy. Uncle Jack, out of his own purse, had presented me with my first pair of Wellington boots; my mother had been coaxed into allowing me a small tail to jackets hitherto tail-less; my collars, which had been wont, spaniel-like, to flap and fall about my neck, now, terrier-wise, stood erect and rampant, encompassed with a circumvallation of whalebone, buckram, and black silk. I was, in truth, nearly seventeen, and I gave myself the airs of a man. Now, be it observed that that crisis in adolescent existence wherein we first

pass from Master Sisty into Mr. Pisistratus, or Pisistratus Caxton, Esq.; wherein we arrogate, and with tacit concession from our elders, the long-envied title of young man,—always seems a sudden and imprompt upshooting and elevation. We do not mark the gradual preparations thereto; we remember only one distinct period, in which all the signs and symptoms burst and effloresced together,—Wellington boots, coat-tail, cravat, down on the upper lip, thoughts on razors, reveries on young ladies, and a new kind of sense of poetry.

I began now to read steadily, to understand what I did read, and to cast some anxious looks towards the future, with vague notions that I had a place to win in the world, and that nothing is to be won without perseverance and labor; and so I went on till I was seventeen and at the head of the school, when I received the two letters I subjoin.

1.—FROM AUGUSTINE CAXTON, Esq.

> My Dear Son,—I have informed Dr. Herman that you will not return to him after the approaching holidays. You are old enough now to look forward to the embraces of our beloved Alma Mater, and I think studious enough to hope for the honors she bestows on her worthier sons. You are already entered at Trinity,—and in fancy I see my youth return to me in your image. I see you wandering where the Cam steals its way through those noble gardens; and, confusing you with myself, I recall the old dreams that haunted me when the chiming bells swung over the placid waters. Verum secretumque Mouseion, quam multa

dictatis, quam multa invenitis! There at that illustrious college, unless the race has indeed degenerated, you will measure yourself with young giants. You will see those who, in the Law, the Church, the State, or the still cloisters of Learning, are destined to become the eminent leaders of your age.

To rank amongst them you are not forbidden to aspire; he who in youth "can scorn delights, and love laborious days," should pitch high his ambition.

Your Uncle Jack says he has done wonders with his newspaper; though Mr. Rollick grumbles, and declares that it is full of theories, and that it puzzles the farmers. Uncle Jack, in reply, contends that he creates an audience, not addresses one, and sighs that his genius is thrown away in a provincial town. In fact, he really is a very clever man, and might do much in London, I dare say. He often comes over to dine and sleep, returning the next morning.

His energy is wonderful—and contagious. Can you imagine that he has actually stirred up the flame of my vanity, by constantly poking at the bars? Metaphor apart, I find myself collecting all my notes and commonplaces, and wondering to see how easily they fall into method, and take shape in chapters and books. I cannot help smiling when I add, that I fancy I am going to become an author; and smiling more when I think that your Uncle Jack should have provoked me into so egregious an ambition. However, I have read some passages of my book to your mother, and she says, "it is vastly fine," which is encouraging. Your mother has great good sense, though I don't mean to say that she

has much learning,—

which is a wonder, considering that Pic de la Mirandola was nothing to her father. Yet he died, dear great man, and never printed a line; while I—positively I blush to think of my temerity! Adieu, my son; make the best of the time that remains with you at the Philhellenic. A full mind is the true Pantheism, plena Jovis. It is only in some corner of the brain which we leave empty that Vice can obtain a lodging. When she knocks at your door, my son, be able to say, "No room for your ladyship; pass on." Your affectionate father,

A. CAXTON.

2.—FROM Mrs. CAXTON.

My Dearest Sisty,—You are coming home! My heart is so full of that thought that it seems to me as if I could not write anything else. Dear child, you are coming home; you have done with school, you have done with strangers,—you are our own, all our own son again! You are mine again, as you were in the cradle, the nursery, and the garden, Sisty, when we used to throw daisies at each other!

You will laugh at me so when I tell you that as soon as I heard you were coming home for good, I crept away from the room, and went to my drawer where I keep, you know, all my treasures. There was your little cap that I worked myself, and your poor little nankeen jacket that you were so proud to throw off—oh! and many other relies of you when you were little Sisty, and I was not the cold, formal "Mother" you call me now, but dear "Mamma." I kissed them, Sisty, and said, "My little child is coming back to me

again!" So foolish was I, I forgot all the long years that have passed, and fancied I could carry you again in my arms, and that I should again coax you to say "God bless papa." Well, well! I write now between laughing and crying. You cannot be what you were, but you are still my own dear son,—your father's son; dearer to me than all the world,—except that father. I am so glad, too, that you will come so soon,—come while your father is really warm with his book, and while you can encourage and keep him to it. For why should he not be great and famous?

Why should not all admire him as we do? You know how proud of him I always was; but I do so long to let the world know why I was so proud. And yet, after all, it is not only because he is so wise and learned, but because he is so good, and has such a large, noble heart. But the heart must appear in the book too, as well as the learning. For though it is full of things I don't understand, every now and then there is something I do understand,—that seems as if that heart spoke out to all the world.

Your uncle has undertaken to get it published, and your father is going up to town with him about it, as soon as the first volume is finished.

All are quite well except poor Mrs. Jones, who has the ague very bad indeed; Primmins has made her wear a charm for it, and Mrs. Jones actually declares she is already much better. One can't deny that there may be a great deal in such things, though it seems quite against the reason. Indeed your father says, "Why not? A charm must be accompanied by a strong wish on the part of the charmer that it may

succeed,—and what is magnetism but a wish?" I don't quite comprehend this; but, like all your father says, it has more than meets the eye, I am quite sure.

Only three weeks to the holidays, and then no more school, Sisty,— no more school! I shall have your room all done, freshly, and made so pretty; they are coming about it to-morrow.

The duck is quite well, and I really don't think it is quite as lame as it was.

God bless you, dear, dear child. Your affectionate happy mother.

K.C.

The interval between these letters and the morning on which I was to return home seemed to me like one of those long, restless, yet half-dreamy days which in some infant malady I had passed in a sick-bed. I went through my task-work mechanically, composed a Greek ode in farewell to the Philhellenic, which Dr. Herman pronounced a chef d'oeuvre, and my father, to whom I sent it in triumph, returned a letter of false English with it, that parodied all my Hellenic barbarisms by imitating them in my mother-tongue. However, I swallowed the leek, and consoled myself with the pleasing recollection that, after spending six years in learning to write bad Greek, I should never have any further occasion to avail myself of so precious an accomplishment.

And so came the last day. Then alone, and in a kind of delighted melancholy, I revisited each of the old haunts,—the

robbers' cave we had dug one winter, and maintained, six of us, against all the police of the little kingdom; the place near the pales where I had fought my first battle; the old beech-stump on which I sat to read letters from home! With my knife, rich in six blades (besides a cork-screw, a pen-picker, and a button-hook), I carved my name in large capitals over my desk. Then night came, and the bell rang, and we went to our rooms. And I opened the window and looked out. I saw all the stars, and wondered which was mine,—which should light to fame and fortune the manhood about to commence. Hope and Ambition were high within me; and yet, behind them stood Melancholy. Ah! who amongst you, readers, can now summon back all those thoughts, sweet and sad, —all that untold, half-conscious regret for the past,—all those vague longings for the future, which made a poet of the dullest on the last night before leaving boyhood and school forever?

PART III

CHAPTER I

It was a beautiful summer afternoon when the coach set me down at my father's gate. Mrs. Primmins herself ran out to welcome me; and I had scarcely escaped from the warm clasp of her friendly hand before I was in the arms of my mother.

As soon as that tenderest of parents was convinced that I was not famished, seeing that I had dined two hours ago at Dr. Herman's, she led me gently across the garden towards the arbor. "You will find your father so cheerful," said she, wiping away a tear. "His brother is with him."

I stopped. His brother! Will the reader believe it? I had never heard that he had a brother, so little were family affairs ever discussed in my hearing.

"His brother!" said I. "Have I then an Uncle Caxton as well as an Uncle Jack?"

"Yes, my love," said my mother. And then she added, "Your father and he were not such good friends as they ought to have been, and the Captain has been abroad. However, thank Heaven! they are now quite reconciled."

We had time for no more,—we were in the arbor. There, a table was spread with wine and fruit,—the gentlemen were at

their dessert; and those gentlemen were my father, Uncle Jack, Mr. Squills, and—tall, lean, buttoned-to-the-chin—an erect, martial, majestic, and imposing personage, who seemed worthy of a place in my great ancestor's "Boke of Chivalrie."

All rose as I entered; but my poor father, who was always slow in his movements, had the last of me. Uncle Jack had left the very powerful impression of his great seal-ring on my fingers; Mr. Squills had patted me on the shoulder and pronounced me "wonderfully grown;" my new-found relative had with great dignity said, "Nephew, your hand, sir,—I am Captain de Caxton;" and even the tame duck had taken her beak from her wing and rubbed it gently between my legs, which was her usual mode of salutation, before my father placed his pale hand on my forehead, and looking at me for a moment with unutterable sweetness, said, "More and more like your mother,—God bless you!"

A chair had been kept vacant for me between my father and his brother. I sat down in haste, and with a tingling color on my cheeks and a rising at my throat, so much had the unusual kindness of my father's greeting affected me; and then there came over me a sense of my new position. I was no longer a schoolboy at home for his brief holiday: I had returned to the shelter of the roof-tree to become myself one of its supports. I was at last a man, privileged to aid or solace those dear ones who had ministered, as yet without return, to me. That is a very strange crisis in our life when we come home for good. Home

seems a different thing; before, one has been but a sort of guest after all, only welcomed and indulged, and little festivities held in honor of the released and happy child. But to come home for good,—to have done with school and boyhood,—is to be a guest, a child no more. It is to share the everyday life of cares and duties; it is to enter into the confidences of home. Is it not so? I could have buried my face in my hands and wept!

My father, with all his abstraction and all his simplicity, had a knack now and then of penetrating at once to the heart. I verily believe he read all that was passing in mine as easily as if it had been Greek. He stole his arm gently round my waist and whispered, "Hush!" Then, lifting his voice, he cried aloud, "Brother Roland, you must not let Jack have the best of the argument."

"Brother Austin," replied the Captain, very formally, "Mr. Jack, if I may take the liberty so to call him—"

"You may indeed," cried Uncle Jack.

"Sir," said the Captain, bowing, "it is a familiarity that does me honor. I was about to say that Mr. Jack has retired from the field."

"Far from it," said Squills, dropping an effervescing powder into a chemical mixture which he had been preparing with great attention, composed of sherry and lemon-juice—"far from it. Mr. Tibbets—whose organ of combativeness is finely developed, by the by—was saying—"

"That it is a rank sin and shame in the nineteenth century,"

quoth Uncle Jack, "that a man like my friend Captain Caxton—"

"De Caxton, sir—Mr. Jack."

"De Caxton,—of the highest military talents, of the most illustrious descent,—a hero sprung from heroes,—should have served so many years, and with such distinction, in his Majesty's service, and should now be only a captain on half-pay. This, I say, comes of the infamous system of purchase, which sets up the highest honors for sale, as they did in the Roman empire—"

My father pricked up his ears; but Uncle jack pushed on before my father could get ready the forces of his meditated interruption.

"A system which a little effort, a little union, can so easily terminate. Yes, sir," and Uncle Jack thumped the table, and two cherries bobbed up and smote Captain de Caxton on the nose, "yes, sir, I will undertake to say that I could put the army upon a very different footing. If the poorer and more meritorious gentlemen, like Captain de Caxton, would, as I was just observing, but unite in a grand anti-aristocratic association, each paying a small sum quarterly, we could realize a capital sufficient to out-purchase all these undeserving individuals, and every man of merit should have his fair chance of promotion."

"Egad! sir," said Squills, "there is something grand in that, eh, Captain?"

"No, sir," replied the Captain, quite seriously; "there is in monarchies but one fountain of honor. It would be an interference with a soldier's first duty,—his respect for his

sovereign."

"On the contrary," said Mr. Squills, "it would still be to the sovereigns that one would owe the promotion."

"Honor," pursued the Captain, coloring up, and unheeding this witty interruption, "is the reward of a soldier. What do I care that a young jackanapes buys his colonelcy over my head? Sir, he does not buy from me my wounds and my services. Sir, he does not buy from me the medal I won at Waterloo. He is a rich man, and I am a poor man; he is called—colonel, because he paid money for the name. That pleases him; well and good. It would not please me; I had rather remain a captain, and feel my dignity, not in my title, but in the services by which it has been won. A beggarly, rascally association of stock-brokers, for aught I know, buy me a company! I don't want to be uncivil, or I would say damn 'em—Mr.—sir—Jack!"

A sort of thrill ran through the Captain's audience; even Uncle Jack seemed touched, for he stared very hard at the grim veteran, and said nothing. The pause was awkward; Mr. Squills broke it. "I should like," quoth he, "to see your Waterloo medal,—you have it not about you?"

"Mr. Squills," answered the Captain, "it lies next to my heart while I live. It shall be buried in my coffin, and I shall rise with it, at the word of command, on the day of the Grand Review!" So saying, the Captain leisurely unbuttoned his coat, and detaching from a piece of striped ribbon as ugly a specimen of the art of the silversmith (begging its pardon) as ever rewarded merit at the

expense of taste, placed the medal on the table.

The medal passed round, without a word, from hand to hand.

"It is strange," at last said my father, "how such trifles can be made of such value,—how in one age a man sells his life for what in the next age he would not give a button! A Greek esteemed beyond price a few leaves of olive twisted into a circular shape and set upon his head,—a very ridiculous head-gear we should now call it. An American Indian prefers a decoration of human scalps, which, I apprehend, we should all agree (save and except Mr. Squills, who is accustomed to such things) to be a very disgusting addition to one's personal attractions; and my brother values this piece of silver, which may be worth about five shillings, more than Jack does a gold mine, or I do the library of the London Museum. A time will come when people will think that as idle a decoration as leaves and scalps."

"Brother," said the Captain, "there is nothing strange in the matter. It is as plain as a pike-staff to a man who understands the principles of honor."

"Possibly," said my father, mildly. "I should like to hear what you have to say upon honor. I am sure it would very much edify us all."

CHAPTER II

"Gentlemen," began the Captain, at the distinct appeal thus made to him,—"Gentlemen, God made the earth, but man made

the garden. God made man, but man re-creates himself."

"True, by knowledge," said my father.

"By industry," said Uncle Jack.

"By the physical conditions of his body," said Mr. Squills. "He could not have made himself other than he was at first in the woods and wilds if he had fins like a fish, or could only chatter gibberish like a monkey. Hands and a tongue, sir,—these are the instruments of progress."

"Mr. Squills," said my father, nodding, "Anaxagoras said very much the same thing before you, touching the hands."

"I cannot help that," answered Mr. Squills; "one could not open one's lips, if one were bound to say what nobody else had said. But after all, our superiority is less in our hands than the greatness, of our thumbs."

"Albinus, 'De Sceleto,' and our own learned William Lawrence, have made a similar remark," again put in my father. "Hang it, sir!" exclaimed Squills, "what business have you to know everything?"

"Everything! No; but thumbs furnish subjects of investigation to the simplest understanding," said my father, modestly.

"Gentlemen," re-commenced my Uncle Roland, "thumbs and hands are given to an Esquimaux, as well as to scholars and surgeons,—and what the deuce are they the wiser for them? Sirs, you cannot reduce us thus into mechanism. Look within. Man, I say, re-creates himself. How? By The Principle Of Honor. His first desire is to excel some one else; his first impulse is

distinction above his fellows. Heaven places in his soul, as if it were a compass, a needle that always points to one end; namely, to honor in that which those around him consider honorable. Therefore, as man at first is exposed to all dangers from wild beasts, and from men as savage as himself, Courage becomes the first quality mankind must honor: therefore the savage is courageous; therefore he covets the praise for courage; therefore he decorates himself with the skins of the beasts he has subdued, or the the scalps of the foes he has slain. Sirs, don't tell me that the skins and the scalps are only hide and leather: they are trophies of honor. Don't tell me that they are ridiculous and disgusting: they become glorious as proofs that the savage has emerged out of the first brute-like egotism, and attached price to the praise which men never give except for works that secure or advance their welfare. By and by, sirs, our savages discover that they cannot live in safety amongst themselves unless they agree to speak the truth to each other: therefore Truth becomes valued, and grows into a principle of honor; so brother Austin will tell us that in the primitive times truth was always the attribute of a hero."

