



EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

THE CAXTONS

PART XVI

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PART XVI.

CHAPTER I.

"Please, sir, be this note for you?" asked the waiter.

"For me,--yes; it is my name."

I did not recognize the handwriting, and yet the note was from one whose writing I had often seen. But formerly the writing was cramped, stiff, perpendicular (a feigned hand, though I guessed not it was feigned); now it was hasty, irregular, impatient, scarce a letter formed, scarce a word that seemed finished, and yet strangely legible withal, as the handwriting of a bold man almost always is. I opened the note listlessly, and read,--

"I have watched for you all the morning. I saw her go. Well! I did not throw myself under the hoofs of the horses. I write this in a public-house, not far. Will you follow the bearer, and see once again the outcast whom all the rest of the world will shun?"

Though I did not recognize the hand, there could be no doubt who was the writer.

"The boy wants to know if there's an answer," said the waiter.

I nodded, took up my hat, and left the room. A ragged boy was standing in the yard, and scarcely six words passed between us before I was following him through a narrow lane that faced the inn and terminated in a turnstile. Here the boy paused, and making me a sign to go on, went back his way whistling. I passed the turnstile, and found myself in a green field, with a row of stunted willows hanging over a narrow rill. I looked round, and saw Vivian (as I intend still to call him) half kneeling, and seemingly intent upon some object in the grass.

My eye followed his mechanically. A young unfledged bird that had left the nest too soon stood, all still and alone, on the bare short sward, its beak open as for food, its gaze fixed on us with a wistful stare. Methought there was something in the forlorn bird that softened me more

to the forlorn youth, of whom it seemed a type.

"Now," said Vivian, speaking half to himself, half to me, "did the bird fall from the nest, or leave the nest at its own wild whim? The parent does not protect it. Mind, I say not it is the parent's fault,--perhaps the fault is all with the wanderer. But, look you, though the parent is not here, the foe is,--yonder, see!"

And the young man pointed to a large brindled cat that, kept back from its prey by our unwelcome neighborhood, still remained watchful, a few paces off, stirring its tail gently backwards and forwards, and with that stealthy look in its round eyes, dulled by the sun,--half fierce, half frightened,--which belongs to its tribe when man comes between the devourer and the victim.

"I do see," said I; "but a passing footstep has saved the bird!"

"Stop!" said Vivian, laying my hand on his own, and with his old bitter smile on his lip,--"stop! Do you think it mercy to save the bird? What from; and what for? From a natural enemy,--from a short pang and a quick death? Fie! is not that better than slow starvation,--or, if you take more heed of it, than the prison-bars of a cage? You cannot restore the nest, you cannot recall the parent. Be wiser in your mercy,--leave the bird to its gentlest fate."

I looked hard on Vivian: the lip had lost the bitter smile. He rose and turned away. I sought to take up the poor bird; but it did not know its friends, and ran from me, chirping piteously,--ran towards the very jaws of the grim enemy. I was only just in time to scare away the beast, which sprang up a tree and glared down through the hanging boughs. Then I followed the bird, and as I followed, I heard, not knowing at first whence the sound came, a short, quick, tremulous note. Was it near, was it far? From the earth, in the sky? Poor parent bird, like parent-love, it seemed now far and now near; now on earth, now in sky!

And at last, quick and sudden, as if born of the space, lo, the little wings hovered over me!

The young bird halted, and I also.

"Come," said I, "ye have found each other at last,--settle it between you!"

I went back to the outcast.

CHAPTER II.

Pisistratus.--"How came you to know we had stayed in the town?"

Vivian.--"Do you think I could remain where you left me? I wandered out, wandered hither. Passing at dawn through yon streets, I saw the hostlers loitering by the gates of the yard, overheard them talk, and so knew you were all at the inn,--all!" He sighed heavily.

Pisistratus.--"Your poor father is very ill. Oh, cousin, how could you fling from you so much love?"

Vivian.--"Love! his! my father's!"

Pisistratus.--"Do you really not believe, then, that your father loved you?"

Vivian.--"If I had believed it, I had never left him. All the gold of the Indies had never bribed me to leave my mother."

Pisistratus.--"This is indeed a strange misconception of yours. If we can remove it, all may be well yet. Need there now be any secrets between us? [persuasively]. Sit down, and tell me all, cousin."

After some hesitation, Vivian complied; and by the clearing of his brow and the very tone of his voice I felt sure that he was no longer seeking to disguise the truth. But as I afterwards learned the father's tale as well as now the son's, so, instead of repeating Vivian's words, which--not by design, but by the twist of a mind habitually wrong--distorted the facts, I will state what appears to me the real case, as between the parties so unhappily opposed. Reader, pardon me if the recital be tedious; and if thou thinkest that I bear not hard enough on the erring hero of the story, remember that he who recites, judges as Austin's son must judge of Roland's.

CHAPTER III.

Vivian.

At The Entrance of Life Sits--The Mother.

It was during the war in Spain that a severe wound, and the fever which ensued, detained Roland at the house of a Spanish widow. His hostess had once been rich; but her fortune had been ruined in the general calamities of the country. She had an only daughter, who assisted to nurse and tend the wounded Englishman; and when the time approached for Roland's departure, the frank grief of the young Ramouna betrayed the impression that the guest had made upon her affections. Much of gratitude, and something, it might be, of an exquisite sense of honor, aided, in Roland's breast, the charm naturally produced by the beauty of his young nurse, and the knightly compassion he felt for her ruined fortunes and desolate condition.

In one of those hasty impulses common to a generous nature--and which too often fatally vindicate the rank of Prudence amidst the tutelary Powers of Life--Roland committed the error of marriage with a girl of whose connections he knew nothing, and of whose nature little more than its warm, spontaneous susceptibility. In a few days subsequent to these rash nuptials, Roland rejoined the march of the army; nor was he able to return to Spain till after the crowning victory of Waterloo.

Maimed by the loss of a limb, and with the scars of many a noble wound still fresh, Roland then hastened to a home, the dreams of which had soothed the bed of pain, and now replaced the earlier visions of renown. During his absence a son had been born to him,--a son whom he might rear to take the place he had left in his country's service; to renew, in some future fields, a career that had failed the romance of his own antique and chivalrous ambition. As soon as that news had reached him his care had been to provide an English nurse for the infant, so that with the first sounds of the mother's endearments, the child might yet hear a voice from the father's land. A female relation of Bolt had settled in Spain, and was induced to undertake this duty. Natural as this appointment was to a man so devotedly English, it displeased his wild and passionate Ramouna. She had that mother's jealousy, strongest in minds uneducated; she had also that peculiar pride which belongs to her country-people of every rank and condition: the jealousy and the pride were both wounded by the sight of the English nurse at the child's cradle.

That Roland on regaining his Spanish hearth should be disappointed in

his expectations of the happiness awaiting him there, was the inevitable condition of such a marriage, since, not the less for his military bluntness, Roland had that refinement of feeling, perhaps over-fastidious, which belongs to all natures essentially poetic; and as the first illusions of love died away, there could have been little indeed congenial to his stately temper in one divided from him by an utter absence of education and by the strong, but nameless, distinctions of national views and manners. The disappointment probably, however, went deeper than that which usually attends an ill-assorted union; for instead of bringing his wife to his old Tower (an expatriation which she would doubtless have resisted to the utmost), he accepted, maimed as he was, not very long after his return to Spain, the offer of a military post under Ferdinand. The Cavalier doctrines and intense loyalty of Roland attached him, without reflection, to the service of a throne which the English arms had contributed to establish; while the extreme unpopularity of the Constitutional Party in Spain, and the stigma of irreligion fixed to it by the priests, aided to foster Roland's belief that he was supporting a beloved king against the professors of those revolutionary and Jacobinical doctrines which to him were the very atheism of politics. The experience of a few years in the service of a bigot so contemptible as Ferdinand, whose highest object of patriotism was the restoration of the Inquisition, added another disappointment to those which had already embittered the life of a man who had seen in the grand hero of Cervantes no follies to satirize, but high virtues to imitate. Poor Quixote himself,--he came mournfully back to his La Mancha with no other reward for his knight-errantry than a decoration, which he disdained to place beside his simple Waterloo medal, and a grade for which he would have blushed to resign his more modest, but more honorable, English dignity.

But still weaving hopes, the sanguine man returned to his Penates. His child now had grown from infancy into boyhood,--the child would pass naturally into his care. Delightful occupation! At the thought, home smiled again.

Now behold the most pernicious circumstance in this ill-omened connection.

