

# The Caxtons, Part 5

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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## 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 haunt o' mine, and she minds them that come from me perticklerly."

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 creature, 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-Lip 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 yeare 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 restraped 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 turn-stile, 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 Ho-tons 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 turn-stile, like a cork in a patent corkscrew.

"And threepence for nephew 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 indefinitely 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.

"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.

My uncle resumed: "Time out of mind, every generation of our house has given one soldier to his country. I look round now: only one branch is budding yet on the old tree; and--"

"Ah! uncle. But what would they say? Do you think I should not like to be a soldier? Don't tempt me!"

My uncle had recourse to his snuff-box; and at that moment—unfortunately, perhaps, for the laurels that might otherwise have wreathed the brows of Pisistratus of England—private conversation was stopped by the sudden and noisy entrance of Uncle Jack. No apparition could have been more unexpected.

"Here I am, my dear friends. How d'ye do; how are you all? Captain de Caxton, yours heartily. Yes, I am released, thank Heaven! I have given up the drudgery of that pitiful provincial paper. I was not made for it. An ocean in a tea cup! I was indeed! Little, sordid, narrow interests; and I, whose heart embraces all humanity,—you might as well turn a circle into an isolated triangle."

"Isosceles!" said my father, sighing as he pushed aside his notes, and very slowly becoming aware of the eloquence that destroyed all chance of further progress that night in the Great Book. "'Isosceles' triangle, Jack Tibbets, not 'isolated.'"

"'Isosceles' or 'isolated,' it is all one," said Uncle Jack, as he rapidly performed three evolutions, by no means consistent with his favorite theory of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number,"—first, he emptied into the cup which he took from my mother's hands half the thrifty contents of a London cream-jug; secondly, he reduced the circle of a muffin, by the abstraction of three triangles, to as nearly an isosceles as possible; and thirdly, striding towards the fire, lighted in consideration of Captain de Caxton, and hooking his coat-tails under his arms while he sipped his tea, he permitted another circle peculiar to humanity wholly to eclipse the luminary it approached.

"'Isolated' or 'isosceles,' it is all the same thing. Alan is made for his fellow-creatures. I had long been disgusted with the interference of those selfish Squirearchs. Your departure decided me. I have concluded negotiations with a London firm of spirit and capital and extended views of philanthropy. On Saturday last I retired from the service of the oligarchy.

"I am now in my true capacity of protector of the million. My prospectus



is printed,--here it is in my pocket. Another cup of tea, sister; a little more cream, and another muffin. Shall I ring?" Having disembarassed himself of his cup and saucer, Uncle Jack then drew forth from his pocket a damp sheet of printed paper. In large capitals stood out "The Anti-Monopoly Gazette; or Popular Champion." He waved it triumphantly before my father's eyes.

"Pisistratus," said my father, "look here. This is the way your Uncle Jack now prints his pats of butter,--a cap of liberty growing out of an open book! Good, Jack! good! good!"

"It is Jacobinical!" exclaimed the Captain.

"Very likely," said my father; "but knowledge and freedom are the best devices in the world to print upon pats of butter intended for the market."

"Pats of butter! I don't understand," said Uncle Jack. "The less you understand, the better will the butter sell, Jack," said my father, settling back to his notes.

### CHAPTER III.

Uncle Jack had made up his mind to lodge with us, and my mother found some difficulty in inducing him to comprehend that there was no bed to spare.

"That's unlucky," said he. "I had no sooner arrived in town than I was pestered with invitations; but I refused them all, and kept myself for you."

"So kind in you, so like you!" said my mother; "but you see--"

"Well, then, I must be off and find a room. Don't fret; you know I can breakfast and dine with you all the same,--that is, when my other friends will let me. I shall be dreadfully persecuted." So saying, Uncle Jack repocketed his prospectus and wished us good-night.