"Right," said my father; "Homer emphatically assigns it to Achilles."

"Out of truth comes the necessity for some kind of rude justice and law. Therefore men, after courage in the warrior, and truth in all, begin to attach honor to the elder, whom they intrust with preserving justice amongst them. So, sirs, Law is born—"

"But the first lawgivers were priests," quoth my father.

"Sirs, I am coming to that. Whence arises the desire of honor, but from man's necessity of excelling,—in other words, of improving his faculties for the benefit of others; though, unconscious of that consequence, man only strives for their praise? But that desire for honor is unextinguishable, and man is naturally anxious to carry its rewards beyond the grave. Therefore he who has slain most lions or enemies, is naturally prone to believe that he shall have the best hunting fields in the country beyond, and take the best place at the banquet. Nature, in all its operations, impresses man with the idea of an invisible Power; and the principle of honor that is, the desire of praise and reward—makes him anxious for the approval which that Power can bestow. Thence comes the first rude idea of Religion; and in the death-hymn at the stake, the savage chants songs prophetic of the distinctions he is about to receive. Society goes on; hamlets are built; property is established. He who has more than another has more power than another. Power is honored. Man covets the honor attached to the power which is attached to possession. Thus the soil is cultivated; thus the rafts are constructed; thus tribe trades with tribe; thus Commerce is founded, and Civilization commenced. Sirs, all that seems least connected with honor, as we approach the vulgar days of the present, has its origin in honor, and is but an abuse of its principles. If men nowadays are hucksters and traders, if even military honors are purchased, and a rogue buys his way to a peerage, still all arises from the desire for honor, which

society, as it grows old, gives to the outward signs of titles and gold, instead of, as once, to its inward essentials,—courage, truth, justice, enterprise. Therefore I say, sirs, that honor is the foundation of all improvement in mankind."

"You have argued like a schoolman, brother," said Mr. Caxton, admiringly; "but still, as to this round piece of silver, don't we go back to the most barbarous ages in estimating so highly such things as have no real value in themselves,—as could not give us one opportunity for instructing our minds?"

"Could not pay for a pair of boots," added Uncle Jack.

"Or," said Mr. Squills, "save you one twinge of the cursed rheumatism you have got for life from that night's bivouac in the Portuguese marshes,—to say nothing of the bullet in your cranium, and that cork-leg, which must much diminish the salutary effects of your constitutional walk."

"Gentlemen," resumed the Captain, nothing abashed, "in going back to those barbarous ages, I go back to the true principles of honor. It is precisely because this round piece of silver has no value in the market that it is priceless, for thus it is only a proof of desert. Where would be the sense of service in this medal, if it could buy back my leg, or if I could bargain it away for forty thousand a year? No, sirs, its value is this,—that when I wear it on my breast, men shall say, 'That formal old fellow is not so useless as he seems. He was one of those who saved England and freed Europe.' And even when I conceal it here," and, devoutly kissing the medal, Uncle Roland restored it

to its ribbon and its resting-place, “and no eye sees it, its value is yet greater in the thought that my country has not degraded the old and true principles of honor, by paying the soldier who fought for her in the same coin as that in which you, Mr. Jack, sir, pay your bootmaker’s bill. No, no, gentlemen. As courage was the first virtue that honor called forth, the first virtue from which all safety and civilization proceed, so we do right to keep that one virtue at least clear and unsullied from all the money-making, mercenary, pay-me-in-cash abominations which are the vices, not the virtues, of the civilization it has produced.”

My Uncle Roland here came to a full stop; and, filling his glass, rose and said solemnly: “A last bumper, gentlemen,—‘To the dead who died for England!’”

CHAPTER III

“Indeed, my dear, you must take it. You certainly have caught cold; you sneezed three times together.”

“Yes, ma’am, because I would take a pinch of Uncle Roland’s snuff, just to say that I had taken a pinch out of his box,—the honor of the thing, you know.”

“Ah, my dear! what was that very clever remark you made at the same time, which so pleased your father,—something about Jews and the college?”

“Jews and—oh! pulverem Olympicum collegisse juvat, my dear mother,—which means that it is a pleasure to take a pinch

out of a brave man's snuff-box. I say, mother, put down the posset. Yes, I'll take it; I will, indeed. Now, then, sit here,—that's right,—and tell me all you know about this famous old Captain. Imprimis, he is older than my father?"

"To be sure!" exclaimed my mother, indignantly. "He looks twenty years older; but there is only five years' real difference. Your father must always look young."

"And why does Uncle Roland put that absurd French de before his name; and why were my father and he not good friends; and is he married; and has he any children?"

Scene of this conference: my own little room, new papered on purpose for my return for good,—trellis-work paper, flowers and birds, all so fresh and so new and so clean and so gay, with my books ranged in neat shelves, and a writing-table by the window; and, without the window, shines the still summer moon. The window is a little open: you scent the flowers and the new-mown hay. Past eleven; and the boy and his dear mother are all alone.

"My dear, my dear, you ask so many questions at once!"

"Don't answer them, then. Begin at the beginning, as Nurse Primmins does with her fairy tales, 'Once on a time.'

"Once on a time, then," said my mother, kissing me between the eyes,—"once on a time, my love, there was a certain clergyman in Cumberland who had two sons; he had but a small living, and the boys were to make their own way in the world. But close to the parsonage, on the brow of a hill, rose an old ruin with one tower left, and this, with half the country round it, had once

belonged to the clergyman's family; but all had been sold,—all gone piece by piece, you see, my dear, except the presentation to the living (what they call the advowson was sold too), which had been secured to the last of the family. The elder of these sons was your Uncle Roland; the younger was your father. Now I believe the first quarrel arose from the absurdist thing possible, as your father says; but Roland was exceedingly touchy on all things connected with his ancestors. He was always poring over the old pedigree, or wandering amongst the ruins, or reading books of knight-errantry. Well, where this pedigree began, I know not, but it seems that King Henry II. gave some lands in Cumberland to one Sir Adam de Caxton; and from that time, you see, the pedigree went regularly from father to son till Henry V. Then, apparently from the disorders produced, as your father says, by the Wars of the Roses, there was a sad blank left,—only one or two names, without dates or marriages, till the time of Henry VII, except that in the reign of Edward IV. there was one insertion of a William Caxton (named in a deed). Now in the village church there was a beautiful brass monument to one Sir William de Caxton, who had been killed at the battle of Bosworth, fighting for that wicked king Richard III. And about the same time there lived, as you know, the great printer, William Caxton. Well, your father, happening to be in town on a visit to his aunt, took great trouble in hunting up all the old papers he could find at the Heralds' College; and, sure enough, he was overjoyed to satisfy himself that he was descended, not from that poor Sir William

who had been killed in so bad a cause, but from the great printer, who was from a younger branch of the same family, and to whose descendants the estate came in the reign of Henry VIII. It was upon this that your Uncle Roland quarrelled with him,—and, indeed, I tremble to think that they may touch on that matter again."

"Then, my dear mother, I must say my uncle was wrong there so far as common-sense is concerned; but still, somehow or other, I can understand it. Surely, this was not the only cause of estrangement?"

My mother looked down, and moved one hand gently over the other, which was her way when embarrassed. "What was it, my own mother?" said I, coaxingly.

"I believe—that is, I—I think that they were both attached to the same young lady."

"How! you don't mean to say that my father was ever in love with any one but you?"

"Yes, Sisty,—yes, and deeply! And," added my mother, after a slight pause, and with a very low sigh, "he never was in love with me; and what is more, he had the frankness to tell me so!"

"And yet you—"

"Married him—yes!" said my mother, raising the softest and purest eyes that ever lover could have wished to read his fate in; "yes, for the old love was hopeless. I knew that I could make him happy. I knew that he would love me at last, and he does so! My son, your father loves me!"

As she spoke, there came a blush, as innocent as virgin ever knew, to my mother's smooth cheek; and she looked so fair, so good, and still so young all the while that you would have said that either Dusius, the Teuton fiend, or Nock, the Scandinavian sea-imp, from whom the learned assure us we derive our modern Daimones, "The Deuce," and Old Nick, had possessed my father, if he had not learned to love such a creature.

I pressed her hand to my lips; but my heart was too full tot speak for a moment or so, and then I partially changed the subject.

"Well, and this rivalry estranged them more? And who was the lady?"

"Your father never told me, and I never asked," said my mother, simply. "But she was very different from me, I know. Very accomplished, very beautiful, very highborn."

"For all that, my father was a lucky man to escape her. Pass on. What did the Captain do?"

"Why, about that time your grandfather died; and shortly after an aunt, on the mother's side, who was rich and saving, died, and unexpectedly left each sixteen thousand pounds. Your uncle, with his share, bought back, at an enormous price, the old castle and some land round it, which they say does not bring him in three hundred a year. With the little that remained, he purchased a commission in the army; and the brothers met no more till last week, when Roland suddenly arrived."

"He did not marry this accomplished young lady?"

"No! but he married another, and is a widower."

"Why, he was as inconstant as my father, and I am sure without so good an excuse. How was that?"

"I don't know. He says nothing about it."

"Has he any children?"

"Two, a son—By the by, you must never speak about him. Your uncle briefly said, when I asked him what was his family, 'A girl, ma'am. I had a son, but—'

"'He is dead,' cried your father, in his kind, pitying voice."

"'Dead to me, brother; and you will never mention his name!' You should have seen how stern your uncle looked. I was terrified."

"But the girl,—why did not he bring her here?"

"She is still in France, but he talks of going over for her; and we have half promised to visit them both in Cumberland. But, bless me! is that twelve? and the posset quite cold!"

"One word more, dearest mother,—one word. My father's book,—is he still going on with it?"

"Oh yes, indeed!" cried my mother, clasping her hands; "and he must read it to you, as he does to me,—you will understand it so well. I have always been so anxious that the world should know him, and be proud of him as we are,—so—so anxious! For perhaps, Sisty, if he had married that great lady, he would have roused himself, been more ambitious,—and I could only make him happy, I could not make him great!"

"So he has listened to you at last?"

"To me?" said my mother, shaking her head and smiling gently. "No, rather to your Uncle Jack, who, I am happy to say, has at length got a proper hold over him."

"A proper hold, my dear mother! Pray beware of Uncle Jack, or we shall all be swept into a coal-mine, or explode with a grand national company for making gunpowder out of tea-leaves!"

"Wicked child!" said my mother, laughing; and then, as she took up her candle and lingered a moment while I wound my watch, she said, musingly: "Yet Jack is very, very clever; and if for your sake we could make a fortune, Sisty!"

"You frighten me out of my wits, mother! You are not in earnest?"

"And if my brother could be the means of raising him in the world—"

"Your brother would be enough to sink all the ships in the Channel, ma'am," said I, quite irreverently. I was shocked before the words were well out of my mouth; and throwing my arms round my mother's neck, I kissed away the pain I had inflicted.

When I was left alone and in my own little crib, in which my slumber had ever been so soft and easy, I might as well have been lying upon cut straw. I tossed to and fro; I could not sleep. I rose, threw on my dressing-gown, lighted my candle, and sat down by the table near the window. First I thought of the unfinished outline of my father's youth, so suddenly sketched before me. I filled up the missing colors, and fancied the picture explained all that had often perplexed my conjectures.

I comprehended, I suppose by some secret sympathy in my own nature (for experience in mankind could have taught me little enough), how an ardent, serious, inquiring mind, struggling into passion under the load of knowledge, had, with that stimulus sadly and abruptly withdrawn, sunk into the quiet of passive, aimless study. I comprehended how, in the indolence of a happy but unimpassioned marriage, with a companion so gentle, so provident and watchful, yet so little formed to rouse and task and fire an intellect naturally calm and meditative, years upon years had crept away in the learned idleness of a solitary scholar. I comprehended, too, how gradually and slowly, as my father entered that stage of middle life when all men are most prone to ambition, the long-silenced whispers were heard again, and the mind, at last escaping from the listless weight which a baffled and disappointed heart had laid upon it, saw once more, fair as in youth, the only true mistress of Genius,—Fame.

Oh! how I sympathized, too, in my mother's gentle triumph. Looking over the past, I could see, year after year, how she had stolen more and more into my father's heart of hearts; how what had been kindness had grown into love; how custom and habit, and the countless links in the sweet charities of home, had supplied that sympathy with the genial man which had been missed at first by the lonely scholar.

Next I thought of the gray, eagle-eyed old soldier, with his ruined tower and barren acres, and saw before me his proud, prejudiced, chivalrous boyhood, gliding through the ruins or

poring over the mouldy pedigree. And this son, so disowned,—for what dark offence? An awe crept over me. And this girl,—his ewe-lamb, his all,—was she fair? had she blue eyes like my mother, or a high Roman nose and beetle brows like Captain Roland? I mused and mused and mused; and the candle went out, and the moonlight grew broader and stiller; till at last I was sailing in a balloon with Uncle Jack, and had just tumbled into the Red Sea, when the well-known voice of Nurse Primmins restored me to life with a "God bless my heart! the boy has not been in bed all this 'varsal night!"

CHAPTER IV

As soon as I was dressed I hastened downstairs, for I longed to revisit my old haunts,—the little plot of garden I had sown with anemones and cresses; the walk by the peach wall; the pond wherein I had angled for roach and perch.

Entering the hall, I discovered my Uncle Roland in a great state of embarrassment. The maid-servant was scrubbing the stones at the hall-door; she was naturally plump,—and it is astonishing how much more plump a female becomes when she is on all-fours! The maid-servant, then, was scrubbing the stones, her face turned from the Captain; and the Captain, evidently meditating a sortie, stood ruefully gazing at the obstacle before him and hemming aloud. Alas, the maidservant was deaf! I stopped, curious to see how Uncle Roland would extricate

himself from the dilemma.

Finding that his hems were in vain, my uncle made himself as small as he could, and glided close to the left of the wall; at that instant the maid turned abruptly round towards the right, and completely obstructed, by this manoeuvre, the slight crevice through which hope had dawned on her captive. My uncle stood stock-still,—and, to say the truth, he could not have stirred an inch without coming into personal contact with the rounded charms which blockaded his movements. My uncle took off his hat and scratched his forehead in great perplexity. Presently, by a slight turn of the flanks, the opposing party, while leaving him an opportunity of return, entirely precluded all chance of egress in that quarter. My uncle retreated in haste, and now presented himself to the right wing of the enemy. He had scarcely done so, when, without looking behind her, the blockading party shoved aside the pail that crippled the range of her operations, and so placed it that it formed a formidable barricade, which my uncle's cork leg had no chance of surmounting. Therewith Captain Roland lifted his eyes appealingly to Heaven, and I heard him distinctly ejaculate—

"Would to Heaven she were a creature in breeches!"

But happily at this moment the maid-servant turned her head sharply round, and seeing the Captain, rose in an instant, moved away the pail, and dropped a frightened courtesy.

My uncle Roland touched his hat. "I beg you a thousand pardons, my good girl," said he; and, with a half bow, he slid into

the open air.

"You have a soldier's politeness, uncle," said I, tucking my arm into Captain Roland's.

"Tush, my boy," said he, smiling seriously, and coloring up to the temples; "tush, say a gentleman's! To us, sir, every woman is a lady, in right of her sex."