The father of Ramouna had been one of that strange and mysterious race which presents in Spain so many features distinct from the characteristics of its kindred tribes in more civilized lands. The Gitano, or gypsy of Spain, is not the mere vagrant we see on our commons and road-sides. Retaining, indeed, much of his lawless principles and predatory inclinations, he lives often in towns, exercises various

callings, and not unfrequently becomes rich. A wealthy Gitano had married a Spanish woman; (1) Roland's wife had been the offspring of this marriage. The Gitano had died while Ramouna was yet extremely young, and her childhood had been free from the influences of her paternal kindred. But though her mother, retaining her own religion, had brought up Ramouna in the same faith, pure from the godless creed of the Gitano, and at her husband's death had separated herself wholly from his tribe, still she had lost caste with her own kin and people. And while struggling to regain it, the fortune, which made her sole chance of success in that attempt, was swept away, so that she had remained apart and solitary, and could bring no friends to cheer the solitude of Ramouna during Roland's absence. But while my uncle was still in the service of Ferdinand, the widow died; and then the only relatives who came round Ramouna were her father's kindred. They had not ventured to claim affinity while her mother lived, and they did so now by attentions and caresses to her son. This opened to them at once Ramouna's heart and doors. Meanwhile the English nurse--who, in spite of all that could render her abode odious to her, had, from strong love to her charge, stoutly maintained her post--died, a few weeks after Ramouna's mother; and no healthful influence remained to counteract those baneful ones to which the heir of the honest old Caxtons was subject. But Roland returned home in a humor to be pleased with all things. Joyously he clasped his wife to his breast, and thought, with self-reproach, that he had forborne too little and exacted too much,--he would be wiser now. Delightedly he acknowledged the beauty, the intelligence, and manly bearing of the boy, who played with his sword-knot and ran off with his pistols as a prize.

The news of the Englishman's arrival at first kept the lawless kinsfolk from the house; but they were fond of the boy, and the boy of them, and interviews between him and these wild comrades, if stolen, were not less frequent. Gradually Roland's eyes became opened. As in habitual intercourse the boy abandoned the reserve which awe and cunning at first imposed, Roland was inexpressibly shocked at the bold principles his son affected, and at his utter incapacity even to comprehend that plain honesty and that frank honor which to the English soldier, seemed ideas innate and heaven-planted. Soon afterwards, Roland found that a system of plunder was carried on in his household, and tracked it to the connivance of the wife and the agency of his son for the benefit of lazy bravos and dissolute vagrants. A more patient man than Roland might well have been exasperated, a more wary man confounded, by this discovery. He took the natural step,--perhaps insisting on it too summarily; perhaps not allowing enough for the uncultured mind and lively passions of his wife,--he ordered her instantly to prepare to

accompany him from the place, and to abandon all communication with her kindred.

A vehement refusal ensued; but Roland was not a man to give up such a point, and at length a false submission and a feigned repentance soothed his resentment and obtained his pardon. They moved several miles from the place; but where they moved, there some at least, and those the worst, of the baleful brood stealthily followed. Whatever Ramouna's earlier love for Roland had been, it had evidently long ceased, in the thorough want of sympathy between them, and in that absence which, if it renews a strong affection, destroys an affection already weakened. But the mother and son adored each other with all the strength of their strong, wild natures. Even under ordinary circumstances the father's influence over a boy yet in childhood is exerted in vain if the mother lend herself to baffle it. And in this miserable position, what chance had the blunt, stern, honest Poland (separated from his son during the most ductile years of infancy) against the ascendancy of a mother who humored all the faults and gratified all the wishes of her darling?

In his despair, Roland let fall the threat that if thus thwarted, it would become his duty to withdraw his son from the mother. This threat instantly hardened both hearts against him. The wife represented Roland to the boy as a tyrant, as an enemy, as one who had destroyed all the happiness they had before enjoyed in each other, as one whose severity showed that he hated his own child; and the boy believed her. In his own house a firm union was formed against Roland, and protected by the cunning which is the force of the weak against the strong.

In spite of all, Roland could never forget the tenderness with which the young nurse had watched over the wounded man, nor the love--genuine for the hour, though not drawn from the feelings which withstand the wear and tear of life--that lips so beautiful had pledged him in the bygone days. These thoughts must have come perpetually between his feelings and his judgment, to embitter still more his position, to harass still more his heart. And if, by the strength of that sense of duty which made the force of his character, he could have strung himself to the fulfilment of the threat, humanity, at all events, compelled him to delay it,--his wife promised to be again a mother. Blanche was born. How could he take the infant from the mother's breast, or abandon the daughter to the fatal influences from which only, by so violent an effort, he could free the son?

No wonder, poor Roland, that those deep furrows contracted thy bold front, and thy hair grew gray before its time!

Fortunately, perhaps, for all parties, Roland's wife died while Blanche was still an infant. She was taken ill of a fever; she died delirious, clasping her boy to her breast, and praying the saints to protect him from his cruel father. How often that death-bed haunted the son, and justified his belief that there was no parent's love in the heart which was now his sole shelter from the world and the "pelting of its pitiless rain!" Again I say "poor Roland;" for I know that in that harsh, unloving disrupture of such solemn ties thy large, generous heart forgot its wrongs,--again didst thou see tender eyes bending over the wounded stranger, again hear low murmurs breathe the warm weakness which the women of the South deem it no shame to own. And now did it all end in those ravings of hate, and in that glazing gaze of terror?

(1) A Spaniard very rarely indeed marries a Gitana, or female gypsy. But occasionally (observes Mr. Borrow) a wealthy Gitano marries a Spanish female.

CHAPTER IV.

The Preceptor.

Roland removed to France, and fixed his abode in the environs of Paris. He placed Blanche at a convent in the immediate neighborhood, going to see her daily, and gave himself up to the education of his son. The boy was apt to learn; but to unlearn was here the arduous task,--and for that task it would have needed either the passionless experience, the exquisite forbearance, of a practised teacher, or the love and confidence and yielding heart of a believing pupil. Roland felt that he was not the man to be the teacher, and that his son's heart remained obstinately closed to him. He looked round, and found at the other side of Paris what seemed a suitable preceptor,--a young Frenchman of some distinction in letters, more especially in science, with all a Frenchman's eloquence of talk, full of high-sounding sentiments that pleased the romantic enthusiasm of the Captain; so Roland, with sanguine hopes, confided his son to this man's care. The boy's natural quickness mastered readily all that pleased his taste; he learned to speak and write French with rare felicity and precision. His tenacious memory, and those flexible organs in which the talent for languages is placed,

served, with the help of an English master, to revive his earlier knowledge of his father's tongue and to enable him to speak it with fluent correctness,—though there was always in his accent something which had struck me as strange; but not suspecting it to be foreign, I had thought it a theatrical affectation. He did not go far into science,—little further, perhaps, than a smattering of French mathematics; but he acquired a remarkable facility and promptitude in calculation. He devoured eagerly the light reading thrown in his way, and picked up thence that kind of knowledge which novels and plays afford, for good or evil, according as the novel or the play elevates the understanding and ennobles the passions, or merely corrupts the fancy and lowers the standard of human nature. But of all that Roland desired him to be taught, the son remained as ignorant as before. Among the other misfortunes of this ominous marriage, Roland's wife had possessed all the superstitions of a Roman Catholic Spaniard; and with these the boy had unconsciously intermingled doctrines far more dreary, imbibed from the dark paganism of the Gitanos.

Roland had sought a Protestant for his son's tutor. The preceptor was nominally a Protestant,—a biting derider of all superstitions, indeed! He was such a Protestant as some defender of Voltaire's religion says the Great Wit would have been had he lived in a Protestant country. The Frenchman laughed the boy out of his superstitions, to leave behind them the sneering scepticism of the Encyclopedie, without those redeeming ethics on which all sects of philosophy are agreed, but which, unhappily, it requires a philosopher to comprehend.

This preceptor was doubtless not aware of the mischief he was doing; and for the rest, he taught his pupil after his own system,—a mild and plausible one, very much like the system we at home are recommended to adopt: "Teach the understanding,—all else will follow;" "Learn to read something, and it will all come right;" "Follow the bias of the pupil's mind,—thus you develop genius, not thwart it." Mind, understanding, genius,—fine things! But to educate the whole man you must educate something more than these. Not for want of mind, understanding, genius, have Borgias and Neros left their names as monuments of horror to mankind. Where, in all this teaching, was one lesson to warm the heart and guide the soul?