The clock had struck eleven, my mother had retired, when my father looked up from his books and returned his spectacles to their case. I had finished my work, and was seated over the fire, thinking now of Fanny Trevanion's hazel eyes, now, with a heart that beat as high at the thought, of campaigns, battle-fields, laurels, and glory; while, with his arms folded on his breast and his head drooping, Uncle Roland gazed into the low clear embers. My father cast his eyes round the room, and after surveying his brother for some moments he said, almost in a whisper,--

"My son has seen the Trevanions. They remember us, Roland."

The Captain sprang to his feet and began whistling,--a habit with him when he was much disturbed.

"And Trevanion wishes to see us. Pisistratus promised to give him our address: shall he do so, Roland?"

"If you like it," answered the Captain, in a military attitude, and drawing himself up till he looked seven feet high.

"I should like it," said my father, mildly. "Twenty years since we met."

"More than twenty," said my uncle, with a stern smile; "and the season was--the fall of the leaf!"

"Man renews the fibre and material of his body every seven years," said my father; "in three times seven years he has time to renew the inner man. Can two passengers in yonder street be more unlike each other than the soul is to the soul after an interval of twenty years? Brother, the plough does not pass over the soil in vain, nor care over the human heart. New crops change the character of the land; and the plough must go deep indeed before it stirs up the mother stone."

"Let us see Trevanion," cried my uncle; then, turning to me, he said abruptly, "What family has he?"

"One daughter."

"No son?"

"No."

"That must vex the poor, foolish, ambitious man. Oho! you admire this Mr. Trevanion much, eh? Yes, that fire of manner, his fine words, and bold thoughts, were made to dazzle youth."

"Fine words, my dear uncle,--fire! I should have said, in hearing Mr. Trevanion, that his style of conversation was so homely you would wonder how he could have won such fame as a public speaker."

"Indeed!"

"The plough has passed there," said my father.

"But not the plough of care: rich, famous, Ellinor his wife, and no son!"

"It is because his heart is sometimes sad that he would see us."

Roland stared first at my father, next at me. "Then," quoth my uncle, heartily, "in God's name, let him come. I can shake him by the hand, as I would a brother soldier. Poor Trevanion! Write to him at once, Sisty."

I sat down and obeyed. When I had sealed my letter, I looked up, and saw that Roland was lighting his bed-candle at my father's table; and my father, taking his hand, said something to him in a low voice. I guessed it related to his son, for he shook his head, and answered in a stern, hollow voice, "Renew grief if you please; not shame. On that subject--silence!"

## CHAPTER IV.

Left to myself in the earlier part of the day, I wandered, wistful and lonely, through the vast wilderness of London. By degrees I familiarized myself with that populous solitude; I ceased to pine for the green fields. That active energy all around, at first saddening, became soon exhilarating, and at last contagious. To an industrious mind, nothing is so catching as industry. I began to grow weary of my golden holiday of unlaborious childhood, to sigh for toil, to look around me for a career. The University, which I had before anticipated with pleasure, seemed now to fade into a dull monastic prospect; after having trod the streets of London, to wander through cloisters was to go back in life. Day by day, my mind grew sensibly within me; it came out from the rosy twilight of boyhood,—it felt the doom of Cain under the broad sun of man.

Uncle Jack soon became absorbed in his new speculation for the good of the human race, and, except at meals (whereat, to do him justice, he was punctual enough, though he did not keep us in ignorance of the sacrifices he made, and the invitations he refused, for our sake), we seldom saw him. The Captain, too, generally vanished after breakfast, seldom dined with us, and it was often late before he returned. He had the latch-key of the house, and let himself in when he pleased. Sometimes (for his chamber was next to mine) his step on the stairs awoke me; and sometimes I heard him pace his room with perturbed strides, or fancied that I caught a low groan. He became every day more care-worn in appearance, and every day the hair seemed more gray. Yet he talked to us all easily and cheerfully; and I thought that I was the only one in the house who perceived the gnawing pangs over which the stout old Spartan drew the decorous cloak.