Now, I had often occasion later to recall that aphorism of my uncle's; and it served to explain to me how a man, so prejudiced on the score of family pride, never seemed to consider it an offence in my father to have married a woman whose pedigree was as brief as my dear mother's. Had she been a Montmorenci, my uncle could not have been more respectful and gallant than he was to that meek descendant of the Tibbetses. He held, indeed, which I never knew any other man, vain of family, approve or support,—a doctrine deduced from the following syllogisms: First, that birth was not valuable in itself, but as a transmission of certain qualities which descent from a race of warriors should perpetuate; namely, truth, courage, honor; secondly, that whereas from the woman's side we derive our more intellectual faculties, from the man's we derive our moral: a clever and witty man generally has a clever and witty mother; a brave and honorable man, a brave and honorable father. Therefore all the qualities which attention to race should perpetuate are the manly qualities, traceable only from the father's side. Again, he held that while the aristocracy have higher and more chivalrous notions, the people generally have shrewder and livelier ideas. Therefore, to prevent

gentlemen from degenerating into complete dunderheads, an admixture with the people, provided always it was on the female side, was not only excusable, but expedient; and, finally, my uncle held that whereas a man is a rude, coarse, sensual animal, and requires all manner of associations to dignify and refine him, women are so naturally susceptible of everything beautiful in sentiment and generous in purpose that she who is a true woman is a fit peer for a king. Odd and preposterous notions, no doubt, and capable of much controversy, so far as the doctrine of race (if that be any way tenable) is concerned; but then the plain fact is that my Uncle Roland was as eccentric and contradictory a gentleman—as—as—why, as you and I are, if we once venture to think for ourselves.

"Well, sir, and what profession are you meant for?" asked my uncle. "Not the army, I fear?"

"I have never thought of the subject, uncle."

"Thank Heaven," said Captain Roland, "we have never yet had a lawyer in the family, nor a stockbroker, nor a tradesman —ahem!"

I saw that my great ancestor the printer suddenly rose up in that hem.

"Why, uncle, there are honorable men in all callings."

"Certainly, sir. But in all callings honor is not the first principle of action."

"But it may be, sir, if a man of honor pursue it! There are some soldiers who have been great rascals!"

My uncle looked posed, and his black brows met thoughtfully. "You are right, boy, I dare say," he answered, somewhat mildly. "But do you think that it ought to give me as much pleasure to look on my old ruined tower if I knew it had been bought by some herring-dealer, like the first ancestor of the Poles, as I do now, when I know it was given to a knight and gentleman (who traced his descent from an Anglo-Dane in the time of King Alfred) for services done in Aquitaine and Gascony, by Henry the Plantagenet? And do you mean to tell me that I should have been the same man if I had not from a boy associated that old tower with all ideas of what its owners were, and should be, as knights and gentlemen? Sir, you would have made a different being of me if at the head of my pedigree you had clapped a herring-dealer,—though, I dare say, the herring-dealer might have been as good a man as ever the Anglo-Dane was, God rest him!"

"And for the same reason I suppose, sir, that you think my father never would have been quite the same being he is if he had not made that notable discovery touching our descent from the great William Caxton, the printer."

My uncle bounded as if he had been shot,—bounded so incautiously, considering the materials of which one leg was composed, that he would have fallen into a strawberry-bed if I had not caught him by the arm.

"Why, you—you—you young jackanapes!" cried the Captain, shaking me off as soon as he had regained his equilibrium. "You do not mean to inherit that infamous crotchet my brother has

got into his head? You do not mean to exchange Sir William de Caxton, who fought and fell at Bosworth, for the mechanic who sold black-letter pamphlets in the Sanctuary at Westminster?"

"That depends on the evidence, uncle!"

"No, sir; like all noble truths, it depends upon faith. Men, nowadays," continued my uncle, with a look of ineffable disgust, "actually require that truths should be proved."

"It is a sad conceit on their part, no doubt, my dear uncle; but till a truth is proved, how can we know that it is a truth?"

I thought that in that very sagacious question I had effectually caught my uncle. Not I. He slipped through it like an eel.

"Sir," said he, "whatever in Truth makes a man's heart warmer and his soul purer, is a belief, not a knowledge. Proof, sir, is a handcuff; belief is a wing! Want proof as to an ancestor in the reign of King Richard? Sir, you cannot even prove to the satisfaction of a logician that you are the son of your own father. Sir, a religious man does not want to reason about his religion; religion is not mathematics. Religion is to be felt, not proved. There are a great many things in the religion of a good man which are not in the catechism. Proof!" continued my uncle, growing violent—"Proof, sir, is a low, vulgar, levelling, rascally Jacobin; Belief is a loyal, generous, chivalrous gentleman! No, no; prove what you please, you shall never rob me of one belief that has made me—"

"The finest-hearted creature that ever talked nonsense," said my father, who came up, like Horace's deity, at the right moment.

"What is it you must believe in, brother, no matter what the proof against you?"

My uncle was silent, and with great energy dug the point of his cane into the gravel.

"He will not believe in our great ancestor the printer," said I, maliciously.

My father's calm brow was overcast in a moment. "Brother," said the Captain, loftily, "you have a right to your own ideas; but you should take care how they contaminate your child."

"Contaminate!" said my father, and for the first time I saw an angry sparkle flash from his eyes; but he checked himself on the instant. "Change the word, my dear brother."

"No, sir, I will not change it! To belie the records of the family!"

"Records! A brass plate in a village church against all the books of the College of Arms!"

"To renounce your ancestor, a knight who died in the field!"

"For the worst cause that man ever fought for!"

"On behalf of his king!"

"Who had murdered his nephews!"

"A knight! with our crest on his helmet."

"And no brains underneath it, or he would never have had them knocked out for so bloody a villain!"

"A rascally, drudging, money-making printer!"

"The wise and glorious introducer of the art that has enlightened a world. Prefer for an ancestor, to one whom scholar

and sage never name but in homage, a worthless, obscure, jolter-headed booby in mail, whose only record to men is a brass plate in a church in a village!"

My uncle turned round perfectly livid. "Enough, sir! enough! I am insulted sufficiently. I ought to have expected it. I wish you and your son a very good day."

My father stood aghast. The Captain was hobbling off to the iron gate; in another moment he would have been out of our precincts. I ran up and hung upon him. "Uncle, it is all my fault. Between you and me, I am quite of your side; pray forgive us both. What could I have been thinking of, to vex you so? And my father, whom your visit has made so happy!" My uncle paused, feeling for the latch of the gate. My father had now come up, and caught his hand. "What are all the printers that ever lived, and all the books they ever printed, to one wrong to thy fine heart, brother Roland? Shame on me! A bookman's weak point, you know! It is very true, I should never have taught the boy one thing to give you pain, brother Roland,—though I don't remember," continued my father, with a perplexed look, "that I ever did teach it him, either! Pisistratus, as you value my blessing, respect as your ancestor Sir William de Caxton, the hero of Bosworth. Come, come, brother!"

"I am an old fool," said Uncle Roland, "whichever way we look at it. Ah, you young dog, you are laughing at us both!"

"I have ordered breakfast on the lawn," said my mother, coming out from the porch, with her cheerful smile on her lips;

"and I think the devil will be done to your liking to-day, brother Roland."

"We have had enough of the devil already, my love," said my father, wiping his forehead.

So, while the birds sang overhead or hopped familiarly across the sward for the crumbs thrown forth to them, while the sun was still cool in the east, and the leaves yet rustled with the sweet air of morning, we all sat down to our table, with hearts as reconciled to each other, and as peaceably disposed to thank God for the fair world around us, as if the river had never run red through the field of Bosworth, and that excellent Mr. Caxton had never set all mankind by the ears with an irritating invention a thousand times more provocative of our combative tendencies than the blast of the trumpet and the gleam of the banner!

CHAPTER V

"Brother," said Mr. Caxton, "I will walk with you to the Roman encampment."

The Captain felt that this proposal was meant as the greatest peace-offering my father could think of; for, first, it was a very long walk, and my father detested long walks; secondly, it was the sacrifice of a whole day's labor at the Great Work. And yet, with that quick sensibility which only the generous possess, Uncle Roland accepted at once the proposal. If he had not done so, my father would have had a heavier heart for a month to come.

And how could the Great Work have got on while the author was every now and then disturbed by a twinge of remorse?

Half an hour after breakfast, the brothers set off arm-in-arm; and I followed, a little apart, admiring how sturdily the old soldier got over the ground, in spite of the cork leg. It was pleasant enough to listen to their conversation, and notice the contrasts between these two eccentric stamps from Dame Nature's ever-variable mould,—Nature, who casts nothing in stereotype; for I do believe that not even two fleas can be found identically the same.

My father was not a quick or minute observer of rural beauties. He had so little of the organ of locality that I suspect he could have lost his way in his own garden. But the Captain was exquisitely alive to external impressions,—not a feature in the landscape escaped him. At every fantastic gnarled pollard he halted to gaze; his eye followed the lark soaring up from his feet; when a fresher air came from the hill-top his nostrils dilated, as if voluptuously to inhale its delight. My father, with all his learning, and though his study had been in the stores of all language, was very rarely eloquent. The Captain had a glow and a passion in his words which, what with his deep, tremulous voice and animated gestures, gave something poetic to half of what he uttered. In every sentence of Roland's, in every tone of his voice and every play of his face, there was some outbreak of pride; but unless you set him on his hobby of that great ancestor the printer, my father had not as much pride as a homeopathist

could have put into a globule. He was not proud even of not being proud. Chafe all his feathers, and still you could rouse but the dove. My father was slow and mild, my uncle quick and fiery; my father reasoned, my uncle imagined; my father was very seldom wrong, my uncle never quite in the right; but, as my father once said of him, "Roland beats about the bush till he sends out the very bird that we went to search for. He is never in the wrong without suggesting to us what is the right." All in my uncle was stern, rough, and angular; all in my father was sweet, polished, and rounded into a natural grace. My uncle's character cast out a multiplicity of shadows, like a Gothic pile in a northern sky. My father stood serene in the light, like a Greek temple at mid-day in a southern clime. Their persons corresponded with their natures. My uncle's high, aquiline features, bronzed hue, rapid fire of eye, and upper lip that always quivered, were a notable contrast to my father's delicate profile, quiet, abstracted gaze, and the steady sweetness that rested on his musing smile. Roland's forehead was singularly high, and rose to a peak in the summit where phrenologists place the organ of veneration; but it was narrow, and deeply furrowed. Augustine's might be as high, but then soft, silky hair waved carelessly over it, concealing its height, but not its vast breadth, on which not a wrinkle was visible. And yet, withal, there was a great family likeness between the two brothers. When some softer sentiment subdued him, Roland caught the very look of Augustine; when some high emotion animated my father, you might have taken him for Roland. I

have often thought since, in the greater experience of mankind which life has afforded me, that if, in early years, their destinies had been exchanged,—if Roland had taken to literature, and my father had been forced into action,—each would have had greater worldly success. For Roland's passion and energy would have given immediate and forcible effect to study; he might have been a historian or a poet. It is not study alone that produces a writer, it is intensity. In the mind, as in yonder chimney, to make the fire burn hot and quick, you must narrow the draught. Whereas, had my father been forced into the practical world, his calm depth of comprehension, his clearness of reason, his general accuracy in such notions as he once entertained and pondered over, joined to a temper that crosses and losses could never ruffle, and utter freedom from vanity and self-love, from prejudice and passion, might have made him a very wise and enlightened counsellor in the great affairs of life,—a lawyer, a diplomatist, a statesman, for what I know, even a great general, if his tender humanity had not stood in the way of his military mathematics.

But as it was,—with his slow pulse never stimulated by action, and too little stirred by even scholarly ambition,—my father's mind went on widening and widening till the circle was lost in the great ocean of contemplation; and Roland's passionate energy, fretted into fever by every let and hindrance in the struggle with his kind, and narrowed more and more as it was curbed within the channels of active discipline and duty, missed its due career altogether, and what might have been the poet, contracted into

the humorist.

Yet who that had ever known ye, could have wished you other than ye were, ye guileless, affectionate, honest, simple creatures? —simple both, in spite of all the learning of the one, all the prejudices, whims, irritabilities, and crotchets of the other. There you are, seated on the height of the old Roman camp, with a volume of the Stratagems of Polyaenus (or is it Frontinus?) open on my father's lap; the sheep grazing in the furrows of the circumvallations; the curious steer gazing at you where it halts in the space whence the Roman cohorts glittered forth; and your boy-biographer standing behind you with folded arms, and—as the scholar read, or the soldier pointed his cane to each fancied post in the war—filling up the pastoral landscape with the eagles of Agricola and the scythed cars of Boadicea!

CHAPTER VI

"It is never the same two hours together in this country," said my Uncle Roland, as, after dinner, or rather after dessert, we joined my mother in the drawing-room.

Indeed, a cold, drizzling rain had come on within the last two hours, and though it was July, it was as chilly as if it had been October. My mother whispered to me, and I went out; in ten minutes more, the logs (for we live in a wooded country) blazed merrily in the grate. Why could not my mother have rung the bell and ordered the servant to light a fire? My dear reader, Captain

Roland was poor, and he made a capital virtue of economy!

The two brothers drew their chairs near to the hearth, my father at the left, my uncle at the right; and I and my mother sat down to "Fox and Geese."

Coffee came in,—one cup for the Captain, for the rest of the party avoided that exciting beverage. And on that cup was a picture of—His Grace the Duke of Wellington!

During our visit to the Roman camp my mother had borrowed Mr. Squills's chaise and driven over to our market-town, for the express purpose of greeting the Captain's eyes with the face of his old chief.

My uncle changed color, rose, lifted my mother's hand to his lips, and sat himself down again in silence.

"I have heard," said the Captain after a pause, "that the Marquis of Hastings, who is every inch a soldier and a gentleman,—and that is saying not a little, for he measures seventy-five inches from the crown to the sole,—when he received Louis XVIII. (then an exile) at Donnington, fitted up his apartments exactly like those his Majesty had occupied at the Tuileries. It was a kingly attention (my Lord Hastings, you know, is sprung from the Plantagenets),—a kingly attention to a king. It cost some money and made some noise. A woman can show the same royal delicacy of heart in this bit of porcelain, and so quietly that we men all think it a matter of course, brother Austin."

"You are such a worshipper of women, Roland, that it is melancholy to see you single. You must marry again!"

My uncle first smiled, then frowned, and lastly sighed somewhat heavily.

"Your time will pass slowly in your old tower, poor brother," continued my father, "with only your little girl for a companion."

"And the past!" said my uncle; "the past, that mighty world—"

"Do you still read your old books of chivalry,—Froissart and the Chronicles, Palmerin of England, and Amadis of Gaul?"

"Why," said my uncle, reddening, "I have tried to improve myself with studies a little more substantial. And," he added with a sly smile, "there will be your great book for many a long winter to come."

"Um!" said my father, bashfully.

"Do you know," quoth my uncle, "that Dame Primmins is a very intelligent woman,—full of fancy, and a capital story-teller?"

"Is not she, uncle?" cried I, leaving my fox in the corner. "Oh, if you could hear her tell the tale of King Arthur and the Enchanted Lake, or the Grim White Woman!"

"I have already heard her tell both," said my uncle.

"The deuce you have, brother! My dear, we must look to this. These captains are dangerous gentlemen in an orderly household. Pray, where could you have had the opportunity of such private communications with Mrs. Primmins?"

"Once," said my uncle, readily, "when I went into her room, while she mended my stock; and once—" He stopped short, and looked down.

"Once when? Out with it."

"When she was warming my bed," said my uncle, in a half-whisper.

"Dear!" said my mother, innocently, "that's how the sheets came by that bad hole in the middle. I thought it was the warming-pan."

"I am quite shocked!" faltered my uncle.

"You well may be," said my father. "A woman who has been heretofore above all suspicion! But come," he said, seeing that my uncle looked sad, and was no doubt casting up the probable price of twice six yards of holland, "but come, you were always a famous rhapsodist or tale-teller yourself. Come, Roland, let us have some story of your own,—something which your experience has left strong in your impressions."

"Let us first have the candles," said my mother.

The candles were brought, the curtains let down; we all drew our chairs to the hearth. But in the interval my uncle had sunk into a gloomy revery; and when we called upon him to begin, he seemed to shake off with effort some recollections of pain.