Oh, mother mine, that the boy had stood by thy knee and heard from thy lips why life was given us, in what life shall end, and how heaven stands open to us night and day! Oh, father mine, that thou hadst been his preceptor, not in book-learning, but the heart's simple wisdom! Oh that he had learned from thee, in parables closed with practice, the

happiness of self-sacrifice, and how "good deeds should repair the bad"!

It was the misfortune of this boy, with his daring and his beauty, that there was in his exterior and his manner that which attracted indulgent interest and a sort of compassionate admiration. The Frenchman liked him, believed his story, thought him ill-treated by that hard-visaged English soldier. All English people were so disagreeable, particularly English soldiers; and the Captain once mortally offended the Frenchman by calling Vilainton un grand homme, and denying, with brutal indignation, that the English had poisoned Napoleon! So, instead of teaching the son to love and revere his father, the Frenchman shrugged his shoulders when the boy broke into some unfilial complaint, and at most said, "Mais, cher enfant, ton pere est Anglais,--c'est tout dire." Meanwhile, as the child sprang rapidly into precocious youth, he was permitted a liberty in his hours of leisure of which he availed himself with all the zest of his earlier habits and adventurous temper. He formed acquaintances among the loose young haunters of cafes and spendthrifts of that capital,--the wits! He became an excellent swordsman and pistol-shot, adroit in all games in which skill helps fortune. He learned betimes to furnish himself with money, by the cards and the billiard-balls.

But delighted with the easy home he had obtained, he took care to school his features and smooth his manner in his father's visits, to make the most of what he had learned of less ignoble knowledge, and, with his characteristic imitateness, to cite the finest sentiments he had found in his plays; and novels. What father is not credulous? Roland believed, and wept tears of joy. And now he thought the time was come to take back the boy,--to return with a worthy heir to the old Tower. He thanked and blessed the tutor; he took the son. But under pretence that he had yet some things to master, whether in book knowledge or manly accomplishments, the youth begged his father at all events not yet to return to England,--to let him attend his tutor daily for some months. Roland consented, moved from his old quarters, and took a lodging for both in the same suburb as that in which the teacher resided. But soon, when they were under one roof, the boy's habitual tastes, and his repugnance to all paternal authority, were betrayed. To do my unhappy cousin justice (such as that justice is), though he had the cunning for a short disguise, he had not the hypocrisy to maintain systematic deceit. He could play a part for a while, from an exulting joy in his own address; but he could not wear a mask with the patience of cold-blooded dissimulation. Why enter into painful details, so easily divined by the intelligent reader? The faults of the son were precisely those to which Roland would be least indulgent. To the

ordinary scrapes of high-spirited boyhood no father, I am sure, would have been more lenient; but to anything that seemed low, petty,--that grated on him as a gentleman and soldier,--there, not for worlds would I have braved the darkness of his frown, and the woe that spoke like scorn in his voice. And when, after all warning and prohibition were in vain, Roland found his son in the middle of the night in a resort of gamblers and sharpers, carrying all before him with his cue, in the full flush of triumph, and a great heap of five-franc pieces before him, you may conceive with what wrath the proud, hasty, passionate man drove out, cane in hand, the obscene associates, flinging after them the son's ill-gotten gains; and with what resentful humiliation the son was compelled to follow the father home. Then Roland took the boy to England, but not to the old Tower; that hearth of his ancestors was still too sacred for the footsteps of the vagrant heir!

CHAPTER V.

The Hearts Without Trust, and The World Without a Guide.

And then, vainly grasping at every argument his blunt sense could suggest, then talked Roland much and grandly of the duties men owed,--even if they threw off all love to their father, still to their father's name; and then his pride, always so lively, grew irritable and harsh, and seemed, no doubt, to the perverted ears of the son, unlovely and unloving. And that pride, without serving one purpose of good, did yet more mischief; for the youth caught the disease, but in a wrong way. And he said to himself,--

"Ho, then, my father is a great man, with all these ancestors and big words! And he has lands and a castle; and yet how miserably we live, and how he stints me! But if he has cause for pride in all these dead men, why, so have I. And are these lodgings, these appurtenances, fit for the 'gentleman' he says I am?"

Even in England the gypsy blood broke out as before, and the youth found vagrant associates,--Heaven knows how or where; strange-looking forms, gaudily shabby and disreputably smart, were seen lurking in the corner of the street, or peering in at the window, slinking off if they saw Roland: and Roland could not stoop to be a spy. And the son's heart grew harder and harder against his father, and his father's face now never smiled on him. Then bills came in, and duns knocked at the door,

--bills and duns to a man who shrank from the thought of a debt as an ermine from a spot on its fur! And the son's short answer to remonstrance was: "Am I not a gentleman? These are the things gentlemen require." Then perhaps Roland remembered the experiment of his French friend, and left his bureau unlocked, and said, "Ruin me if you will, but no debts. There is money in those drawers,--they are unlocked." That trust would forever have cured of extravagance a youth with a high and delicate sense of honor: the pupil of the Gitanos did not understand the trust; he thought it conveyed a natural, though ungracious, permission to take out what he wanted,--and he took! To Roland this seemed a theft; and a theft of the coarsest kind; but when he so said, the son started indignant, and saw in that which had been so touching an appeal to his honor but a trap to decoy him into disgrace. In short, neither could understand the other. Roland forbade his son to stir from the house; and the young man the same night let himself out, and stole forth into the wide world, to enjoy or defy it in his own wild way.

It would be tedious to follow him through his various adventures and experiments on fortune (even if I knew them all, which I do not). And now putting altogether aside his right name, which he had voluntarily abandoned, and not embarrassing the reader with the earlier aliases assumed, I shall give to my unfortunate kinsman the name by which I first knew him, and continue to do so until,--Heaven grant the time may come!--having first redeemed, he may reclaim his own. It was in joining a set of strolling players that Vivian became acquainted with Peacock; and that worthy, who had many strings to his bow, soon grew aware of Vivian's extraordinary skill with the cue, and saw therein a better mode of making their joint fortunes than the boards of an itinerant Thespis furnished to either. Vivian listened to him, and it was while their intimacy was most fresh that I met them on the highroad. That chance meeting produced (if I may be allowed to believe his assurance) a strong, and for the moment a salutary, effect upon Vivian. The comparative innocence and freshness of a boy's mind were new to him; the elastic, healthful spirits with which those gifts were accompanied startled him, by the contrast to his own forced gayety and secret gloom. And this boy was his own cousin!

Coming afterwards to London, he adventured inquiry at the hotel in the Strand at which I had given my address; learned where we were; and passing one night in the street, saw my uncle at the window,--to recognize and to fly from him. Having then some money at his disposal, he broke off abruptly from the set in which he had been thrown. He had resolved to return to France,--he would try for a more respectable mode of existence. He had not found happiness in that liberty he had won,

nor room for the ambition that began to gnaw him, in those pursuits from which his father had vainly warned him. His most reputable friend was his old tutor; he would go to him. He went; but the tutor was now married, and was himself a father,--and that made a wonderful alteration in his practical ethics. It was no longer moral to aid the son in rebellion to his father. Vivian evinced his usual sarcastic haughtiness at the reception he met, and was requested civilly to leave the house. Then again he flung himself on his wits at Paris. But there were plenty of wits there sharper than his own. He got into some quarrel with the police,--not, indeed, for any dishonest practices of his own, but from an unwary acquaintance with others less scrupulous,--and deemed it prudent to quit France. Thus had I met him again, forlorn and ragged, in the streets of London.

Meanwhile Roland, after the first vain search, had yielded to the indignation and disgust that had long rankled within him. His son had thrown off his authority because it preserved him from dishonor. His ideas of discipline were stern, and patience had been well-nigh crushed out of his heart. He thought he could bear to resign his son to his fate,--to disown him, and to say, "I have no more a son." It was in this mood that he had first visited our house. But when, on that memorable night in which he had narrated to his thrilling listeners the dark tale of a fellow-sufferer's woe and crime,--betraying in the tale, to my father's quick sympathy, his own sorrow and passion,--it did not need much of his gentler brother's subtle art to learn or guess the whole, nor much of Austin's mild persuasion to convince Roland that he had not yet exhausted all efforts to track the wanderer and reclaim the erring child. Then he had gone to London; then he had sought every spot which the outcast would probably haunt; then had he saved and pinched from his own necessities to have wherewithal to enter theatres and gaming-houses, and fee the agencies of police; then had he seen the form for which he had watched and pined, in the street below his window, and cried, in a joyous delusion, "He repents!" One day a letter reached my uncle, through his bankers, from the French tutor (who knew of no other means of tracing Roland but through the house by which his salary had been paid), informing him of his son's visit. Roland started instantly for Paris. Arriving there, he could only learn of his son through the police, and from them only learn that he had been seen in the company of accomplished swindlers, who were already in the hands of justice, but that the youth himself, whole there was nothing to criminate, had been suffered to quit Paris, and had taken, it was supposed, the road to England. Then at last the poor Captain's stout heart gave way. His son the companion of swindlers! Could he be sure that he was not their accomplice? If not yet, how small the step between companionship and

participation! He took the child left him still from the convent, returned to England, and arrived there to be seized with fever and delirium,--apparently on the same day or a day before that on which the son had dropped, shelter-less and penniless, on the stones of London.