Pity, blended with admiration, made me curious to learn how these absent days, that brought night so disturbed, were consumed. I felt that, if I could master the Captain's secret, I might win the right both to comfort and to aid.

I resolved at length, after many conscientious scruples, to endeavor to satisfy a curiosity excused by its motives.

Accordingly, one morning, after watching him from the house, I stole in his track, and followed him at a distance.

And this was the outline of his day: he set off at first with a firm stride, despite his lameness, his gaunt figure erect, the soldierly chest well thrown out from the threadbare but speckless coat. First he took his way towards the purlieu of Leicester Square; several times, to and fro, did he pace the isthmus that leads from Piccadilly into that reservoir of foreigners, and the lanes and courts that start thence towards St. Martin's. After an hour or two so passed, the step became more slow; and often the sleek, napless hat was lifted up, and the brow wiped. At length he bent his way towards the two great theatres, paused before the play-bills, as if deliberating seriously on the chances of entertainment they severally proffered, wandered slowly through the small streets that surround those temples of the Muse, and finally emerged into the Strand. There he rested himself for an hour at a small cook-shop; and as I passed the window and glanced within, I could see him seated before the simple dinner, which he scarcely touched, and poring over the advertisement columns of the "Times." The "Times"

finished, and a few morsels distastefully swallowed, the Captain put down his shilling in silence, receiving his pence in exchange, and I had just time to slip aside as he reappeared at the threshold. He looked round as he lingered,--but I took care he should not detect me,--and then struck off towards the more fashionable quarters of the town. It was now the afternoon, and, though not yet the season, the streets swarmed with life. As he came into Waterloo Place, a slight but muscular figure buttoned up across the breast like his own cantered by on a handsome bay horse; every eye was on that figure. Uncle Roland stopped short, and lifted his hand to his hat; the rider touched his own with his forefinger, and cantered on; Uncle Roland turned round and gazed.

"Who," I asked of a shop-boy just before me, also staring with all his eyes, "who is that gentleman on horseback?"

"Why, the Duke to be sure," said the boy, contemptuously.

"The Duke?"

"Wellington, stu-pid!"

"Thank you," said I, meekly. Uncle Roland had moved on into Regent Street, but with a brisker step: the sight of the old chief had done the old soldier good. Here again he paced to and fro; till I, watching him from the other side of the way, was ready to drop with fatigue, stout walker though I was. But the Captain's day was not half done. He took out his watch, put it to his ear, and then, replacing it, passed into Bond Street, and thence into Hyde Park. There, evidently wearied out, he leaned against the rails, near the bronze statue, in an attitude that spoke despondency. I seated myself on the grass near the statue, and gazed at him: the park was empty compared with the streets, but still there were some equestrian idlers, and many foot-loungers. My uncle's eye turned wistfully on each: once or twice, some gentleman of a military aspect (which I had already learned to detect) stopped, looked at him, approached, and spoke; but the Captain seemed as if ashamed of such greetings. He answered shortly, and turned again.

The day waned,--evening came on; the Captain again looked at his watch, shook his head, and made his way to a bench, where he sat perfectly motionless, his hat over his brows, his arms folded, till up rose the moon. I had tasted nothing since breakfast, I was famished; but I still kept my post like an old Roman sentinel.

At length the Captain rose, and re-entered Piccadilly; but how different his mien and bearing!--languid, stooping; his chest sunk, his head inclined; his limbs dragging one after the other; his lameness painfully perceptible. What a contrast in the broken invalid at night from the stalwart veteran of the morning!

How I longed to spring forward to offer my arm! but I did not dare.

The Captain stopped near a cab-stand. He put his hand in his pocket, he drew out his purse, he passed his fingers over the net-work; the purse slipped again into the pocket, and as if with a heroic effort, my uncle drew up his head and walked on sturdily.

"Where next?" thought I. "Surely home! No, he is pitiless!"