"You ask me," he said, "to tell you some tale which my own experience has left deeply marked in my impressions,—I will tell you one, apart from my own life, but which has often haunted me. It is sad and strange, ma'am."

"Ma'am, brother?" said my mother, reproachfully, letting her small hand drop upon that which, large and sunburnt, the Captain waved towards her as he spoke.

"Austin, you have married an angel!" said my uncle; and he was, I believe, the only brother-in-law who ever made so hazardous an assertion.

CHAPTER VII. MY UNCLE ROLAND'S TALE

"It was in Spain—no matter where or how—that it was my fortune to take prisoner a French officer of the same rank that I then held,—a lieutenant; and there was so much similarity in our sentiments that we became intimate friends,—the most intimate friend I ever had, sister, out of this dear circle. He was a rough soldier, whom the world had not well treated; but he never railed at the world, and maintained that he had had his deserts. Honor was his idol, and the sense of honor paid him for the loss of all else.

"We were both at that time volunteers in a foreign service, —in that worst of service, civil war,—he on one side, I the other, both, perhaps, disappointed in the cause we had severally espoused. There was something similar, too, in our domestic relationships. He had a son—a boy—who was all in life to him, next to his country and his duty. I too had then such a son, though of fewer years." (The Captain paused an instant; we exchanged glances, and a stifling sensation of pain and suspense was felt by all his listeners.) "We were accustomed, brother, to talk of these children, to picture their future, to compare our hopes and

dreams. We hoped and dreamed alike. A short time sufficed to establish this confidence. My prisoner was sent to head-quarters, and soon afterwards exchanged.

"We met no more till last year. Being then at Paris, I inquired for my old friend, and learned that he was living at R—, a few miles from the capital. I went to visit him. I found his house empty and deserted. That very day he had been led to prison, charged with a terrible crime. I saw him in that prison, and from his own lips learned his story. His son had been brought up, as he fondly believed, in the habits and principles of honorable men, and having finished his education, came to reside with him at R —. The young man was accustomed to go frequently to Paris. A young Frenchman loves pleasure, sister; and pleasure is found at Paris. The father thought it natural, and stripped his age of some comforts to supply luxuries to the son's youth.

"Shortly after the young man's arrival, my friend perceived that he was robbed. Moneys kept in his bureau were abstracted, he knew not how, nor could guess by whom. It must be done in the night. He concealed himself and watched. He saw a stealthy figure glide in, he saw a false key applied to the lock; he started forward, seized the felon, and recognized his son. What should the father have done? I do not ask you, sister! I ask these men: son and father, I ask you."

"Expelled him the house," cried I.

"Done his duty, and reformed the unhappy wretch," said my father. "Nemo repente turpissinus semper fait,—No man is

wholly bad all at once."

"The father did as you would have advised, brother. He kept the youth; he remonstrated with him: he did more,—he gave him the key of the bureau. 'Take what I have to give,' said he; 'I would rather be a beggar than know my son a thief.'"

"Right! And the youth repented, and became a good man?" exclaimed my father.

Captain Roland shook his head. "The youth promised amendment, and seemed penitent. He spoke of the temptations of Paris, the gaming-table, and what not. He gave up his daily visits to the capital. He seemed to apply to study. Shortly after this, the neighborhood was alarmed by reports of night robberies on the road. Men, masked and armed, plundered travellers, and even broke into houses.

"The police were on the alert. One night an old brother officer knocked at my friend's door. It was late; the veteran (he was a cripple, by the way, like myself,—strange coincidence!) was in bed. He came down in haste, when his servant woke, and told him that his old friend, wounded and bleeding, sought an asylum under his roof. The wound, however, was slight. The guest had been attacked and robbed on the road. The next morning the proper authority of the town was sent for. The plundered man described his loss,—some billets of five hundred francs in a pocketbook, on which was embroidered his name and coronet (he was a vicomte). The guest stayed to dinner. Late in the forenoon, the son looked in. The guest started to see him;

my friend noticed his paleness. Shortly after, on pretence of faintness, the guest retired to his room, and sent for his host. 'My friend,' said he, 'can you do me a favor? Go to the magistrate and recall the evidence I have given.'

"'Impossible,' said the host. 'What crotchet is this?'

"The guest shuddered. 'Peste!' said he, 'I do not wish in my old age to be hard on others. Who knows how the robber may have been tempted, and who knows what relations he may have,—honest men, whom his crime would degrade forever! Good heavens! if detected, it is the galleys, the galleys!'

"And what then? The robber knew what he braved. 'But did his father know it?' cried the guest.

"A light broke upon my unhappy comrade in arms; he caught his friend by the hand: 'You turned pale at my son's sight,—where did you ever see him before? Speak!'

"'Last night on the road to Paris. The mask slipped aside. Call back my evidence!'

"'You are mistaken,' said my friend, calmly. 'I saw my son in his bed, and blessed him, before I went to my own.'

"'I will believe you,' said the guest; 'and never shall my hasty suspicion pass my lips,—but call back the evidence.'

"The guest returned to Paris before dusk. The father conversed with his son on the subject of his studies; he followed him to his room, waited till he was in bed, and was then about to retire, when the youth said, 'Father, you have forgotten your blessing.'

"The father went back, laid his hand on the boy's head and prayed. He was credulous—fathers are so! He was persuaded that his friend had been deceived. He retired to rest, and fell asleep. He woke suddenly in the middle of the night, and felt (I here quote his words)—'I felt,' said he, 'as if a voice had awakened me,—a voice that said, "Rise and search." I rose at once, struck a light, and went to my son's room. The door was locked. I knocked once, twice, thrice no answer. I dared not call aloud, lest I should rouse the servants. I went down the stairs, I opened the back-door, I passed to the stables. My own horse was there, not my son's. My horse neighed; it was old, like myself,—my old charger at Mont St. Jean. I stole back, I crept into the shadow of the wall by my son's door, and extinguished my light. I felt as if I were a thief myself.'"

"Brother," interrupted my mother, under her breath; "speak in your own words, not in this wretched father's. I know not why, but it would shock me less."

The Captain nodded.

"Before daybreak, my friend heard the back-door open gently; a foot ascended the stair, a key grated in the door of the room close at hand: the father glided through the dark into that chamber behind his unseen son.

"He heard the clink of the tinder-box; a light was struck; it spread over the room, but he had time to place himself behind the window-curtain which was close at hand. The figure before him stood a moment or so motionless, and seemed to listen, for

it turned to the right, to the left, its visage covered with the black, hideous mask which is worn in carnivals. Slowly the mask was removed. Could that be his son's face,—the son of a brave man? It was pale and ghastly with scoundrel fears; the base drops stood on the brow; the eye was haggard and bloodshot. He looked as a coward looks when death stands before him.

"The youth walked, or rather skulked, to the secretaire, unlocked it, opened a secret drawer, placed within it the contents of his pockets and his frightful mask; the father approached softly, looked over his shoulder, and saw in the drawer the pocketbook embroidered with his friend's name. Meanwhile, the son took out his pistols, uncocked them cautiously, and was about also to secrete them, when his father arrested his arm. 'Robber, the use of these is yet to come!'

"The son's knees knocked together, an exclamation for mercy burst from his lips; but when, recovering the mere shock of his dastard nerves, he perceived it was not the gripe of some hireling of the law, but a father's hand that had clutched his arm, the vile audacity which knows fear only from a bodily cause, none from the awe of shame, returned to him.

"Tush, sir!' he said, 'waste not time in reproaches, for, I fear, the gendarmes are on my track. It is well that you are here; you can swear that I have spent the night at home. Unhand me, old man; I have these witnesses still to secrete,' and he pointed to the garments wet and dabbled with the mud of the roads. He had scarcely spoken when the walls shook; there was the heavy clatter

of hoofs on the ringing pavement without.

"'They come!' cried the son. 'Off, dotard! save your son from the galleys.'

"'The galleys, the galleys!' said the father, staggering back; 'it is true; he said—"the galleys!"'

"There was a loud knocking at the gate. The gendarmes surrounded the house. 'Open, in the name of the law!' No answer came, no door was opened. Some of the gendarmes rode to the rear of the house, in which was placed the stable yard. From the window of the son's room the father saw the sudden blaze of torches, the shadowy forms of the men-hunters. He heard the clatter of arms as they swung themselves from their horses. He heard a voice cry, 'Yes, this is the robber's gray horse,—see, it still reeks with sweat!' And behind and in front, at either door, again came the knocking, and again the shout, 'Open, in the name of the law!'

"Then lights began to gleam from the casements of the neighboring houses; then the space filled rapidly with curious wonderers startled from their sleep: the world was astir, and the crowd came round to know what crime or what shame had entered the old soldier's home.

"Suddenly, within, there was heard the report of a fire-arm; and a minute or so afterwards the front door was opened, and the soldier appeared.

"'Enter,' he said to the gendarmes: 'what would you?'

"'We seek a robber who is within your walls.'

"I know it; mount and find him: I will lead the way.'

"He ascended the stairs; he threw open his son's room: the officers of justice poured in, and on the floor lay the robber's corpse.

"They looked at each other in amazement. 'Take what is left you,' said the father. 'Take the dead man rescued from the galleys; take the living man on whose hands rests the dead man's blood!'

"I was present at my friend's trial. The facts had become known beforehand. He stood there with his gray hair, and his mutilated limbs, and the deep scar on his visage, and the Cross of the Legion of Honor on his breast; and when he had told his tale, he ended with these words: 'I have saved the son whom I reared for France from a doom that would have spared the life to brand it with disgrace. Is this a crime? I give you my life in exchange for my son's disgrace. Does my country need a victim? I have lived for my country's glory, and I can die contented to satisfy its laws, sure that, if you blame me, you will not despise; sure that the hands that give me to the headsman will scatter flowers over my grave. Thus I confess all. I, a soldier, look round amongst a nation of soldiers; and in the name of the star which glitters on my breast I dare the fathers of France to condemn me!'

"They acquitted the soldier,—at least they gave a verdict answering to what in our courts is called 'justifiable homicide.' A shout rose in the court which no ceremonial voice could still; the crowd would have borne him in triumph to his house, but his look repelled such vanities. To his house he returned indeed;

and the day afterwards they found him dead, beside the cradle in which his first prayer had been breathed over his sinless child. Now, father and son, I ask you, do you condemn that man?"

CHAPTER VIII

My father took three strides up and down the room, and then, halting on his hearth, and facing his brother, he thus spoke: "I condemn his deed, Roland! At best he was but a haughty egotist. I understand why Brutus should slay his sons. By that sacrifice he saved his country! What did this poor dupe of an exaggeration save? Nothing but his own name. He could not lift the crime from his son's soul, nor the dishonor from his son's memory. He could but gratify his own vain pride; and insensibly to himself, his act was whispered to him by the fiend that ever whispers to the heart of man, 'Dread men's opinions more than God's law!' Oh, my dear brother! what minds like yours should guard against the most is not the meanness of evil,—it is the evil that takes false nobility, by garbing itself in the royal magnificence of good." My uncle walked to the window, opened it, looked out a moment, as if to draw in fresh air, closed it gently, and came back again to his seat; but during the short time the window had been left open, a moth flew in.

"Tales like these," renewed my father, pityingly,—"whether told by some great tragedian, or in thy simple style, my brother, —tales like these have their uses: they penetrate the heart to

make it wiser; but all wisdom is meek, my Roland. They invite us to put the question to ourselves that thou hast asked, 'Can we condemn this man?' and reason answers as I have answered, 'We pity the man, we condemn the deed.' We—take care, my love! that moth will be in the candle. We—whisk! whisk!" and my father stopped to drive away the moth. My uncle turned, and taking his handkerchief from the lower part of his face, of which he had wished to conceal the workings, he flapped away the moth from the flame. My mother moved the candles from the moth.

I tried to catch the moth in my father's straw-hat. The deuce was in the moth! it baffled us all, now circling against the ceiling, now sweeping down at the fatal lights. As if by a simultaneous impulse, my father approached one candle, my uncle approached the other; and just as the moth was wheeling round and round, irresolute which to choose for its funeral pyre, both candles were put out. The fire had burned down low in the grate, and in the sudden dimness my father's soft, sweet voice came forth, as if from an invisible being: "We leave ourselves in the dark to save a moth from the flame, brother! Shall we do less for our fellow-men? Extinguish, oh! humanely extinguish, the light of our reason when the darkness more favors our mercy." Before the lights were relit, my uncle had left the room; his brother followed him. My mother and I drew near to each other and talked in whispers.

PART IV

CHAPTER I

I was always an early riser. Happy the man who is! Every morning, day comes to him with a virgin's love, full of bloom and purity and freshness. The youth of Nature is contagious, like the gladness of a happy child. I doubt if any man can be called "old" so long as he is an early riser and an early walker. And oh, youth!—take my word of it—youth in dressing-gown and slippers, dawdling over breakfast at noon, is a very decrepit, ghastly image of that youth which sees the sun blush over the mountains, and the dews sparkle upon blossoming hedgerows.

Passing by my father's study, I was surprised to see the windows unclosed; surprised more, on looking in, to see him bending over his books,—for I had never before known him study till after the morning meal. Students are not usually early risers, for students, alas! whatever their age, are rarely young. Yes, the Great Book must be getting on in serious earnest. It was no longer dalliance with learning; this was work.

I passed through the gates into the road. A few of the cottages were giving signs of returning life, but it was not yet the hour for labor, and no "Good morning, sir," greeted me on the road. Suddenly at a turn, which an over-hanging beech-tree had before

concealed, I came full upon my Uncle Roland.

"What! you, sir? So early? Hark, the clock is striking five!"

"Not later! I have walked well for a lame man. It must be more than four miles to—and back."

"You have been to—? Not on business? No soul would be up."

"Yes, at inns there is always some one up. Hostlers never sleep! I have been to order my humble chaise and pair. I leave you today, nephew."

"Ah, uncle, we have offended you! It was my folly, that cursed print—"

"Pooh!" said my uncle, quickly. "Offended me, boy? I defy you!" and he pressed my hand roughly.

"Yet this sudden determination! It was but yesterday, at the Roman Camp, that you planned an excursion with my father, to C——— Castle."

"Never depend upon a whimsical man. I must be in London tonight."

"And return to-morrow?"

"I know not when," said my uncle, gloomily; and he was silent for some moments. At length, leaning less lightly on my arm, he continued: "Young man, you have pleased me. I love that open, saucy brow of yours, on which Nature has written 'Trust me.' I love those clear eyes, that look one manfully in the face. I must know more of you—much of you. You must come and see me some day or other in your ancestors' ruined keep."

"Come! that I will. And you shall show me the old tower—"

"And the traces of the outworks!" cried my uncle, flourishing his stick.

"And the pedigree—"

"Ay, and your great-great-grandfather's armor, which he wore at Marston Moor—"

"Yes, and the brass plate in the church, uncle."

"The deuce is in the boy! Come here, come here: I've three minds to break your head, sir!"

"It is a pity somebody had not broken the rascally printer's, before he had the impudence to disgrace us by having a family, uncle."

Captain Roland tried hard to frown, but he could not. "Pshaw!" said he, stopping, and taking snuff. "The world of the dead is wide; why should the ghosts jostle us?"

"We can never escape the ghosts, uncle. They haunt us always. We cannot think or act, but the soul of some man, who has lived before, points the way. The dead never die, especially since—"

"Since what, boy? You speak well."

"Since our great ancestor introduced printing," said I, majestically.

My uncle whistled "Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre."

I had not the heart to plague him further.

"Peace!" said I, creeping cautiously within the circle of the stick.

"No! I forewarn you—"

"Peace! and describe to me my little cousin, your pretty

daughter,—for pretty I am sure she is."

"Peace," said my uncle, smiling. "But you must come and judge for yourself."

CHAPTER II

Uncle Roland was gone. Before he went, he was closeted for an hour with my father, who then accompanied him to the gate; and we all crowded round him as he stepped into his chaise. When the Captain was gone, I tried to sound my father as to the cause of so sudden a departure. But my father was impenetrable in all that related to his brother's secrets. Whether or not the Captain had ever confided to him the cause of his displeasure with his son,—a mystery which much haunted me,—my father was mute on that score both to my mother and myself. For two or three days, however, Mr. Caxton was evidently unsettled. He did not even take to his Great Work, but walked much alone, or accompanied only by the duck, and without even a book in his hand. But by degrees the scholarly habits returned to him; my mother mended his pens, and the work went on.