CHAPTER VI.

The Attempt to Build a Temple to Fortune Out of the Ruins of Home.

"But," said Vivian, pursuing his tale, "but when you came to my aid, not knowing me; when you relieved me; when from your own lips, for the first time, I heard words that praised me, and for qualities that implied I might yet be 'worth much,'--ah!" he added mournfully, "I remember the very words,--a new light broke upon me, struggling and dim, but light still. The ambition with which I had sought the truckling Frenchman revived, and took worthier and more definite form. I would lift myself above the mire, make a name, rise in life!"

Vivian's head drooped; but he raised it quickly, and laughed his low, mocking laugh. What follows of this tale may be told succinctly. Retaining his bitter feelings towards his father, he resolved to continue his incognito: he gave himself a name likely to mislead conjecture if I conversed of him to my family, since he knew that Roland was aware that a Colonel Vivian had been afflicted by a runaway son,--and indeed, the talk upon that subject had first put the notion of flight into his own head. He caught at the idea of becoming known to Trevanion; but he saw reasons to forbid his being indebted to me for the introduction, to forbid my knowing where he was: sooner or later that knowledge could scarcely fail to end in the discovery of his real name. Fortunately, as he deemed, for the plans he began to meditate, we were all leaving London; he should have the stage to himself. And then boldly he resolved upon what he regarded as the masterscheme of life; namely, to obtain a small pecuniary independence and to emancipate himself formally and entirely from his father's control. Aware of poor Roland's chivalrous reverence for his name, firmly persuaded that Roland had no love for the son, but only the dread that the son might disgrace him, he determined to avail himself of his father's prejudices in order to effect his purpose.

He wrote a short letter to Roland (that letter which had given the poor

man so sanguine a joy),--that letter after reading which he had said to Blanche, "Pray for me", stating simply that he wished to see his father, and naming a tavern in the City for the meeting.

The interview took place. And when Roland--love and forgiveness in his heart, but (who shall blame him?) dignity on his brow and rebuke in his eye--approached, ready at a word to fling himself on the boy's breast, Vivian, seeing only the outer signs, and interpreting them by his own sentiments, recoiled, folded his arms on his bosom, and said, coldly, "Spare me reproach, sir,--it is unavailing; I seek you only to propose that you shall save your name and resign your son."

Then, intent perhaps but to gain his object, the unhappy youth declared his fixed determination never to live with his father, never to acquiesce in his authority, resolutely to pursue his own career, whatever that career might be, explaining none of the circumstances that appeared most in his disfavor,--rather, perhaps, thinking that, the worse his father judged of him, the more chance he had to achieve his purpose. "All I ask of you," he said, "is this: Give me the least you can afford to preserve me from the temptation to rob, or the necessity to starve; and I, in my turn, promise never to molest you in life, never to degrade you in my death; whatever my misdeeds, they will never reflect on yourself, for you shall never recognize the misdoer! The name you prize so highly shall be spared." Sickened and revolted, Roland attempted no argument; there was that in the son's cold manner which shut out hope, and against which his pride rose indignant. A meeker man might have remonstrated, implored, and wept; that was not in Roland's nature. He had but the choice of three evils: to say to his son, "Fool, I command thee to follow me!" or say, "Wretch, since thou wouldst cast me off as a stranger, as a stranger I say to thee,--Go, starve or rob, as thou wilt!" or lastly, to bow his proud head, stunned by the blow, and say, "Thou refusest me the obedience of the son, thou demandest to be as the dead to me. I can control thee not from vice, I can guide thee not to virtue. Thou wouldst sell me the name I have inherited stainless, and have as stainless borne. Be it so! Name thy price!"

And something like this last was the father's choice.

He listened, and was long silent; and then he said slowly, "Pause before you decide."

"I have paused long; my decision is made! This is the last time we meet. I see before me now the way to fortune, fairly, honorably; you

can aid me in it only in the way I have said. Reject me now, and the option may never come again to either!"

And then Roland said to himself, "I have spared and saved for this son: what care I for aught else than enough to live without debt, creep into a corner, and await the grave? And the more I can give, why, the better chance that he will abjure the vile associate and the desperate course." And so, out of his small income Roland surrendered to the rebel child more than the half.

Vivian was not aware of his father's fortune,--he did not suppose the sum of two hundred pounds a year was an allowance so disproportioned to Roland's means; yet when it was named, even he was struck by the generosity of one to whom he himself had given the right to say, "I take thee at thy word: 'Just enough not to starve!'"

But then that hateful cynicism, which, caught from bad men and evil books, he called "knowledge of the world," made him think, "It is not for me, it is only for his name;" and he said aloud, "I accept these terms, sir; here is the address of a solicitor with whom yours can settle them. Farewell forever."

At those last words Roland started, and stretched out his arms vaguely like a blind man. But Vivian had already thrown open the window (the room was on the ground floor) and sprung upon the sill. "Farewell," he repeated; "tell the world I am dead."

He leaped into the street, and the father drew in the outstretched arms, smote his heart, and said: "Well, then, my task in the world of man is over! I will back to the old ruin,--the wreck to the wrecks; and the sight of tombs I have at least rescued from dishonor shall comfort me for all!"

CHAPTER VII.

The Results.--Perverted Ambition.--Selfish Passion.--The Intellect Distorted by the Crookedness of the Heart.

Vivian's schemes thus prospered. He had an income that permitted him the outward appearances of a gentleman,--an independence modest, indeed,

but independence still. We were all gone from London. One letter to me with the postmark of the town near which Colonel Vivian lived, sufficed to confirm my belief in his parentage and in his return to his friends. He then presented himself to Trevanion as the young man whose pen I had employed in the member's service; and knowing that I had never mentioned his name to Trevanion,--for without Vivian's permission I should not, considering his apparent trust in me, have deemed myself authorized to do so,--he took that of Gower, which he selected, haphazard, from an old Court Guide as having the advantage--in common with most names borne by the higher nobility of England--of not being confined, as the ancient names of untitled gentlemen usually are, to the members of a single family. And when, with his wonted adaptability and suppleness, he had contrived to lay aside or smooth over whatever in his manners would be calculated to displease Trevanion, and had succeeded in exciting the interest which that generous statesman always conceived for ability, he owned candidly one day, in the presence of Lady Ellinor,--for, his experience had taught him the comparative ease with which the sympathy of woman is enlisted in anything that appeals to the imagination, or seems out of the ordinary beat of life,--that he had reasons for concealing his connections for the present; that he had cause to believe I suspected what they were, and, from mistaken regard for his welfare, might acquaint his relations with his whereabouts. He therefore begged Trevanion, if the latter had occasion to write to me, not to mention him. This promise Trevanion gave, though reluctantly,--for the confidence volunteered to him seemed to exact the promise; but as he detested mystery of all kinds, the avowal might have been fatal to any further acquaintance, and under auspices so doubtful, there would have been no chance of his obtaining that intimacy in Trevanion's house which he desired to establish, but for an accident which at once opened that house to him almost as a home.

Vivian had always treasured a lock of his mother's hair, cut off on her death-bed; and when he was at his French tutor's, his first pocket-money had been devoted to the purchase of a locket, on which he had caused to be inscribed his own name and his mother's. Through all his wanderings he had worn this relic; and in the direst pangs of want, no hunger had been keen enough to induce him to part with it. Now, one morning, the ribbon that suspended the locket gave way, and his eye resting on the names inscribed on the gold, he thought, in his own vague sense of right, imperfect as it was, that his compact with his father obliged him to have the names erased. He took it to a jeweller in Piccadilly for that purpose, and gave the requisite order, not taking notice of a lady in the farther part of the shop. The locket was still on the counter after Vivian had left, when the lady, coming forward, observed it, and

saw the names on the surface. She had been struck by the peculiar tone of the voice, which she had heard before; and that very day Mr. Gower received a note from Lady Ellinor Trevanion, requesting to see him. Much wondering, he went. Presenting him with the locket, she said smiling, "There is only one gentleman in the world who calls himself De Caxton, unless it be his son. Ah! I see now why you wished to conceal yourself from my friend Pisistratus. But how is this? Can you have any difference with your father? Confide in me, or it is my duty to write to him."