The Captain stopped not till he arrived at one of the small theatres in the Strand; then he read the bill, and asked if half price was begun. "Just begun," was the answer, and the Captain entered. I also took a ticket and followed. Passing by the open doors of a refreshment-room, I fortified myself with some biscuits and soda-water; and in another minute, for the first time in my life, I beheld a play. But the play did not fascinate me. It was the middle of some jocular after piece; roars of laughter resounded round me. I could detect nothing to laugh at, and sending my keen eyes into every corner, I perceived at last, in the uppermost tier, one face as saturnine as my own.--Eureka! It was the Captain's! "Why should he go to a play if he enjoys it so little?" thought I; "better have spent a shilling on a cab, poor old fellow!"

But soon came smart-looking men, and still smarter-looking ladies, around the solitary corner of the poor Captain. He grew fidgety--he rose--he vanished. I left my place, and stood without the box to watch for him. Downstairs he stumped,--I recoiled into the shade; and after standing a moment or two, as in doubt, he entered boldly the refreshment-room or saloon.

Now, since I had left that saloon it had become crowded, and I slipped in unobserved. Strange was it, grotesque yet pathetic, to mark the old soldier in the midst of that gay swarm. He towered above all like a Homeric hero, a head taller than the tallest; and his appearance was so remarkable that it invited the instant attention of the fair. I, in my simplicity, thought it was the natural tenderness of that amiable and penetrating sex, ever quick to detect trouble and anxious to relieve it, which induced three ladies in silk attire--one having a hat and plume, the other two with a profusion of ringlets--to leave a little knot of gentlemen--with whom they were conversing, and to plant themselves before my uncle. I advanced through the press to hear what passed.

"You are looking for some one, I'm sure," quoth one familiarly, tapping his arm with her fan.

The Captain started. "Ma'am, you are not wrong," said he.

"Can I do as well?" said one of those compassionate angels, with heavenly sweetness.

"You are very kind, I thank you; no, no, ma'am," said the Captain with his best bow.

"Do take a glass of negus," said another, as her friend gave way to her. "You seem tired, and so am I. Here, this way;" and she took hold of his arm to lead him to the table. The Captain shook his head mournfully; and then, as if suddenly aware of the nature of the attentions so lavished on him, he looked down upon these fair Armidas with a look of such mild reproach, such sweet compassion,--not shaking off the hand, in his chivalrous devotion to the sex, which extended even to all its outcasts,--that each bold eye felt abashed. The hand was timidly and involuntarily withdrawn from the arm, and my uncle passed his way.

He threaded the crowd, passed out at the farther door, and I, guessing his intention, was in waiting for his steps in the street.

"Now home at last, thank Heaven!" thought I. Mistaken still! My uncle went first towards that popular haunt which I have since discovered is

called "the Shades;" but he soon re-emerged, and finally he knocked at the door of a private house in one of the streets out of St. James's. It was opened jealously, and closed as he entered, leaving me without. What could this house be? As I stood and watched, some other men approached: again the low single knock, again the jealous opening and the stealthy entrance.

A policeman passed and re-passed me. "Don't be tempted, young man," said he, looking hard at me: "take my advice, and go home."

"What is that house, then?" said I, with a sort of shudder at this ominous warning.

"Oh! you know."

"Not I. I am new to London."

"It is a hell," said the policeman, satisfied, by my frank manner, that I spoke the truth.

"God bless me,--a what? I could not have heard you rightly!"

"A hell,--a gambling-house!"

"Oh!" and I moved on. Could Captain Roland, the rigid, the thrifty, the penurious, be a gambler? The light broke on me at once: the unhappy father sought his son! I leaned against the post, and tried hard not to sob.

By and by, I heard the door open; the Captain came out and took the way homeward. I ran on before, and got in first, to the inexpressible relief both of father and mother, who had not seen me since breakfast, and who were in equal consternation at my absence. I submitted to be scolded with a good grace. "I had been sight-seeing, and lost my way;" begged for some supper, and slunk to bed; and five minutes afterwards the Captain's jaded step came wearily up the stairs.

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