For my part, left much to myself, especially in the mornings, I began to muse restlessly over the future. Ungrateful that I was, the happiness of home ceased to content me. I heard afar the roar of the great world, and roved impatient by the shore.

At length, one evening, my father, with some modest hums and ha's, and an unaffected blush on his fair forehead, gratified

a prayer frequently urged on him, and read me some portions of the Great Work. I cannot express the feelings this lecture created,—they were something akin to awe. For the design of this book was so immense, and towards its execution a learning so vast and various had administered, that it seemed to me as if a spirit had opened to me a new world, which had always been before my feet, but which my own human blindness had hitherto concealed from me. The unspeakable patience with which all these materials had been collected, year after year; the ease with which now, by the calm power of genius, they seemed of themselves to fall into harmony and system; the unconscious humility with which the scholar exposed the stores of a laborious life,—all combined to rebuke my own restlessness and ambition, while they filled me with a pride in my father which saved my wounded egotism from a pang. Here, indeed, was one of those books which embrace an existence; like the Dictionary of Bayle, or the History of Gibbon, or the "Fasti Hellenici" of Clinton, it was a book to which thousands of books had contributed, only to make the originality of the single mind more bold and clear. Into the furnace all vessels of gold, of all ages, had been cast; but from the mould came the new coin, with its single stamp. And, happily, the subject of the work did not forbid to the writer the indulgence of his naive, peculiar irony of humor, so quiet, yet so profound. My father's book was the "History of Human Error." It was, therefore, the moral history of mankind, told with truth and earnestness, yet with an arch, unmalignant

smile. Sometimes, indeed, the smile drew tears. But in all true humor lies its germ, pathos. Oh! by the goddess Moria, or Folly, but he was at home in his theme. He viewed man first in the savage state, preferring in this the positive accounts of voyagers and travellers to the vague myths of antiquity and the dreams of speculators on our pristine state. From Australia and Abyssinia he drew pictures of mortality unadorned, as lively as if he had lived amongst Bushmen and savages all his life. Then he crossed over the Atlantic, and brought before you the American Indian, with his noble nature, struggling into the dawn of civilization, when Friend Penn cheated him out of his birthright, and the Anglo-Saxon drove him back into darkness. He showed both analogy and contrast between this specimen of our kind and others equally apart from the extremes of the savage state and the cultured,—the Arab in his tent, the Teuton in his forests, the Greenlander in his boat, the Finn in his reindeer car. Up sprang the rude gods of the North and the resuscitated Druidism, passing from its earliest templeless belief into the later corruptions of crommell and idol. Up sprang, by their side, the Saturn of the Phoenicians, the mystic Budh of India, the elementary deities of the Pelasgian, the Naith and Serapis of Egypt, the Ormuzd of Persia, the Bel of Babylon, the winged genii of the graceful Etruria. How nature and life shaped the religion; how the religion shaped the manners; how, and by what influences, some tribes were formed for progress; how others were destined to remain stationary, or be swallowed up in war and slavery by their

brethren,—was told with a precision clear and strong as the voice of Fate. Not only an antiquarian and philologist, but an anatomist and philosopher, my father brought to bear on all these grave points the various speculations involved in the distinction of races. He showed how race in perfection is produced, up to a certain point, by admixture; how all mixed races have been the most intelligent; how, in proportion as local circumstance and religious faith permitted the early fusion of different tribes, races improved and quickened into the refinements of civilization. He tracked the progress and dispersion of the Hellenes from their mythical cradle in Thessaly, and showed how those who settled near the sea-shores, and were compelled into commerce and intercourse with strangers, gave to Greece her marvellous accomplishments in arts and letters,—the flowers of the ancient world. How others, like the Spartans; dwelling evermore in a camp, on guard against their neighbors, and rigidly preserving their Dorian purity of extraction, contributed neither artists, nor poets, nor philosophers to the golden treasure-house of mind. He took the old race of the Celts, Cimry, or Cimmerians. He compared the Celt who, as in Wales, the Scotch Highlands, in Bretagne, and in uncomprehended Ireland, retains his old characteristics and purity of breed, with the Celt whose blood, mixed by a thousand channels, dictates from Paris the manners and revolutions of the world. He compared the Norman, in his ancient Scandinavian home, with that wonder of intelligence and chivalry into which he grew, fused imperceptibly with the

Frank, the Goth, and the Anglo-Saxon. He compared the Saxon, stationary in the land of Horsa, with the colonist and civilizers of the globe as he becomes when he knows not through what channels—French, Flemish, Danish, Welsh, Scotch, and Irish—he draws his sanguine blood. And out from all these speculations, to which I do such hurried and scanty justice, he drew the blessed truth, that carries hope to the land of the Caffre, the hut of the Bushman,—that there is nothing in the flattened skull and the ebon aspect that rejects God's law, improvement; that by the same principle which raises the dog, the lowest of the animals in its savage state, to the highest after man—viz., admixture of race—you can elevate into nations of majesty and power the outcasts of humanity, now your compassion or your scorn. But when my father got into the marrow of his theme; when, quitting these preliminary discussions, he fell pounce amongst the would-be wisdom of the wise; when he dealt with civilization itself, its schools, and porticos, and academies; when he bared the absurdities couched beneath the colleges of the Egyptians and the Symposia of the Greeks; when he showed that, even in their own favorite pursuit of metaphysics, the Greeks were children, and in their own more practical region of politics, the Romans were visionaries and bunglers; when, following the stream of error through the Middle Ages, he quoted the puerilities of Agrippa, the crudities of Cardan, and passed, with his calm smile, into the salons of the chattering wits of Paris in the eighteenth century, —oh! then his irony was that of Lucian, sweetened by the gentle

spirit of Erasmus. For not even here was my father's satire of the cheerless and Mephistophelian school. From this record of error he drew forth the grandeurs of truth. He showed how earnest men never think in vain, though their thoughts may be errors. He proved how, in vast cycles, age after age, the human mind marches on, like the ocean, receding here, but there advancing; how from the speculations of the Greek sprang all true philosophy; how from the institutions of the Roman rose all durable systems of government; how from the robust follies of the North came the glory of chivalry, and the modern delicacies of honor, and the sweet, harmonizing influences of woman. He tracked the ancestry of our Sidneys and Bayards from the Hengists, Genserics, and Attilas. Full of all curious and quaint anecdote, of original illustration, of those niceties of learning which spring from a taste cultivated to the last exquisite polish, the book amused and allured and charmed; and erudition lost its pedantry, now in the simplicity of Montaigne, now in the penetration of La Bruyere. He lived in each time of which he wrote, and the time lived again in him. Ah! what a writer of romances he would have been if—if what? If he had had as sad an experience of men's passions as he had the happy intuition into their humors. But he who would see the mirror of the shore must look where it is cast on the river, not the ocean. The narrow stream reflects the gnarled tree and the pausing herd and the village spire and the romance of the landscape. But the sea reflects only the vast outline of the headland and the lights of the

eternal heaven.

CHAPTER III

"It is Lombard Street to a China orange," quoth Uncle Jack.

"Are the odds in favor of fame against failure so great? You do not speak, I fear, from experience, brother Jack," answered my father, as he stooped down to tickle the duck under the left ear.

"But Jack Tibbets is not Augustine Caxton. Jack Tibbets is not a scholar, a genius, a wond—"

"Stop!" cried my father.

"After all," said Mr. Squills, "though I am no flatterer, Mr. Tibbets is not so far out. That part of your book which compares the crania or skulls of the different races is superb. Lawrence or Dr. Prichard could not have done the thing more neatly. Such a book must not be lost to the world; and I agree with Mr. Tibbets that you should publish as soon as possible."

"It is one thing to write, and another to publish," said my father, irresolutely. "When one considers all the great men who have published; when one thinks one is going to intrude one's self audaciously into the company of Aristotle and Bacon, of Locke, of Herder, of all the grave philosophers who bend over Nature with brows weighty with thought,—one may well pause and—"

"Pooh!" interrupted Uncle Jack, "science is not a club, it is an ocean; it is open to the cock-boat as the frigate. One man carries across it a freightage of ingots, another may fish there

for herrings. Who can exhaust the sea, who say to Intellect, 'The deeps of philosophy are preoccupied'?"

"Admirable!" cried Squills.

"So it is really your advice, my friends," said my father, who seemed struck by Uncle Jack's eloquent illustrations, "that I should desert my household gods, remove to London, since my own library ceases to supply my wants, take lodgings near the British Museum, and finish off one volume, at least, incontinently."

"It is a duty you owe to your country," said Uncle Jack, solemnly.

"And to yourself," urged Squills. "One must attend to the natural evacuations of the brain. Ah! you may smile, sir, but I have observed that if a man has much in his head, he must give it vent, or it oppresses him; the whole system goes wrong. From being abstracted, he grows stupefied. The weight of the pressure affects the nerves. I would not even guarantee you from a stroke of paralysis."

"Oh, Austin!" cried my mother tenderly, and throwing her arms round my father's neck.

"Come, sir, you are conquered," said I.

"And what is to become of you, Sisty?" asked my father. "Do you go with us, and unsettle your mind for the university?"

"My uncle has invited me to his castle; and in the mean while I will stay here, fag hard, and take care of the duck."

"All alone?" said my mother.

"No. All alone! Why, Uncle Jack will come here as often as ever, I hope."

Uncle Jack shook his head.

"No, my boy, I must go to town with your father. You don't understand these things. I shall see the booksellers for him. I know how these gentlemen are to be dealt with. I shall prepare the literary circles for the appearance of the book. In short, it is a sacrifice of interest, I know; my Journal will suffer. But friendship and my country's good before all things."

"Dear Jack!" said my mother, affectionately.

"I cannot suffer it," cried my father. "You are making a good income. You are doing well where you are, and as to seeing the booksellers,—why, when the work is ready, you can come to town for a week, and settle that affair."

"Poor dear Austin," said Uncle Jack, with an air of superiority and compassion. "A week! Sir, the advent of a book that is to succeed requires the preparation of months. Pshaw! I am no genius, but I am a practical man. I know what's what. Leave me alone."

But my father continued obstinate, and Uncle Jack at last ceased to urge the matter. The journey to fame and London was now settled, but my father would not hear of my staying behind.

No, Pisistratus must needs go also to town and see the world; the duck would take care of itself.

CHAPTER IV

We had taken the precaution to send, the day before, to secure our due complement of places—four in all, including one for Mrs. Primmins—in, or upon, the fast family coach called the "Sun," which had lately been set up for the special convenience of the neighborhood.

This luminary, rising in a town about seven miles distant from us, described at first a very erratic orbit amidst the contiguous villages before it finally struck into the high-road of enlightenment, and thence performed its journey, in the full eyes of man, at the majestic pace of six miles and a half an hour. My father with his pockets full of books, and a quarto of "Gebelin on the Primitive World," for light reading, under his arm; my mother with a little basket containing sandwiches, and biscuits of her own baking; Mrs. Primmins, with a new umbrella purchased for the occasion, and a bird-cage containing a canary endeared to her not more by song than age and a severe pip through which she had successfully nursed it; and I myself,—waited at the gates to welcome the celestial visitor. The gardener, with a wheel-barrow full of boxes and portmanteaus, stood a little in the van; and the footman, who was to follow when lodgings had been found, had gone to a rising eminence to watch the dawning of the expected "Sun," and apprise us of its approach by the concerted signal of a handkerchief fixed to a stick.

The quaint old house looked at us mournfully from all its deserted windows. The litter before its threshold and in its open hall; wisps of straw or hay that had been used for packing; baskets and boxes that had been examined and rejected; others, corded and piled, reserved to follow with the footman; and the two heated and hurried serving-women left behind, standing halfway between house and garden-gate, whispering to each other, and looking as if they had not slept for weeks,—gave to a scene, usually so trim and orderly, an aspect of pathetic abandonment and desolation. The Genius of the place seemed to reproach us. I felt the omens were against us, and turned my earnest gaze from the haunts behind with a sigh, as the coach now drew up with all its grandeur. An important personage, who, despite the heat of the day, was enveloped in a vast superfluity of belcher, in the midst of which galloped a gilt fox, and who rejoiced in the name of "guard," descended to inform us politely that only three places, two inside and one out, were at our disposal, the rest having been pre-engaged a fortnight before our orders were received.

Now, as I knew that Mrs. Primmins was indispensable to the comforts of my honored parents (the more so as she had once lived in London, and knew all its ways), I suggested that she should take the outside seat, and that I should perform the journey on foot,—a primitive mode of transport which has its charms to a young man with stout limbs and gay spirits. The guard's outstretched arm left my mother little time to oppose this proposition, to which my father assented with a silent squeeze

of the hand. And having promised to join them at a family hotel near the Strand, to which Mr. Squills had recommended them as peculiarly genteel and quiet, and waved my last farewell to my poor mother, who continued to stretch her meek face out of the window till the coach was whirled off in a cloud like one of the Homeric heroes, I turned within, to put up a few necessary articles in a small knapsack which I remembered to have seen in the lumber-room, and which had appertained to my maternal grandfather; and with that on my shoulder, and a strong staff in my hand, I set off towards the great city at as brisk a pace as if I were only bound to the next village. Accordingly, about noon I was both tired and hungry; and seeing by the wayside one of those pretty inns yet peculiar to England, but which, thanks to the railways, will soon be amongst the things before the Flood, I sat down at a table under some clipped limes, unbuckled my knapsack, and ordered my simple fare with the dignity of one who, for the first time in his life, bespeaks his own dinner and pays for it out of his own pocket.

While engaged on a rasher of bacon and a tankard of what the landlord called "No mistake," two pedestrians, passing the same road which I had traversed, paused, cast a simultaneous look at my occupation, and induced no doubt by its allurements, seated themselves under the same lime-trees, though at the farther end of the table. I surveyed the new-comers with the curiosity natural to my years.

The elder of the two might have attained the age of thirty,

though sundry deep lines, and hues formerly florid and now faded, speaking of fatigue, care, or dissipation, might have made him look somewhat older than he was. There was nothing very prepossessing in his appearance. He was dressed with a pretension ill suited to the costume appropriate to a foot-traveller. His coat was pinched and padded; two enormous pins, connected by a chain, decorated a very stiff stock of blue satin dotted with yellow stars; his hands were cased in very dingy gloves which had once been straw-colored, and the said hands played with a whalebone cane surmounted by a formidable knob, which gave it the appearance of a "life-preserver." As he took off a white napless hat, which he wiped with great care and affection with the sleeve of his right arm, a profusion of stiff curls instantly betrayed the art of man. Like my landlord's ale, in that wig there was "no mistake;" it was brought (after the fashion of the wigs we see in the popular effigies of George IV. in his youth), low over his fore-head, and was raised at the top. The wig had been oiled, and the oil had imbibed no small quantity of dust; oil and dust had alike left their impression on the forehead and cheeks of the wig's proprietor. For the rest, the expression of his face was somewhat impudent and reckless, but not without a certain drollery in the corners of his eyes.

The younger man was apparently about my own age,—a year or two older, perhaps, judging rather from his set and sinewy frame than his boyish countenance. And this last, boyish as it was, could not fail to command the attention even of the most

careless observer. It had not only the darkness, but the character of the gipsy face, with large, brilliant eyes, raven hair, long and wavy, but not curling; the features were aquiline, but delicate, and when he spoke he showed teeth dazzling as pearls. It was impossible not to admire the singular beauty of the countenance; and yet it had that expression, at once stealthy and fierce, which war with society has stamped upon the lineaments of the race of which it reminded me. But, withal, there was somewhat of the air of a gentleman in this young wayfarer. His dress consisted of a black velveteen shooting-jacket, or rather short frock, with a broad leathern strap at the waist, loose white trousers, and a foraging cap, which he threw carelessly on the table as he wiped his brow. Turning round impatiently, and with some haughtiness, from his companion, he surveyed me with a quick, observant flash of his piercing eyes, and then stretched himself at length on the bench, and appeared either to dose or muse, till, in obedience to his companion's orders, the board was spread with all the cold meats the larder could supply.