Even Vivian's powers of dissimulation abandoned him, thus taken by surprise. He saw no alternative but to trust Lady Ellinor with his secret, and implore her to respect it. And then he spoke bitterly of his father's dislike to him, and his own resolution to prove the injustice of that dislike by the position he would himself establish in the world. At present his father believed him dead, and perhaps was not ill-pleased to think so. He would not dispel that belief till he could redeem any boyish errors, and force his family to be proud to acknowledge him.

Though Lady Ellinor was slow to believe that Roland could dislike his son, she could yet readily believe that he was harsh and choleric, with a soldier's high notions of discipline; the young man's story moved her, his determination pleased her own high spirit. Always with a touch of romance in her, and always sympathizing with each desire of ambition, she entered into Vivian's aspirations with an alacrity that surprised himself. She was charmed with the idea of ministering to the son's fortunes, and ultimately reconciling him to the father,--through her own agency; it would atone for any fault of which Roland could accuse herself in the old time.

She undertook to impart the secret to Trevanion, for she would have no secrets from him, and to secure his acquiescence in its concealment from all others.

And here I must a little digress from the chronological course of my explanatory narrative to inform the reader that when Lady Ellinor had her interview with Roland, she had been repelled by the sternness of his manner from divulging Vivian's secret. But on her first attempt to sound or conciliate him, she had begun with some eulogies on Trevanion's new friend and assistant, Mr. Gower, and had awakened Roland's suspicions of that person's identity with his son,--suspicions which had given him a terrible interest in our joint deliverance of bliss Trevanion. But so heroically had the poor soldier sought to resist his

own fears, that on the way he shrank to put to me the questions that might paralyze the energies which, whatever the answer, were then so much needed. "For," said he to my father, "I felt the blood surging to my temples; and if I had said to Pisistratus, 'Describe this man,' and by his description I had recognized my son, and dreaded lest I might be too late to arrest him from so treacherous a crime, my brain would have given way,--and so I did not dare!"

I return to the thread of my story. From the time that Vivian confided in Lady Ellinor, the way was cleared to his most ambitious hopes; and though his acquisitions were not sufficiently scholastic and various to permit Trevanion to select him as a secretary, yet, short of sleeping at the house, he was little less intimate there than I had been.

Among Vivian's schemes of advancement, that of winning the hand and heart of the great heiress had not been one of the least sanguine. This hope was annulled when, not long after his intimacy at her father's house, she became engaged to young Lord Castleton. But he could not see Miss Trevanion with impunity (alas! who, with a heart yet free, could be insensible to attractions so winning?). He permitted the love--such love as his wild, half-educated, half-savage nature acknowledged--to creep into his soul, to master it; but he felt no hope, cherished no scheme while the young lord lived. With the death of her betrothed, Fanny was free; then he began to hope,--not yet to scheme. Accidentally he encountered Peacock. Partly from the levity that accompanied a false good-nature that was constitutional with him, partly from a vague idea that the man might be useful, Vivian established his quondam associate in the service of Trevanion. Peacock soon gained the secret of Vivian's love for Fanny, and dazzled by the advantages that a marriage with Miss Trevanion would confer on his patron, and might reflect on himself, and delighted at an occasion to exercise his dramatic accomplishments on the stage of real life, he soon practised the lesson that the theatres had taught him; namely, to make a sub-intrigue between maid and valet serve the schemes and insure the success of the lover. If Vivian had some opportunities to imply his admiration, Miss Trevanion gave him none to plead his cause. But the softness of her nature, and that graceful kindness which surrounded her like an atmosphere, emanating unconsciously from a girl's harmless desire to please, tended to deceive him. His own personal gifts were so rare, and in his wandering life the effect they had produced had so increased his reliance on them, that he thought he wanted but the fair opportunity to woo in order to win. In this state of mental intoxication, Trevanion, having provided for his Scotch secretary, took him to Lord N--s. His hostess was one of those middle-aged ladies of fashion who like to patronize and bring forward

young men, accepting gratitude for condescension as a homage to beauty. She was struck by Vivian's exterior, and that "picturesque" in look and in manner which belonged to him. Naturally garrulous and indiscreet, she was unreserved to a pupil whom she conceived the whim to make "au fait to society." Thus she talked to him, among other topics in fashion, of Miss Trevanion, and expressed her belief that the present Lord Castleton had always admired her; but it was only on his accession to the marquisate that he had made up his mind to marry, or, from his knowledge of Lady Ellinor's ambition, thought that the Marquis of Castleton might achieve the prize which would have been refused to Sir Sedley Beaudesert. Then, to corroborate the predictions she hazarded, she repeated, perhaps with exaggeration, some passages from Lord Castleton's replies to her own suggestions on the subject. Vivian's alarm became fatally excited; unregulated passions easily obscured a reason so long perverted, and a conscience so habitually dulled. There is an instinct in all intense affection (whether it be corrupt or pure) that usually makes its jealousy prophetic. Thus, from the first, out of all the brilliant idlers round Fanny Trevanion, my jealousy had pre-eminently fastened on Sir Sedley Beaudesert, though, to all seeming, without a cause. From the same instinct Vivian had conceived the same vague jealousy,--a jealousy, in his instance, coupled with a deep dislike to his supposed rival, who had wounded his self-love. For the marquis, though to be haughty or ill-bred was impossible to the blandness of his nature, had never shown to Vivian the genial courtesies he had lavished upon me, and kept politely aloof from his acquaintance; while Vivian's personal vanity had been wounded by that drawing-room effect which the proverbial winner of all hearts produced without an effort,--an effect that threw into the shade the youth and the beauty (more striking, but infinitely less prepossessing) of the adventurous rival. Thus animosity to Lord Castleton conspired with Vivian's passion for Fanny to rouse all that was worst by nature and by rearing in this audacious and turbulent spirit.

His confidant Peacock suggested, from his stage experience, the outlines of a plot, to which Vivian's astuter intellect instantly gave tangibility and coloring. Peacock had already found Miss Trevanion's waiting-woman ripe for any measure that might secure himself as her husband and a provision for life as a reward. Two or three letters between them settled the preliminary engagements. A friend of the ex-comedian's had lately taken an inn on the north road, and might be relied upon. At that inn it was settled that Vivian should meet Miss Trevanion, whom Peacock, by the aid of the abigail, engaged to lure there. The sole difficulty that then remained would, to most men, have seemed the greatest; namely, the consent of Miss Trevanion to a Scotch

marriage. But Vivian hoped all things from his own eloquence, art, and passion; and by an inconsistency, however strange, still not unnatural in the twists of so crooked an intellect, he thought that by insisting on the intention of her parents to sacrifice her youth to the very man of whose attractions he was most jealous,--by the picture of disparity of years, by the caricature of his rival's foibles and frivolities, by the commonplaces of "beauty bartered for ambition," etc.,--he might enlist her fears of the alternative on the side of the choice urged upon her. The plan proceeded, the time came: Peacock pretended the excuse of a sick relation to leave Trevanion; and Vivian a day before, on pretence of visiting the picturesque scenes in the neighborhood, obtained leave of absence. Thus the plot went on to its catastrophe.

"And I need not ask," said I, trying in vain to conceal my indignation, "how Miss Trevanion received your monstrous proposition!"

Vivian's pale cheek grew paler, but he made no reply.

"And if we had not arrived, what would you have done? Oh, dare you look into the gulf of infamy you have escaped!"

"I cannot and I will not bear this!" exclaimed Vivian, starting up. "I have laid my heart bare before you, and it is ungenerous and unmanly thus to press upon its wounds. You can moralize, you can speak coldly; but--I--I loved!"

"And do you think," I burst forth, "do you think that I did not love too,--love longer than you have done; better than you have done; gone through sharper struggles, darker days, more sleepless nights than you; and yet--"

Vivian caught hold of me.

"Hush!" he cried; "is this indeed true? I thought you might have had some faint and fleeting fancy for Miss Trevanion, but that you curbed and conquered it at once. Oh, no! It was impossible to have loved really, and to have surrendered all chance as you did,--have left the house, have fled from her presence! No, no; that was not love!"

"It was love! And I pray Heaven to grant that, one day, you may know how little your affection sprang from those feelings which make true love sublime as honor, and meek as is religion! Oh, cousin, cousin, with those rare gifts, what you might have been; what, if you will pass through repentance and cling to atonement, what, I dare hope, you may

yet be! Talk not now of your love; I talk not of mine! Love is a thing gone from the lives of both. Go back to earlier thoughts, to heavier wrongs,—your father, that noble heart which you have so wantonly lacerated, which you have so little comprehended!"

Then, with all the warmth of emotion, I hurried on,—showed him the true nature of honor and of Roland (for the names were one!); showed him the watch, the hope, the manly anguish I had witnessed, and wept—I, not his son to see; showed him the poverty and privation to which the father, even at the last, had condemned himself, so that the son might have no excuse for the sins that Want whispers to the weak. This and much more, and I suppose with the pathos that belongs to all earnestness, I enforced, sentence after sentence, yielding to no interruption, overmastering all dissent, driving in the truth, nail after nail, as it were, into the obdurate heart that I constrained and grappled to. And at last the dark, bitter, cynical nature gave way, and the young man fell sobbing at my feet and cried aloud, "Spare me, spare me! I see it all now, wretch that I have been!"

CHAPTER VIII.

On leaving Vivian I did not presume to promise him Roland's immediate pardon. I did not urge him to attempt to see his father. I felt the time was not come for either pardon or interview. I contented myself with the victory I had already gained. I judged it right that thought, solitude, and suffering should imprint more deeply the lesson, and prepare the way to the steadfast resolution of reform. I left him seated by the stream, and with the promise to inform him at the small hostelry, where he took up his lodging, how Roland struggled through his illness.

On returning to the inn I was uneasy to see how long a time had elapsed since I had left my uncle. But on coming into his room, to my surprise and relief I found him up and dressed, and with a serene, though fatigued, expression of countenance. He asked me no questions where I had been,—perhaps from sympathy with my feelings in parting with Miss Trevanion; perhaps from conjecture that the indulgence of those feelings had not wholly engrossed my time.

But he said simply, "I think I understood from you that you had sent for Austin,—is it so?"

"Yes, sir; but I named --, as the nearest point to the Tower, for the place of meeting."

"Then let us go hence forthwith,--nay, I shall be better for the change. And here there must be curiosity, conjecture, torture!" said he, locking his hands tightly together. "Order the horses at once!"

I left the room accordingly; and while they were getting ready the horses, I ran to the place where I had left Vivian. He was still there, in the same attitude, covering his face with his hands, as if to shut out the sun. I told him hastily of Roland's improvement, of our approaching departure, and asked him an address in London at which I could find him. He gave me as his direction the same lodging at which I had so often visited him. "If there be no vacancy there for me," said he, "I shall leave word where I am to be found. But I would gladly be where I was before--" He did not finish the sentence. I pressed his hand, and left him.

CHAPTER IX.

Some days have elapsed: we are in London, my father with us; and Roland has permitted Austin to tell me his tale, and received through Austin all that Vivian's narrative to me suggested, whether in extenuation of the past or in hope of redemption in the future. And Austin has inexpressibly soothed his brother. And Roland's ordinary roughness has gone, and his looks are meek and his voice low. But he talks little, and smiles never. He asks me no questions, does not to me name his son, nor recur to the voyage to Australia, nor ask why it is put off, nor interest himself, as before, in preparations for it,--he has no heart for anything.

The voyage is put off till the next vessel sails, and I have seen Vivian twice or thrice, and the result of the interviews has disappointed and depressed me. It seems to me that much of the previous effect I had produced is already obliterated. At the very sight of the great Babel, --the evidence of the ease, the luxury, the wealth, the pomp; the strife, the penury, the famine, and the rags, which the focus of civilization, in the disparities of old societies, inevitably gathers together,--the fierce, combative disposition seemed to awaken again; the perverted

ambition, the hostility to the world; the wrath, the scorn; the war with man, and the rebellious murmur against Heaven. There was still the one redeeming point of repentance for his wrongs to his father,--his heart was still softened there; and, attendant on that softness, I hailed a principle more like that of honor than I had yet recognized in Vivian. He cancelled the agreement which had assured him of a provision at the cost of his father's comforts. "At least there," he said, "I will injure him no more!"

But while on this point repentance seemed genuine, it was not so with regard to his conduct towards Miss Trevanion. His gypsy nurture, his loose associates, his extravagant French romances, his theatrical anode of looking upon love intrigues and stage plots, seemed all to rise between his intelligence and the due sense of the fraud and treachery he had practised. He seemed to feel more shame at the exposure than at the guilt, more despair at the failure of success than gratitude at escape from crime. In a word, the nature of a whole life was not to be remodelled at once,--at least by an artificer so unskilled as I.

After one of these interviews I stole into the room where Austin sat with Roland, and watching a seasonable moment when Roland, shaking off a reverie, opened his Bible and sat down to it, with each muscle in his face set, as I had seen it before, into iron resolution, I beckoned my father from the room.

Pisistratus.--"I have again seen my cousin. I cannot make the way I wished. My dear father, you must see him."

Mr. Caxton.--"I? Yes, assuredly, if I can be of any service. But will he listen to me?"

Pisistratus.--"I think so. A young man will often respect in his elder what he will resent as a presumption in his contemporary."

Mr. Caxton.--"It may be so. [Then more thoughtfully] But you describe this strange boy's mind as a wreck! In what part of the mouldering timbers can I fix the grappling-hook? Here it seems that most of the supports on which we can best rely, when we would save another, fail us,--religion, honor, the associations of childhood, the bonds of home, filial obedience, even the intelligence of self-interest, in the philosophical sense of the word. And I, too,--a mere bookman! My dear son, I despair!"

Pisistratus.--"No, you do not despair; no, you must succeed,--for if you

do not, what is to become of Uncle Roland? Do you not see his heart is fast breaking?"

Mr. Caxton.--"Get me my hat. I will go; I will save this Ishmael,--I will not leave him till he is saved!"

Pisistratus. (some minutes after, as they are walking towards Vivian's lodging).--"You ask me what support you are to cling to: a strong and a good one, sir."

Mr. Caxton. "Ah! what is that?"

Pisistratus.--"Affection! There is a nature capable of strong affection at the core of this wild heart. He could love his mother,--tears gush to his eyes at her name; he would have starved rather than part with the memorial of that love. It was his belief in his father's indifference or dislike that hardened and imbruted him; it is only when he hears how that father loved him that I now melt his pride and curb his passions. You have affection to deal with! Do you despair now?"

"My father turned on me those eyes so inexpressibly benign and mild, and replied softly, 'No!'

"We reached the house; and my father said, as we knocked at the door, 'If he is at home, leave me. This is a hard study to which you have set me; I must work at it alone.'

"Vivian was at home, and the door closed on his visitor. My father stayed some hours.

"On returning home, to my great surprise I found Trevanion with my uncle. He had found us out,--no easy matter, I should think. But a good impulse in Trevanion was not of that feeble kind which turns home at the sight of a difficulty. He had come to London on purpose to see and to thank us.

"I did not think there had been so much of delicacy--of what I may call the "beauty of kindness"--in a man whom incessant business had rendered ordinarily blunt and abrupt. I hardly recognized the impatient Trevanion in the soothing, tender, subtle respect that rather implied than spoke gratitude, and sought to insinuate what he owed to the unhappy father, without touching on his wrongs from the son. But of this kindness--which showed how Trevanion's high nature of gentleman raised him aloof from that coarseness of thought which those absorbed

wholly in practical affairs often contract--of this kindness, so noble and so touching, Roland seemed scarcely aware. He sat by the embers of the neglected fire, his hands grasping the arms of his elbow-chair, his head drooping on his bosom; and only by a deep hectic flush on his dark cheek could you have seen that he distinguished between an ordinary visitor and the man whose child he had helped to save. This minister of state, this high member of the elect, at whose gift are places, peerages, gold-sticks, and ribbons, has nothing at his command for the bruised spirit of the half-pay soldier. Before that poverty, that grief, and that pride, the King's Counsellor was powerless. Only when Trevanion rose to depart, something like a sense of the soothing intention which the visit implied seemed to rouse the repose of the old man and to break the ice at its surface; for he followed Trevanion to the door, took both his hands, pressed them, then turned away, and resumed his seat. Trevanion beckoned to me, and I followed him downstairs and into a little parlor which was unoccupied.