"Beef!" said his companion, screwing a pinchbeck glass into his right eye. "Beef,—mottled, cowey; humph! Lamb,—oldish, rawish, muttony; humph! Pie,—stalish. Veal?—no, pork. Ah! what will you have?"

"Help yourself," replied the young man peevishly, as he sat up, looked disdainfully at the viands, and, after a long pause, tasted first one, then the other, with many shrugs of the shoulders and muttered exclamations of discontent. Suddenly he looked up, and

called for brandy; and to my surprise, and I fear admiration, he drank nearly half a tumblerful of that poison undiluted, with a composure that spoke of habitual use.

"Wrong!" said his companion, drawing the bottle to himself, and mixing the alcohol in careful proportions with water. "Wrong! coats of stomach soon wear out with that kind of clothes-brush. Better stick to the 'yeasty foam,' as sweet Will says. That young gentleman sets you a good example," and therewith the speaker nodded at me familiarly. Inexperienced as I was, I surmised at once that it was his intention to make acquaintance with the neighbor thus saluted. I was not deceived. "Anything to tempt you, sir?" asked this social personage after a short pause, and describing a semicircle with the point of his knife.

"I thank you, sir, but I have dined."

"What then? 'Break out into a second course of mischief,' as the Swan recommends,—Swan of Avon, sir! No? 'Well, then, I charge you with this cup of sack.' Are you going far, if I may take the liberty to ask?"

"To London."

"Oh!" said the traveller, while his young companion lifted his eyes; and I was again struck with their remarkable penetration and brilliancy.

"London is the best place in the world for a lad of spirit. See life there,—'glass of fashion and mould of form.' Fond of the play, sir?"

"I never saw one."

"Possible!" cried the gentleman, dropping the handle of his knife, and bringing up the point horizontally; "then, young man," he added solemnly, "you have,—but I won't say what you have to see. I won't say,—no, not if you could cover this table with golden guineas, and exclaim, with the generous ardor so engaging in youth, 'Mr. Peacock, these are yours if you will only say what I have to see!'"

I laughed outright. May I be forgiven for the boast, but I had the reputation at school of a pleasant laugh. The young man's face grew dark at the sound; he pushed back his plate and sighed.

"Why," continued his friend, "my companion here, who, I suppose, is about your own age, he could tell you what a play is, —he could tell you what life is. He has viewed the manners of the town; 'perused the traders,' as the Swan poetically remarks. Have you not, my lad, eh?"

Thus directly appealed to, the boy looked up with a smile of scorn on his lips,—

"Yes, I know what life is, and I say that life, like poverty, has strange bed-fellows. Ask me what life is now, and I say a melodrama; ask me what it is twenty years hence, and I shall say —"

"A farce?" put in his comrade.

"No, a tragedy,—or comedy as Moliere wrote it."

"And how is that?" I asked, interested and somewhat surprised at the tone of my contemporary.

"Where the play ends in the triumph of the wittiest rogue. My friend here has no chance!"

"'Praise from Sir Hubert Stanley,' hem—yes, Hal Peacock may be witty, but he is no rogue."

"This was not exactly my meaning," said the boy, dryly.

"'A fico for your meaning,' as the Swan says.—Hallo, you sir! Bully Host, clear the table—fresh tumblers—hot water—sugar—lemon—and—The bottle's out! Smoke, sir?" and Mr. Peacock offered me a cigar.

Upon my refusal, he carefully twirled round a very uninviting specimen of some fabulous havanna, moistened it all over, as a boa-constrictor may do the ox he prepares for deglutition, bit off one end, and lighting the other from a little machine for that purpose which he drew from his pocket, he was soon absorbed in a vigorous effort (which the damp inherent in the weed long resisted) to poison the surrounding atmosphere. Therewith the young gentleman, either from emulation or in self-defence, extracted from his own pouch a cigar-case of notable elegance,—being of velvet, embroidered apparently by some fair hand, for "From Juliet" was very legibly worked thereon,—selected a cigar of better appearance than that in favor with his comrade, and seemed quite as familiar with the tobacco as he had been with the brandy.

"Fast, sir, fast lad that," quoth Mr. Peacock, in the short gasps which his resolute struggle with his uninviting victim alone permitted; "nothing but [puff, puff] your true [suck, suck] syl

—syl—sylva—does for him. Out, by the Lord! the 'jaws of darkness have devoured it up;'" and again Mr. Peacock applied to his phosphoric machine. This time patience and perseverance succeeded, and the heart of the cigar responded by a dull red spark (leaving the sides wholly untouched) to the indefatigable ardor of its wooer.

This feat accomplished, Mr. Peacock exclaimed triumphantly: "And now, what say you, my lads, to a game at cards? Three of us,—whist and a dummy; nothing better, eh?" As he spoke, he produced from his coat-pocket a red silk handkerchief, a bunch of keys, a nightcap, a tooth-brush, a piece of shaving-soap, four lumps of sugar, the remains of a bun, a razor, and a pack of cards. Selecting the last, and returning its motley accompaniments to the abyss whence they had emerged, he turned up, with a jerk of his thumb and finger, the knave of clubs, and placing it on the top of the rest, slapped the cards emphatically on the table.

"You are very good, but I don't know whist," said I.

"Not know whist—not been to a play—not smoke! Then pray tell me, young man," said he majestically, and with a frown, "what on earth you do know."

Much consternated by this direct appeal, and greatly ashamed of my ignorance of the cardinal points of erudition in Mr. Peacock's estimation, I hung my head and looked down.

"That is right," renewed Mr. Peacock, more benignly; "you have the ingenuous shame of youth. It is promising, sir; 'lowliness is young ambition's ladder,' as the Swan says. Mount the first

step, and learn whist,—sixpenny points to begin with."

Notwithstanding any newness in actual life, I had had the good fortune to learn a little of the way before me, by those much-slandered guides called novels,—works which are often to the inner world what maps are to the outer; and sundry recollections of "Gil Blas" and the "Vicar of Wakefield" came athwart me. I had no wish to emulate the worthy Moses, and felt that I might not have even the shagreen spectacles to boast of in my negotiations with this new Mr. Jenkinson. Accordingly, shaking my head, I called for my bill. As I took out my purse,—knit by my mother,—with one gold piece in one corner, and sundry silver ones in the other, I saw that the eyes of Mr. Peacock twinkled.

"Poor spirit, sir! poor spirit, young man! 'This avarice sticks deep,' as the Swan beautifully observes. 'Nothing venture, nothing have.'"

"Nothing have, nothing venture," I returned, plucking up spirit.

"Nothing have! Young sir, do you doubt my solidity—my capital—my 'golden joys'?"

"Sir, I spoke of myself. I am not rich enough to gamble."

"Gamble!" exclaimed Mr. Peacock, in virtuous indignation —"gamble! what do you mean, sir? You insult me!" and he rose threateningly, and slapped his white hat on his wig. "Pshaw! let him alone, Hal," said the boy, contemptuously. "Sir, if he is impertinent, thrash him." (This was to me.) "Impertinent! thrash!" exclaimed Mr. Peacock, waxing very red; but catching

the sneer on his companion's lip, he sat down, and subsided into sullen silence.

Meanwhile I paid my bill. This duty—rarely a cheerful one—performed, I looked round for my knapsack, and perceived that it was in the boy's hands. He was very coolly reading the address, which, in case of accidents, I prudently placed on it: "Pisistratus Caxton, Esq.,—Hotel,—Street, Strand."

I took my knapsack from him, more surprised at such a breach of good manners in a young gentleman who knew life so well, than I should have been at a similar error on the part of Mr. Peacock. He made no apology, but nodded farewell, and stretched himself at full length on the bench. Mr. Peacock, now absorbed in a game of patience, vouchsafed no return to my parting salutation, and in another moment I was alone on the high-road. My thoughts turned long upon the young man I had left; mixed with a sort of instinctive compassionate foreboding of an ill future for one with such habits and in such companionship, I felt an involuntary admiration, less even for his good looks than his ease, audacity, and the careless superiority he assumed over a comrade so much older than himself.

The day twas far gone when I saw the spires of a town at which I intended to rest for the night. The horn of a coach behind made me turn my head, and as the vehicle passed me, I saw on the outside Mr. Peacock, still struggling with a cigar,—it could scarcely be the same,—and his young friend stretched on the roof amongst the luggage, leaning his handsome head on his hand,

and apparently unobservant both of me and every one else.

CHAPTER V

I am apt—judging egotistically, perhaps, from my own experience—to measure a young man's chance of what is termed practical success in life by what may seem at first two very vulgar qualities; viz., his inquisitiveness and his animal vivacity. A curiosity which springs forward to examine everything new to his information; a nervous activity, approaching to restlessness, which rarely allows bodily fatigue to interfere with some object in view,—constitute, in my mind, very profitable stock-in-hand to begin the world with.

Tired as I was, after I had performed my ablutions and refreshed myself in the little coffee-room of the inn at which I put up, with the pedestrian's best beverage, familiar and oft calumniated tea, I could not resist the temptation of the broad, bustling street, which, lighted with gas, shone on me through the dim windows of the coffee-room. I had never before seen a large town, and the contrast of lamp-lit, busy night in the streets, with sober, deserted night in the lanes and fields, struck me forcibly.

I sauntered out, therefore, jostling and jostled, now gazing at the windows, now hurried along the tide of life, till I found myself before a cookshop, round which clustered a small knot of housewives, citizens, and hungry-looking children. While contemplating this group, and marvelling how it comes to pass

that the staple business of earth's majority is how, when, and where to eat, my ear was struck with "'In Troy there lies the scene,' as the illustrious Will remarks."

Looking round, I perceived Mr. Peacock pointing his stick towards an open doorway next to the cookshop, the hall beyond which was lighted with gas, while painted in black letters on a pane of glass over the door was the word "Billiards."

Suiting the action to the word, the speaker plunged at once into the aperture, and vanished. The boy-companion was following more slowly, when his eye caught mine. A slight blush came over his dark cheek; he stopped, and leaning against the door-jambs, gazed on me hard and long before he said: "Well met again, sir! You find it hard to amuse yourself in this dull place; the nights are long out of London."

"Oh!" said I, ingenuously, "everything here amuses me,—the lights, the shops, the crowd; but, then, to me everything is new."

The youth came from his lounging-place and moved on, as if inviting me to walk; while he answered, rather with bitter sullenness than the melancholy his words expressed,—

"One thing, at least, cannot be new to you,—it is an old truth with us before we leave the nursery: 'Whatever is worth having must be bought;' ergo, he who cannot buy, has nothing worth having."

"I don't think," said I, wisely, "that the things best worth having can be bought at all. You see that poor dropsical jeweller standing before his shop-door: his shop is the finest in the street,

and I dare say he would be very glad to give it to you or me in return for our good health and strong legs. Oh, no! I think with my father: 'All that are worth having are given to all,'—that is, Nature and labor."

"Your father says that; and you go by what your father says? Of course, all fathers have preached that, and many other good doctrines, since Adam preached to Cain; but I don't see that the fathers have found their sons very credulous listeners."

"So much the worse for the sons," said I, bluntly. "Nature," continued my new acquaintance, without attending to my ejaculation,—"Nature indeed does give us much, and Nature also orders each of us how to use her gifts. If Nature give you the propensity to drudge, you will drudge; if she give me the ambition to rise, and the contempt for work, I may rise,—but I certainly shall not work."

"Oh," said I, "you agree with Squills, I suppose, and fancy we are all guided by the bumps on our foreheads?"

"And the blood in our veins, and our mothers' milk. We inherit other things besides gout and consumption. So you always do as your father tells you! Good boy!"

I was piqued. Why we should be ashamed of being taunted for goodness, I never could understand; but certainly I felt humbled. However, I answered sturdily: "If you had as good a father as I have, you would not think it so very extraordinary to do as he tells you."

"Ah! so he is a very good father, is he? He must have a great

trust in your sobriety and steadiness to let you wander about the world as he does."

"I am going to join him in London."

"In London! Oh, does he live there?"

"He is going to live there for some time."

"Then perhaps we may meet. I too am going to town."

"Oh, we shall be sure to meet there!" said I, with frank gladness; for my interest in the young man was not diminished by his conversation, however much I disliked the sentiments it expressed.

The lad laughed, and his laugh was peculiar,—it was low, musical, but hollow and artificial.

"Sure to meet! London is a large place: where shall you be found?"

I gave him, without scruple, the address of the hotel at which I expected to find my father, although his deliberate inspection of my knapsack must already have apprised him of that address. He listened attentively, and repeated it twice over, as if to impress it on his memory; and we both walked on in silence, till, turning up a small passage, we suddenly found ourselves in a large churchyard,—a flagged path stretched diagonally across it towards the market-place, on which it bordered. In this churchyard, upon a gravestone, sat a young Savoyard; his hurdy-gurdy, or whatever else his instrument might be called, was on his lap; and he was gnawing his crust and feeding some poor little white mice (standing on their hind legs on the hurdy-gurdy) as

merrily as if he had chosen the gayest resting-place in the world.

We both stopped. The Savoyard, seeing us, put his arch head on one side, showed all his white teeth in that happy smile so peculiar to his race, and in which poverty seems to beg so blithely, and gave the handle of his instrument a turn. "Poor child!" said I.

"Aha, you pity him! but why? According to your rule, Mr. Caxton, he is not so much to be pitied; the dropsical jeweller would give him as much for his limbs and health as for ours! How is it—answer me, son of so wise a father—that no one pities the dropsical jeweller, and all pity the healthy Savoyard? It is, sir, because there is a stern truth which is stronger than all Spartan lessons,—Poverty is the master-ill of the world. Look round. Does poverty leave its signs over the graves? Look at that large tomb fenced round; read that long inscription: 'Virtue'—'best of husbands'—'affectionate father'—'inconsolable grief'—'sleeps in the joyful hope,' etc. Do you suppose these stoneless mounds hide no dust of what were men just as good? But no epitaph tells their virtues, bespeaks their wifes' grief, or promises joyful hope to them!"

"Does it matter? Does God care for the epitaph and tombstone?"

"Datemi qualche cosa!" said the Savoyard, in his touching patois, still smiling, and holding out his little hand; therein I dropped a small coin. The boy evinced his gratitude by a new turn of the hurdy-gurdy.

"That is not labor," said my companion; "and had you found him at work, you had given him nothing. I, too, have my instrument to play upon, and my mice to see after. Adieu!"

He waved his hand, and strode irreverently over the graves back in the direction we had come.

I stood before the fine tomb with its fine epitaph: the Savoyard looked at me wistfully.

CHAPTER VI

The Savoyard looked at me wistfully. I wished to enter into conversation with him. That was not easy. However, I began.

Pisistratus.—"You must be often hungry enough, my poor boy. Do the mice feed you?"

Savoyard puts his head on one side, shakes it, and strokes his mice.

Pisistratus.—"You are very fond of the mice; they are your only friends, I fear."

Savoyard evidently understanding Pisistratus, rubs his face gently against the mice, then puts them softly down on a grave, and gives a turn to the hurdy-gurdy. The mice play unconcernedly over the grave.

Pisistratus, pointing first to the beasts, then to the instrument. —"Which do you like best, the mice or the hurdygurdy?"

Savoyard shows his teeth—considers—stretches himself on the grass—plays with the mice—and answers volubly.

Pisistratus, by the help of Latin comprehending that the Savoyard says that the mice are alive, and the hurdy-gurdy is not.—"Yes, a live friend is better than a dead one. Mortua est hurdy-gurda!"

Savoyard shakes his head vehemently.—"No—no, Eccellenza, non e morta!" and strikes up a lively air on the slandered instrument. The Savoyard's face brightens—he looks happy; the mice run from the grave into his bosom. Pisistratus, affected, and putting the question in Latin.—"Have you a father?"