"After some remarks upon Roland, full of deep and considerate feeling, and one quick, hurried reference to the son,--to the effect that his guilty attempt would never be known by the world,--Trevanion then addressed himself to me with a warmth and urgency that took me by surprise. 'After what has passed,' he exclaimed, 'I cannot suffer you to leave England thus. Let me not feel with you, as with your uncle, that there is nothing by which I can repay--No, I will not so put it,--stay, and serve your country at home; it is my prayer, it is Ellinor's. Out of all at my disposal it will go hard but what I shall find something to suit you.' And then, hurrying on, Trevanion spoke flatteringly of my pretensions, in right of birth and capabilities, to honorable employment, and placed before me a picture of public life, its prizes and distinctions, which for the moment, at least, made my heart beat loud and my breath come quick. But still, even then I felt (was it an unreasonable pride?) that there was something that jarred, something that humbled, in the thought of holding all my fortunes as a dependency on the father of the woman I loved, but might not aspire to; something even of personal degradation in the mere feeling that I was thus to be repaid for a service, and recompensed for a loss. But these were not reasons I could advance; and, indeed, so for the time did Trevanion's generosity and eloquence overpower me that I could only falter out my thanks and my promise that I would consider and let him know.

"With that promise he was forced to content himself; he told me to direct to him at his favorite country seat, whither he was going that day, and so left me. I looked round the humble parlor of the mean lodging-house, and Trevanion's words came again before me like a flash of golden light.

I stole into the open air and wandered through the crowded streets, agitated and disturbed."

CHAPTER X.

Several days elapsed, and of each day my father spent a considerable part at Vivian's lodgings. But he maintained a reserve as to his success, begged me not to question him, and to refrain also for the present from visiting my cousin. My uncle guessed or knew his brother's mission; for I observed that whenever Austin went noiseless away, his eye brightened, and the color rose in a hectic flush to his cheek. At last my father came to me one morning, his carpet-bag in his hand, and said, "I am going away for a week or two. Keep Roland company till I return."

"Going with him?"

"With him."

"That is a good sign."

"I hope so; that is all I can say now."

The week had not quite passed when I received from my father the letter I am about to place before the reader; and you may judge how earnestly his soul must have been in the task it had volunteered, if you observe how little, comparatively speaking, the letter contains of the subtleties and pedantries (may the last word be pardoned, for it is scarcely a just one) which ordinarily left my father,--a scholar even in the midst of his emotions. He seemed here to have abandoned his books, to have put the human heart before the eyes of his pupil, and said, "Read and un-learn!"

To Pisistratus Caxton.

My Dear Son,--It were needless to tell you all the earlier difficulties I have had to encounter with my charge, nor to repeat all the means which, acting on your suggestion (a correct one), I have employed to arouse feelings long dormant and confused, and allay others long prematurely active and terribly distinct. The

evil was simply this: here was the intelligence of a man in all that is evil, and the ignorance of an infant in all that is good. In matters merely worldly, what wonderful acumen; in the plain principles of right and wrong, what gross and stolid obtuseness! At one time I am straining all my poor wit to grapple in an encounter on the knottiest mysteries of social life; at another, I am guiding reluctant fingers over the horn-book of the most obvious morals. Here hieroglyphics, and there pot-hooks! But as long as there is affection in a man, why, there is Nature to begin with! To get rid of all the rubbish laid upon her, clear back the way to that Nature and start afresh,--that is one's only chance.

Well, by degrees I won my way, waiting patiently till the bosom, pleased with the relief, disgorged itself of all "its perilous stuff,"--not chiding, not even remonstrating, seeming almost to sympathize, till I got him, Socratically, to disprove himself. When I saw that he no longer feared me, that my company had become a relief to him, I proposed an excursion, and did not tell him whither.

Avoiding as much as possible the main north road (for I did not wish, as you may suppose, to set fire to a train of associations that might blow us up to the dog-star), and where that avoidance was not possible, travelling by night, I got him into the neighborhood of the old Tower.

I would not admit him under its roof. But you know the little inn, three miles off, near the trout stream? We made our abode there.

Well, I have taken him into the village, preserving his incognito. I have entered with him into cottages, and turned the talk upon Roland. You know how your uncle is adored; you know what anecdotes of his bold, warm-hearted youth once, and now of his kind and charitable age, would spring up from the garrulous lips of gratitude! I made him see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, how all who knew Roland loved and honored him,--except his son. Then I took him round the ruins (still not suffering him to enter the house); for those ruins are the key to Roland's character,--seeing them, one sees the pathos in his poor foible of family pride. There, you distinguish it from the insolent boasts of the prosperous, and feel that it is little more than the pious reverence to the dead, "the tender culture of the tomb." We sat down on heaps of mouldering stone, and it was there that I explained to him what Roland was in youth, and what he had dreamed

that a son would be to him. I showed him the graves of his ancestors, and explained to him why they were sacred in Roland's eyes. I had gained a great way when he longed to enter the home that should have been his and I could make him pause of his own accord and say, "No, I must first be worthy of it." Then you would have smiled--sly satirist that you are--to have heard me impressing upon this acute, sharp-witted youth all that we plain folk understand by the name of Home,--its perfect trust and truth, its simple holiness, its exquisite happiness, being to the world what conscience is to the human mind. And after that I brought in his sister, whom till then he had scarcely named, for whom he scarcely seemed to care,--brought her in to aid the father and endear the home. "And you know," said I, "that if Roland were to die, it would be a brother's duty to supply his place,--to shield her innocence, to protect her name! A good name is something, then. Your father was not so wrong to prize it. You would like yours to be that which your sister would be proud to own!"

While we were talking, Blanche suddenly came to the spot, and rushed to my arms. She looked on him as a stranger, but I saw his knees tremble. And then she was about to put her hand in his, but I drew her back. Was I cruel? He thought so. But when I dismissed her, I replied to his reproach: "Your sister is a part of Home. If you think yourself worthy of either, go and claim both; I will not object."

"She has my mother's eyes," said he, and walked away. I left him to muse amidst the ruins, while I went in to see your poor mother and relieve her fears about Roland and make her understand why I could not yet return home.

This brief sight of his sister has sunk deep into him. But I now approach what seems to me the great difficulty of the whole. He is fully anxious to redeem his name, to regain his home. So far so well. But he cannot yet see ambition, except with hard, worldly eyes. He still fancies that all he has to do is to get money and power and some of those empty prizes in the Great Lottery which we often win more easily by our sins than our virtues. [Here follows a long passage from Seneca, omitted as superfluous.] He does not yet even understand me--or if he does, he fancies me a mere book-worm indeed--when I imply that he might be poor and obscure, at the bottom of fortune's wheel, and yet be one we should be proud of. He supposes that to redeem his name he has only got to lacker it. Don't think me merely the fond father when I add my hope that I

shall use you to advantage here. I mean to talk to him to-morrow, as we return to London, of you and of your ambition; you shall hear the result.

At this moment (it is past midnight) I hear his step in the room above me. The window-sash aloft opens, for the third time. Would to Heaven he could read the true astrology of the stars! There they are,--bright, luminous, benignant. And I seeking to chain this wandering comet into the harmonies of heaven! Better task than that of astrologers, and astronomers to boot! Who among them can "loosen the band of Orion"? But who amongst us may not be permitted by God to have sway over the action and orbit of the human soul?

Your ever-affectionate father,

A. C.

Two days after the receipt of this letter came the following; and though I would fain suppress those references to myself which must be ascribed to a father's partiality, yet it is so needful to retain them in connection with Vivian that I have no choice but to leave the tender flatteries to the indulgence of the kind.

My Dear Son,--I was not too sanguine as to the effect that your simple story would produce upon your cousin. Without implying any contrast to his own conduct, I described that scene in which you threw yourself upon our sympathy, in the struggle between love and duty, and asked for our counsel and support; when Roland gave you his blunt advice to tell all to Trevanion; and when, amidst such sorrow as the heart in youth seems scarcely large enough to hold, you caught at truth impulsively, and the truth bore you safe from the shipwreck. I recounted your silent and manly struggles, your resolution not to suffer the egotism of passion to unfit you for the aims and ends of that spiritual probation which we call Life. I showed you as you were,--still thoughtful for us, interested in our interests, smiling on us, that we might not guess that you wept in secret! Oh, my son, my son, do not think that in those times I did not feel and pray for you! And while he was melted by my own emotion, I turned from your love to your ambition. I made him see that you too had known the restlessness which belongs to young, ardent natures; that you too had had your dreams of fortune and aspirations for success. But I painted that ambition in its true colors: it was not the desire of a selfish intellect. to be in yourself a somebody, a something, raised a step or two in the

social ladder, for the pleasure of looking down on those at the foot, but the warmer yearning of a generous heart; your ambition was to repair your father's losses, minister to your father's very foible in his idle desire of fame, supply to your uncle what he had lost in his natural heir, link your success to useful objects, your interests to those of your kind, your reward to the proud and grateful smiles of those you loved. That was thine ambition, O my tender Anachronism! And when, as I closed the sketch, I said, "Pardon me, you know not what delight a father feels when, while sending a son away from him into the world, he can speak and think thus of him. But this, you see, is not your kind of ambition. Let us talk of making money, and driving a coach-and-four through this villanous world,"--your cousin sank into a profound revery; and when he woke from it, it was like the waking of the earth after a night in spring,--the bare trees had put forth buds!

And, some time after, he startled me by a prayer that I would permit him, with his father's consent, to accompany you to Australia. The only answer I have given him as yet has been in the form of a question: "Ask yourself if I ought? I cannot wish Pistratus to be other than he is; and unless you agree with him in all his principles and objects, ought I to incur the risk that you should give him your knowledge of the world and inoculate him with your ambition?" he was struck, and had the candor to attempt no reply.

Now, Pistratus, the doubt I expressed to him is the doubt I feel. For, indeed, it is only by home-truths, not refining arguments, that I can deal with this unscholastic Scythian, who, fresh from the Steppes, comes to puzzle me in the Portico.

On the one hand, what is to become of him in the Old World? At his age and with his energies it would be impossible to cage him with us in the Cumberland ruins; weariness and discontent would undo all we could do. He has no resource in books, and I fear never will have! But to send him forth into one of the over-crowded professions; to place him amidst all those "disparities of social life," on the rough stones of which he is perpetually grinding his heart; turn him adrift amongst all the temptations to which he is most prone,--this is a trial which, I fear, will be too sharp for a conversion so incomplete. In the New World, no doubt, his energies would find a safer field, and even the adventurous and desultory habits of his childhood might there be put to healthful account. Those complaints of the disparities of the civilized world find, I

suspect, an easier, if a bluffer, reply from the political economist than the Stoic philosopher. "You don't like them, you find it hard to submit to them," says the political economist; "but they are the laws of a civilized state, and you can't alter them. Wiser men than you have tried to alter them, and never succeeded, though they turned the earth topsy-turvy! Very well; but the world is wide,—go into a state that is not so civilized. The disparities of the Old World vanish amidst the New! Emigration is the reply of Nature to the rebellious cry against Art." Thus would say the political economist; and, alas, even in your case, my son, I found no reply to the reasonings! I acknowledge, then, that Australia might open the best safety-valve to your cousin's discontent and desires; but I acknowledge also a counter-truth, which is this: "It is not permitted to an honest man to corrupt himself for the sake of others." That is almost the only maxim of Jean Jacques to which I can cheerfully subscribe! Do you feel quite strong enough to resist all the influences which a companionship of this kind may subject you to; strong enough to bear his burden as well as your own; strong enough, also,—ay, and alert and vigilant enough,—to prevent those influences harming the others whom you have undertaken to guide, and whose lots are confided to you? Pause well and consider maturely, for this must not depend upon a generous impulse. I think that your cousin would now pass under your charge with a sincere desire for reform; but between sincere desire and steadfast performance there is a long and dreary interval, even to the best of us. Were it not for Roland, and had I one grain less confidence in you, I could not entertain the thought of laying on your young shoulders so great a responsibility. But every new responsibility to an earnest nature is a new prop to virtue; and all I now ask of you is to remember that it is a solemn and serious charge, not to be undertaken without the most deliberate gauge and measure of the strength with which it is to be borne.

In two days we shall be in London.

Yours, my Anachronism, anxiously and fondly,

A. C.

I was in my own room while I read this letter, and I had just finished it when, as I looked up, I saw Roland standing opposite to me. "It is from Austin," said he; then he paused a moment, and added, in a tone that seemed quite humble, "May I see it,—and dare I?" I placed the letter in his hands, and retired a few paces, that he might not think I watched his countenance while he read it. And I was only aware that he

had come to the end by a heavy, anxious, but not disappointed sigh. Then I turned, and our eyes met; and there was something in Roland's look, inquiring and, as it were, imploring. I interpreted it at once.

"Oh, yes, uncle!" I said, smiling; "I have reflected, and I have no fear of the result. Before my father wrote, what he now suggests had become my secret wish. As for our other companions, their simple natures would defy all such sophistries as--But he is already half-cured of those. Let him come with me, and when he returns he shall be worthy of a place in your heart beside his sister Blanche. I feel, I promise it; do not fear for me! Such a charge will be a talisman to myself. I will shun every error that I might otherwise commit, so that he may have no example to entice him to err."

I know that in youth, and the superstition of first love, we are credulously inclined to believe that love and the possession of the beloved are the only happiness. But when my uncle folded me in his arms and called me the hope of his age and stay of his house,--the music of my father's praise still ringing on my heart,--I do affirm that I knew a prouder bliss than if Trevanion had placed Fanny's hand in mine and said, "She is yours."

And now the die was cast, the decision made. It was with no regret that I wrote to Trevanion to decline his offers. Nor was the sacrifice so great--even putting aside the natural pride which had before inclined to it--as it may seem to some; for restless though I was, I had labored to constrain myself to other views of life than those which close the vistas of ambition with images of the terrestrial deities, Power and Rank. Had I not been behind the scenes, noted all of joy and of peace that the pursuit of power had cost Trevanion, and seen how little of happiness rank gave even to one of the polished habits and graceful attributes of Lord Castleton? Yet each nature seemed fitted so well,--the first for power, the last for rank! It is marvellous with what liberality Providence atones for the partial dispensations of Fortune. Independence, or the vigorous pursuit of it; affection, with its hopes and its rewards; a life only rendered by Art more susceptible to Nature, in which the physical enjoyments are pure and healthful, in which the moral faculties expand harmoniously with the intellectual, and the heart is at peace with the mind,--is this a mean lot for ambition to desire, and is it so far out of human reach? "Know thyself," said the old philosophy. "Improve thyself," saith the new. The great object of the Sojourner in Time is not to waste all his passions and gifts on the things external that he must leave behind,--that which he cultivates within is all that he can carry into the Eternal Progress. We are here

but as schoolboys, whose life begins where school ends; and the battles we fought with our rivals, and the toys that we shared with our playmates, and the names that we carved, high or low, on the wall above our desks,--will they so much bestead us hereafter? As new fates crowd upon us, can they more than pass through the memory with a smile or a sigh? Look back to thy schooldays and answer.

CHAPTER XI.

Two weeks since the date of the preceding chapter have passed; we have slept our last, for long years to come, on the English soil. It is night, and Vivian has been admitted to an interview with his father. They have been together alone an hour and more, and I and my father will not disturb them. But the clock strikes, the hour is late, the ship sails to-night; we should be on board. And as we two stand below, the door opens in the room above, and a heavy step descends the stairs: the father is leaning on the son's arm. You should see how timidly the son guides the halting step. And now, as the light gleams on their faces, there are tears on Vivian's cheek; but the face of Roland seems calm and happy. Happy, when about to be separated, perhaps forever, from his son? Yes, happy, because he has found a son for the first time, and is not thinking of years and absence and the chance of death, but thankful for the Divine Mercy, and cherishing celestial hope. If ye wonder why Roland is happy in such an hour, how vainly have I sought to make him breathe and live and move before you!

We are on board; our luggage all went first. I had had time, with the help of a carpenter, to knock up cabins for Vivian, Guy Bolding, and myself in the hold; for thinking we could not too soon lay aside the pretensions of Europe,--"de-fine-gentlemanize" ourselves, as Trevanion recommended,--we had engaged steerage passage, to the great humoring of our finances. We had, too, the luxury to be by ourselves, and our own Cumberland folks were round us, as our friends and servants both.

We are on board, and have looked our last on those we are to leave, and we stand on deck leaning on each other. We are on board, and the lights, near and far, shine from the vast City; and the stars are on high, bright and clear, as for the first mariners of old. Strange noises, rough voices, and crackling cords, and here and there the sobs of women, mingling with the oaths of men. Now the swing and heave of

the vessel, the dreary sense of exile that comes when the ship fairly moves over the waters. And still we stood and looked and listened, silent, and leaning on each other.

Night deepened, the City vanished: not a gleam from its myriad lights! The river widened and widened. How cold comes the wind,--is that a gale from the sea? The stars grow faint, the moon has sunk. And now, how desolate seem the waters in the comfortless gray of dawn! Then we shivered and looked at each other, and muttered something that was not the thought deepest at our hearts, and crept into our berths, feeling sure it was not for sleep. And sleep came on us, soft and kind. The ocean lulled the exiles as on a mother's breast.

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