Savoyard with his face overcast.—"No, Eccellenza!" then pausing a little, he says briskly, "Si, si!" and plays a solemn air on the hurdy-gurdy—stops—rests one hand on the instrument, and raises the other to heaven.

Pisistratus understands: the father is like the hurdygurdy, at once dead and living. The mere form is a dead thing, but the music lives. Pisistratus drops another small piece of silver on the ground, and turns away.

God help and God bless thee, Savoyard! Thou hast done Pisistratus all the good in the world. Thou hast corrected the hard wisdom of the young gentleman in the velveteen jacket; Pisistratus is a better lad for having stopped to listen to thee.

I regained the entrance to the churchyard, I looked back; there sat the Savoyard still amidst men's graves, but under God's sky. He was still looking at me wistfully; and when he caught my eye, he pressed his hand to his heart and smiled. God help and God bless thee, young Savoyard!

PART V

CHAPTER I

In setting off the next morning, the Boots, whose heart I had won by an extra sixpence for calling me betimes, good-naturedly informed me that I might save a mile of the journey, and have a very pleasant walk into the bargain, if I took the footpath through a gentleman's park, the lodge of which I should see about seven miles from the town.

"And the grounds are showed too," said the Boots, "if so be you has a mind to stay and see 'em. But don't you go to the gardener,—he'll want half a crown; there's an old 'oman at the lodge who will show you all that's worth seeing—the walks and the big cascade—for a tizzy. You may make use of my name," he added proudly,—"Bob, boots at the 'Lion.' She be a *h*aunt o' mine, and she minds them that come from me pertic*k*lerly."

Not doubting that the purest philanthropy actuated these counsels, I thanked my shock-headed friend, and asked carelessly to whom the park belonged.

"To Muster Trevanion, the great parliament man," answered the Boots. "You has heard o' him, I guess, sir?"

I shook my head, surprised every hour more and more to find how very little there was in it.

"They takes in the 'Moderate Man's Journal' at the 'Lamb:' and they say in the tap there that he's one of the cleverest chaps in the House o' Commons," continued the Boots, in a confidential whisper. "But we takes in the 'People's Thunderbolt' at the 'Lion,' and we knows better this Muster Trevanion: he is but a trimmer,—milk and water,—no horator,—not the right sort; you understand?" Perfectly satisfied that I understood nothing about it, I smiled, and said, "Oh, yes!" and slipping on my knapsack, commenced my adventures, the Boots bawling after me, "Mind, sir, you tells haunt I sent you!"

The town was only languidly putting forth symptoms of returning life as I strode through the streets; a pale, sickly, unwholesome look on the face of the slothful Phoebus had succeeded the feverish hectic of the past night; the artisans whom I met glided by me haggard and dejected; a few early shops were alone open; one or two drunken men, emerging from the lanes, sallied homeward with broken pipes in their mouths; bills, with large capitals, calling attention to "Best family teas at 4s. a pound;" "The arrival of Mr. Sloinan's caravan of wild beasts;" and Dr. Do'em's "Paracelsian Pills of Immortality," stared out dull and uncheering from the walls of tenantless, dilapidated houses in that chill sunrise which favors no illusion. I was glad when I had left the town behind me, and saw the reapers in the corn-fields, and heard the chirp of the birds. I arrived at the lodge of which the Boots had spoken,—a pretty rustic building half-concealed by a belt of plantations, with two large iron gates

for the owner's friends, and a small turn-stile for the public, who, by some strange neglect on his part, or sad want of interest with the neighboring magistrates, had still preserved a right to cross the rich man's domains and look on his grandeur, limited to compliance with a reasonable request, mildly stated on the notice-board, "to keep to the paths." As it was not yet eight o'clock, I had plenty of time before me to see the grounds; and profiting by the economical hint of the Boots, I entered the lodge and inquired for the old lady who was haunt to Mr. Bob. A young woman, who was busied in preparing breakfast, nodded with great civility to this request, and hastening to a bundle of clothes which I then perceived in the corner, she cried, "Grandmother, here's a gentleman to see the cascade."

The bundle of clothes then turned round and exhibited a human countenance, which lighted up with great intelligence as the granddaughter, turning to me, said with simplicity. "She's old, honest cretur, but she still likes to earn a sixpence, sir;" and taking a crutch-staff in her hand, while her granddaughter put a neat bonnet on her head, this industrious gentlewoman sallied out at a pace which surprised me.

I attempted to enter into conversation with my guide; but she did not seem much inclined to be sociable, and the beauty of the glades and groves which now spread before my eyes reconciled me to silence.

I have seen many fine places since then, but I do not remember to have seen a landscape more beautiful in its peculiar English

character than that which I now gazed on. It had none of the feudal characteristics of ancient parks, with giant oaks, fantastic pollards, glens covered with fern, and deer grouped upon the slopes; on the contrary, in spite of some fine trees, chiefly beech, the impression conveyed was, that it was a new place,—a made place. You might see ridges on the lawns which showed where hedges had been removed; the pastures were parcelled out in divisions by new wire fences; young plantations, planned with exquisite taste, but without the venerable formality of avenues and quin-cunxes, by which you know the parks that date from Elizabeth and James, diversified the rich extent of verdure; instead of deer, were short-horned cattle of the finest breed, sheep that would have won the prize at an agricultural show. Everywhere there was the evidence of improvement, energy, capital, but capital clearly not employed for the mere purpose of return. The ornamental was too conspicuously predominant amidst the lucrative not to say eloquently: "The owner is willing to make the most of his land, but not the most of his money."

But the old woman's eagerness to earn sixpence had impressed me unfavorably as to the character of the master. "Here," thought I, "are all the signs of riches; and yet this poor old woman, living on the very threshold of opulence, is in want of a sixpence."

These surmises, in the indulgence of which I piqued myself on my penetration, were strengthened into convictions by the few sentences which I succeeded at last in eliciting from the old woman.

"Mr. Trevanion must be a rich man?" said I. "Oh, ay, rich eno'!" grumbled my guide.

"And," said I, surveying the extent of shrubbery or dressed ground through which our way wound, now emerging into lawns and glades, now belted by rare garden-trees, now (as every inequality of the ground was turned to advantage in the landscape) sinking into the dell, now climbing up the slopes, and now confining the view to some object of graceful art or enchanting Nature,—"and," said I, "he must employ many hands here: plenty of work, eh?"

"Ay, ay! I don't say that he don't find work for those who want it. But it ain't the same place it wor in my day."

"You remember it in other hands, then?"

"Ay, ay! When the Hogtons had it, honest folk! My good man was the gardener,—none of those set-up fine gentlemen who can't put hand to a spade."

Poor faithful old woman!

I began to hate the unknown proprietor. Here clearly was some mushroom usurper who had bought out the old simple, hospitable family, neglected its ancient servants, left them to earn tizzies by showing waterfalls, and insulted their eyes by his selfish wealth.

"There's the water all spilt,—it warn't so in my day," said the guide.

A rivulet, whose murmur I had long heard, now stole suddenly into view, and gave to the scene the crowning charm. As, relapsing into silence, we tracked its sylvan course, under

dripping chestnuts and shady limes, the house itself emerged on the opposite side,—a modern building of white stone, with the noblest Corinthian portico I ever saw in this country.

"A fine house indeed," said I. "Is Mr. Trevanion here much?"

"Ay, ay! I don't mean to say that he goes away altogether, but it ain't as it wor in my day, when the Hogtons lived here all the year round in their warm house,—not that one."

Good old woman, and these poor banished Hogtons, thought I, —hateful parvenu! I was pleased when a curve in the shrubberies shut out the house from view, though in reality bringing us nearer to it. And the boasted cascade, whose roar I had heard for some moments, came in sight.

Amidst the Alps, such a waterfall would have been insignificant, but contrasting ground highly dressed, with no other bold features, its effect was striking, and even grand. The banks were here narrowed and compressed; rocks, partly natural, partly no doubt artificial, gave a rough aspect to the margin; and the cascade fell from a considerable height into rapid waters, which my guide mumbled out were "mortal deep."

"There wor a madman leapt over where you be standing," said the old woman, "two years ago last June."

"A madman! why," said I, observing, with an eye practised in the gymnasium of the Hellenic Institute, the narrow space of the banks over the gulf,—"why, my good lady, it need not be a madman to perform that leap."

And so saying, with one of those sudden impulses which it

would be wrong to ascribe to the noble quality of courage, I drew back a few steps, and cleared the abyss. But when from the other side I looked back at what I had done, and saw that failure had been death, a sickness came over me, and I felt as if I would not have releapt the gulf to become lord of the domain.

"And how am I to get back?" said I, in a forlorn voice to the old woman, who stood staring at me on the other side. "Ah! I see there is a bridge below."

"But you can't go over the bridge, there's a gate on it; master keeps the key himself. You are in the private grounds now. Dear, dear! the squire would be so angry if he knew. You must go back; and they'll see you from the house! Dear me! dear, dear! What shall I do? Can't you leap back again?"

Moved by these piteous exclamations, and not wishing to subject the poor old lady to the wrath of a master evidently an unfeeling tyrant, I resolved to pluck up courage and releap the dangerous abyss.

"Oh, yes, never fear," said I, therefore. "What's been done once ought to be done twice, if needful. Just get out of my way, will you?"

And I receded several paces over a ground much too rough to favor my run for a spring. But my heart knocked against my ribs. I felt that impulse can do wonders where preparation fails.

"You had best be quick, then," said the old woman.

Horrid old woman! I began to esteem her less. I set my teeth, and was about to rush on, when a voice close beside me said,—

"Stay, young man; I will let you through the gate."

I turned round sharply, and saw close by my side, in great wonder that I had not seen him before, a man, whose homely (but not working) dress seemed to intimate his station as that of the head-gardener, of whom my guide had spoken. He was seated on a stone under a chestnut-tree, with an ugly cur at his feet, who snarled at me as I turned.

"Thank you, my man," said I, joyfully. "I confess frankly that I was very much afraid of that leap."

"Ho! Yet you said, what can be done once can be done twice."

"I did not say it could be done, but ought to be done."

"Humph! That's better put."

Here the man rose; the dog came and smelt my legs, and then, as if satisfied with my respectability, wagged the stump of his tail.

I looked across the waterfall for the old woman, and to my surprise saw her hobbling back as fast as she could. "Ah!" said I, laughing, "the poor old thing is afraid you'll tell her master,—for you're the head gardener, I suppose? But I am the only person to blame. Pray say that, if you mention the circumstance at all!" and I drew out half a crown, which I proffered to my new conductor.

He put back the money with a low "Humph! not amiss." Then, in a louder voice, "No occasion to bribe me, young man; I saw it all."

"I fear your master is rather hard to the poor Hogtons' old servants."

"Is he? Oh! humph! my master. Mr. Trevanion you mean?"

"Yes."

"Well, I dare say people say so. This is the way." And he led me down a little glen away from the fall. Everybody must have observed that after he has incurred or escaped a great danger, his spirits rise wonderfully; he is in a state of pleasing excitement. So it was with me. I talked to the gardener a coeur ouvert, as the French say; and I did not observe that his short monosyllables in rejoinder all served to draw out my little history,—my journey, its destination, my schooling under Dr. Herman, and my father's Great Book. I was only made somewhat suddenly aware of the familiarity that had sprung up between us when, just as, having performed a circuitous meander, we regained the stream and stood before an iron gate set in an arch of rock-work, my companion said simply: "And your name, young gentleman? What's your name?"

I hesitated a moment; but having heard that such communications were usually made by the visitors of show places, I answered: "Oh! a very venerable one, if your master is what they call a bibliomaniac—Caxton."

"Caxton!" cried the gardener, with some vivacity; "there is a Cumberland family of that name—"

"That's mine; and my Uncle Roland is the head of that family."

"And you are the son of Augustine Caxton?"

"I am. You have heard of my dear father, then?"

"We will not pass by the gate now. Follow me,—this way;"

and my guide, turning abruptly round, strode up a narrow path, and the house stood a hundred yards before me ere I recovered my surprise.

"Pardon me," said I, "but where are we going, my good friend?"

"Good friend, good friend! Well said, sir. You are going amongst good friends. I was at college with your father; I loved him well. I knew a little of your uncle too. My name is Trevanion."

Blind young fool that I was! The moment my guide told his name, I was struck with amazement at my unaccountable mistake. The small, insignificant figure took instant dignity; the homely dress, of rough dark broadcloth, was the natural and becoming dishabille of a country gentleman in his own demesnes. Even the ugly cur became a Scotch terrier of the rarest breed.

My guide smiled good-naturedly at my stupor; and patting me on the shoulder, said,—

"It is the gardener you must apologize to, not me. He is a very handsome fellow, six feet high."

I had not found my tongue before we had ascended a broad flight of stairs under the portico, passed a spacious hall adorned with statues and fragrant with large orange-trees, and, entering a small room hung with pictures, in which were arranged all the appliances for breakfast, my companion said to a lady, who rose from behind the tea-urn: "My dear Ellinor, I introduce to you the

son of our old friend Augustine Caxton. Make him stay with us as long as he can. Young gentleman, in Lady Ellinor Trevanion think that you see one whom you ought to know well; family friendships should descend."

My host said these last words in an imposing tone, and then pounced on a letter-bag on the table, drew forth an immense heap of letters and newspapers, threw himself into an armchair, and seemed perfectly forgetful of my existence.

The lady stood a moment in mute surprise, and I saw that she changed color from pale to red, and red to pale, before she came forward with the enchanting grace of unaffected kindness, took me by the hand, drew me to a seat next to her own, and asked so cordially after my father, my uncle, my whole family, that in five minutes I felt myself at home. Lady Ellinor listened with a smile (though with moistened eyes, which she wiped every now and then) to my artless details. At length she said,—

"Have you never heard your father speak of me,—I mean of us; of the Trevanions?"

"Never," said I, bluntly; "and that would puzzle me, only my dear father, you know, is not a great talker."

"Indeed! he was very animated when I knew him," said Lady Ellinor; and she turned her head and sighed.

At this moment there entered a young lady so fresh, so blooming, so lovely that every other thought vanished out of my head at once. She came in singing, as gay as a bird, and seeming to my adoring sight quite as native to the skies.

"Fanny," said Lady Ellinor, "shake hands with Mr. Caxton, the son of one whom I have not seen since I was little older than you, but whom I remember as if it were but yesterday."

Miss Fanny blushed and smiled, and held out her hand with an easy frankness which I in vain endeavored to imitate. During breakfast, Mr. Trevanion continued to read his letters and glance over the papers, with an occasional ejaculation of "Pish!" "Stuff!" between the intervals in which he mechanically swallowed his tea, or some small morsels of dry toast. Then rising with a suddenness which characterized his movements, he stood on his hearth for a few moments buried in thought; and now that a large-brimmed hat was removed from his brow, and the abruptness of his first movement, with the sedateness of his after pause, arrested my curious attention, I was more than ever ashamed of my mistake. It was a careworn, eager, and yet musing countenance, hollow-eyed and with deep lines; but it was one of those faces which take dignity and refinement from that mental cultivation which distinguishes the true aristocrat, namely, the highly educated, acutely intelligent man. Very handsome might that face have been in youth, for the features, though small, were exquisitely defined; the brow, partially bald, was noble and massive, and there was almost feminine delicacy in the curve of the lip. The whole expression of the face was commanding, but sad. Often, as my experience of life increased, have I thought to trace upon that expressive visage the history of energetic ambition curbed by a fastidious philosophy and a scrupulous

conscience; but then all that I could see was a vague, dissatisfied melancholy, which dejected me I knew not why.

Presently Trevanion returned to the table, collected his letters, moved slowly towards the door, and vanished.

His wife's eyes followed him tenderly. Those eyes reminded me of my mother's, as I verily believe did all eyes that expressed affection. I crept nearer to her, and longed to press the white hand that lay so listless before me.

"Will you walk out with us?" said Miss Trevanion, turning to me. I bowed, and in a few minutes I found myself alone. While the ladies left me, for their shawls and bonnets, I took up the newspapers which Mr. Trevanion had thrown on the table, by way of something to do. My eye was caught by his own name; it occurred often, and in all the papers. There was contemptuous abuse in one, high eulogy in another; but one passage in a journal that seemed to aim at impartiality, struck me so much as to remain in my memory; and I am sure that I can still quote the sense, though not the exact words. The paragraph ran somewhat thus:—

"In the present state of parties, our contemporaries have not unnaturally devoted much space to the claims or demerits of Mr. Trevanion. It is a name that stands unquestionably high in the House of Commons; but, as unquestionably, it commands little sympathy in the country. Mr. Trevanion is essentially and emphatically a member of parliament. He is a close and ready debater; he is an admirable chairman in committees. Though

never in office, his long experience of public life, his gratuitous attention to public business, have ranked him high among those practical politicians from whom ministers are selected. A man of spotless character and excellent intentions, no doubt, he must be considered; and in him any cabinet would gain an honest and a useful member. There ends all we can say in his praise. As a speaker, he wants the fire and enthusiasm which engage the popular sympathies. He has the ear of the House, not the heart of the country. An oracle on subjects of mere business, in the great questions of policy he is comparatively a failure. He never embraces any party heartily; he never espouses any question as if wholly in earnest. The moderation on which he is said to pique himself often exhibits itself in fastidious crotchets and an attempt at philosophical originality of candor which has long obtained him, with his enemies, the reputation of a trimmer. Such a man circumstances may throw into temporary power; but can he command lasting influence? No. Let Mr. Trevanion remain in what Nature and position assign as his proper post, —that of an upright, independent, able member of parliament; conciliating sensible men on both sides, when party runs into extremes. He is undone as a cabinet minister. His scruples would break up any government; and his want of decision—when, as in all human affairs, some errors must be conceded to obtain a great good—would shipwreck his own fame."

I had just got to the end of this paragraph when the ladies returned.

My hostess observed the newspaper in my hand, and said, with a constrained smile, "Some attack on Mr. Trevanion, I suppose?"

"No," said I, awkwardly; for perhaps the paragraph that appeared to me so impartial, was the most galling attack of all, —"No, not exactly."

"I never read the papers now,—at least what are called the leading articles; it is too painful. And once they gave me so much pleasure,—that was when the career began, and before the fame was made."

Here Lady Ellinor opened the window which admitted on the lawn, and in a few moments we were in that part of the pleasure-grounds which the family reserved from the public curiosity. We passed by rare shrubs and strange flowers, long ranges of conservatories, in which bloomed and lived all the marvellous vegetation of Africa and the Indies.

"Mr. Trevanion is fond of flowers?" said I.

The fair Fanny laughed. "I don't think he knows one from another."

"Nor I either," said I,—"that is, when I fairly lose sight of a rose or a hollyhock."

"The farm will interest you more," said Lady Ellinor.

We came to farm buildings recently erected, and no doubt on the most improved principle. Lady Ellinor pointed out to me machines and contrivances of the newest fashion for abridging labor and perfecting the mechanical operations of agriculture.

"Ah! then Mr. Trevanion is fond of farming?" The pretty

Fanny laughed again.

"My father is one of the great oracles in agriculture, one of the great patrons of all its improvements; but as for being fond of farming, I doubt if he knows his own fields when he rides through them."

We returned to the house; and Miss Trevanion, whose frank kindness had already made too deep an impression upon the youthful heart of Pisistratus the Second, offered to show me the picture-gallery. The collection was confined to the works of English artists; and Miss Trevanion pointed out to me the main attractions of the gallery.

"Well, at least Mr. Trevanion is fond of pictures?"

"Wrong again," said Fanny, shaking her arched head. "My father is said to be an admirable judge; but he only buys pictures from a sense of duty,—to encourage our own painters. A picture once bought, I am not sure that he ever looks at it again."

"What does he then—" I stopped short, for I felt my meditated question was ill-bred.

"What does he like then? you were about to say. Why, I have known him, of course, since I could know anything; but I have never yet discovered what my father does like. No,—not even politics; though he lives for politics alone. You look puzzled; you will know him better some day, I hope; but you will never solve the mystery—what Mr. Trevanion likes."

"You are wrong," said Lady Ellinor, who had followed us into the room, unheard by us. "I can tell you what your father does

more than like,—what he loves and serves every hour of his noble life,—justice, beneficence, honor, and his country. A man who loves these may be excused for indifference to the last geranium or the newest plough, or even (though that offends you more, Fanny) the freshest masterpiece by Lanseer, or the latest fashion honored by Miss Trevanion."

"Mamma!" said Fanny, and the tears sprang to her eyes. But Lady Ellinor looked to me sublime as she spoke, her eyes kindled, her breast heaved. The wife taking the husband's part against the child, and comprehending so well what the child felt not, despite its experience of every day, and what the world would never know, despite all the vigilance of its praise and its blame, was a picture, to my taste, finer than any in the collection.

Her face softened as she saw the tears in Fanny's bright hazel eyes; she held out her hand, which her child kissed tenderly; and whispering, "'T is not the giddy word you must go by, mamma, or there will be something to forgive every minute," Miss Trevanion glided from the room.

"Have you a sister?" asked Lady Ellinor.

"No."

"And Trevanion has no son," she said, mournfully. The blood rushed to my cheeks. Oh, young fool again! We were both silent, when the door opened, and Mr. Trevanion entered. "Humph!" said he, smiling as he saw me,—and his smile was charming, though rare. "Humph, young sir, I came to seek for you,—I have been rude, I fear; pardon it. That thought has only just occurred

to me, so I left my Blue Books, and my amanuensis hard at work on them, to ask you to come out for half an hour,—just half an hour, it is all I can give you: a deputation at one! You dine and sleep here, of course?"

"Ah, sir, my mother will be so uneasy if I am not in town to-night!"

"Pooh!" said the member; "I'll send an express."

"Oh, no indeed; thank you."

"Why not?"

I hesitated. "You see, sir, that my father and mother are both new to London; and though I am new too, yet they may want me,—I may be of use." Lady Ellinor put her hand on my head and sleeked down my hair as I spoke.

"Right, young man, right; you will do in the world, wrong as that is. I don't mean that you'll succeed, as the rogues say,—that's another question; but if you don't rise, you'll not fall. Now put on your hat and come with me; we'll walk to the lodge,—you will be in time for a coach."

I took my leave of Lady Ellinor, and longed to say something about "compliments to Miss Fanny;" but the words stuck in my throat, and my host seemed impatient.

"We must see you soon again," said Lady Ellinor, kindly, as she followed us to the door.

Mr. Trevanion walked on briskly and in silence, one hand in his bosom, the other swinging carelessly a thick walkingstick.

"But I must go round by the bridge," said I, "for I forgot my

knapsack. I threw it off when I made my leap, and the old lady certainly never took charge of it."

"Come, then, this way. How old are you?"

"Seventeen and a half."

"You know Latin and Greek as they know them at schools, I suppose?"

"I think I know them pretty well, sir."

"Does your father say so?"

"Why, my father is fastidious; however, he owns that he is satisfied on the whole."

"So am I, then. Mathematics?"

"A little."

"Good."

Here the conversation dropped for some time. I had found and restrapped the knapsack, and we were near the lodge, when Mr. Trevanion said abruptly, "Talk, my young friend, talk; I like to hear you talk,—it refreshes me. Nobody has talked naturally to me these last ten years."

The request was a complete damper to my ingenuous eloquence; I could not have talked naturally now for the life of me.

"I made a mistake, I see," said my companion, good-humoredly, noticing my embarrassment. "Here we are at the lodge. The coach will be by in five minutes: you can spend that time in hearing the old woman praise the Hogtons and abuse me. And hark you, sir, never care three straws for praise or blame,

—leather and prunella! Praise and blame are here!" and he struck his hand upon his breast with almost passionate emphasis. "Take a specimen. These Hogtons were the bane of the place,—uneducated and miserly; their land a wilderness, their village a pig-sty. I come, with capital and intelligence; I redeem the soil, I banish pauperism, I civilize all around me: no merit in me, I am but a type of capital guided by education,—a machine. And yet the old woman is not the only one who will hint to you that the Hogtons were angels, and myself the usual antithesis to angels. And what is more, sir, because that old woman, who has ten shillings a week from me, sets her heart upon earning her sixpences,—and I give her that privileged luxury,—every visitor she talks to goes away with the idea that I, the rich Mr. Trevanion, let her starve on what she can pick up from the sightseers. Now, does that signify a jot? Good-by! Tell your father his old friend must see him,—profit by his calm wisdom; his old friend is a fool sometimes, and sad at heart. When you are settled, send me a line to St. James's Square, to say where you are. Humph! that's enough."

Mr. Trevanion wrung my hand, and strode off.

I did not wait for the coach, but proceeded towards the turnstile, where the old woman (who had either seen, or scented from a distance that tizzy of which I was the impersonation),—

"Hushed in grim repose, did wait her morning prey."

My opinions as to her sufferings and the virtues of the departed Hogtons somewhat modified, I contented myself with

dropping into her open palm the exact sum virtually agreed on. But that palm still remained open, and the fingers of the other clawed hold of me as I stood, impounded in the curve of the turnstile, like a cork in a patent corkscrew.

"And threepence for nephy Bob," said the old lady.

"Threepence for nephew Bob, and why?"

"It is his parquisites when he recommends a gentleman. You would not have me pay out of my own earnings; for he will have it, or he'll ruin my bizziness. Poor folk must be paid for their trouble."

Obdurate to this appeal, and mentally consigning Bob to a master whose feet would be all the handsomer for boots, I threaded the stile and escaped.

Towards evening I reached London. Who ever saw London for the first time and was not disappointed? Those long suburbs melting indefinably away into the capital forbid all surprise. The gradual is a great disenchanter. I thought it prudent to take a hackney-coach, and so jolted my way to the Hotel, the door of which was in a small street out of the Strand, though the greater part of the building faced that noisy thoroughfare. I found my father in a state of great discomfort in a little room, which he paced up and down like a lion new caught in his cage. My poor mother was full of complaints: for the first time in her life, I found her indisputably crossish. It was an ill time to relate my adventures.

I had enough to do to listen. They had all day been hunting

for lodgings in vain. My father's pocket had been picked of a new India handkerchief. Primmins, who ought to know London so well, knew nothing about it, and declared it was turned topsy-turvy, and all the streets had changed names. The new silk umbrella, left for five minutes unguarded in the hall, had been exchanged for an old gingham with three holes in it.

It was not till my mother remembered that if she did not see herself that my bed was well aired I should certainly lose the use of my limbs, and therefore disappeared with Primmins and a pert chambermaid, who seemed to think we gave more trouble than we were worth, that I told my father of my new acquaintance with Mr. Trevanion.

He did not seem to listen to me till I got to the name "Trevanion." He then became very pale, and sat down quietly. "Go on," said he, observing I stopped to look at him.

When I had told all, and given him the kind messages with which I had been charged by husband and wife, he smiled faintly; and then, shading his face with his hand, he seemed to muse, not cheerfully, perhaps, for I heard him sigh once or twice.

"And Ellinor," said he at last, without looking up,—"Lady Ellinor, I mean; she is very—very—"

"Very what, sir?"

"Very handsome still?"

"Handsome! Yes, handsome, certainly; but I thought more of her manner than her face. And then Fanny, Miss Fanny, is so young!"

"Ah!" said my father, murmuring in Greek the celebrated lines of which Pope's translation is familiar to all,—

> "'Like leaves on trees, the race of man is found,
> Now green in youth, now withering on the ground.'

"Well, so they wish to see me. Did Ellinor—Lady Ellinor—say that, or her—her husband?"

"Her husband, certainly; Lady Ellinor rather implied than said it."

"We shall see," said my father. "Open the window; this room is stifling."

I opened the window, which looked on the Strand. The noise, the voices, the trampling feet, the rolling wheels, became loudly audible. My father leaned out for some moments, and I stood by his side. He turned to me with a serene face. "Every ant on the hill," said he, "carries its load, and its home is but made by the burden that it bears. How happy am I! how I should bless God! How light my burden! how secure my home!"

My mother came in as he ceased. He went up to her, put his arm round her waist and kissed her. Such caresses with him had not lost their tender charm by custom: my mother's brow, before somewhat ruffled, grew smooth on the instant. Yet she lifted her eyes to his in soft surprise.

"I was but thinking," said my father, apologetically, "how much I owed you, and how much I love you!"

CHAPTER II

And now behold us, three days after my arrival, settled in all the state and grandeur of our own house in Russell Street, Bloomsbury, the library of the Museum close at hand. My father spends his mornings in those lata silentia, as Virgil calls the world beyond the grave. And a world beyond the grave we may well call that land of the ghosts,—a book collection.

"Pisistratus," said my father one evening, as he arranged his notes before him and rubbed his spectacles, "Pisistratus, a great library is an awful place! There, are interred all the remains of men since the Flood."

"It is a burial-place!" quoth my Uncle Roland, who had that day found us out.

"It is an Heraclea!" said my father.

"Please, not such hard words," said the Captain, shaking his head.

"Heraclea was the city of necromancers, in which they raised the dead. Do want to speak to Cicero?—I invoke him. Do I want to chat in the Athenian market-place, and hear news two thousand years old?—I write down my charm on a slip of paper, and a grave magician calls me up Aristophanes. And we owe all this to our ancest—"

"Ancestors who wrote books; thank you."

Here Roland offered his snuff-box to my father, who,

abhorring snuff, benignly imbibed a pinch, and sneezed five times in consequence,—an excuse for Uncle Roland to say, which he did five times, with great unction, "God bless you, brother Austin!"

As soon as my father had recovered himself, he proceeded, with tears in his eyes, but calm as before the interruption—for he was of the philosophy of the Stoics,—

"But it is not that which is awful. It is the presuming to vie with these 'spirits elect;' to say to them, 'Make way,—I too claim place with the chosen. I too would confer with the living, centuries after the death that consumes my dust. I too—' Ah, Pisistratus! I wish Uncle Jack had been at Jericho before he had brought me up to London and placed me in the midst of those rulers of the world!"

I was busy, while my father spoke, in making some pendent shelves for these "spirits elect;" for my mother, always provident where my father's comforts were concerned, had foreseen the necessity of some such accommodation in a hired lodging-house, and had not only carefully brought up to town my little box of tools, but gone out herself that morning to buy the raw materials. Checking the plane in its progress over the smooth deal, "My dear father," said I, "if at the Philhellenic Institute I had looked with as much awe as you do on the big fellows that had gone before me, I should have stayed, to all eternity, the lag of the Infant Division."

"Pisistratus, you are as great an agitator as your namesake," cried my father, smiling. "And so, a fig for the big fellows!"

And now my mother entered in her pretty evening cap, all smiles and good humor, having just arranged a room for Uncle Roland, concluded advantageous negotiations with the laundress, held high council with Mrs. Primmins on the best mode of defeating the extortions of London tradesmen, and, pleased with herself and all the world, she kissed my father's forehead as it bent over his notes, and came to the tea-table, which only waited its presiding deity. My Uncle Roland, with his usual gallantry, started up, kettle in hand (our own urn—for we had one—not being yet unpacked), and having performed with soldier-like method the chivalrous office thus volunteered, he joined me at my employment, and said,—

"There is a better steel for the hands of a well-born lad than a carpenter's plane."

"Aha! Uncle—that depends—"

"Depends! What on?"

"On the use one makes of it. Peter the Great was better employed in making ships than Charles XII. in cutting throats."

"Poor Charles XII.!" said my uncle, sighing pathetically; "a very brave fellow!"

"Pity he did not like the ladies a little better!"

"No man is perfect!" said my uncle, sententiously. "But, seriously, you are now the male hope of the family; you are now—" My uncle stopped, and his face darkened. I saw that he thought of his son,—that mysterious son! And looking at him tenderly, I observed that his deep lines had grown deeper, his

iron-gray hair more gray. There was the trace of recent suffering on his face; and though he had not spoken to us a word of the business on which he had left us, it required no penetration to perceive that it had come to no successful issue.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.