Title: The Caxtons: A Family Picture — Volume 14

Author: Baron Edward Bulwer Lytton Lytton

Release date: February 1, 2005 [EBook #7599]
Most recently updated: December 30, 2020

Language: English

PART XIV.

CHAPTER I.

There is a beautiful and singular passage in Dante (which has not perhaps attracted the attention it deserves), wherein the stern Florentine defends Fortune from the popular accusations against her. According to him she is an angelic power appointed by the Supreme Being to direct and order the course of human splendors; she obeys the will of God; she is blessed; and hearing not those who blaspheme her, calm and aloft amongst the other angelic powers, revolves her spheral course and rejoices in her beatitude. (1)

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

But that misanthropical answer of Chremylus is neither here nor there, and only diverts us from the real question, and that is, "Whether Fortune be a heavenly, Christian angel, or a blind, blundering, old heathen deity?" For my part, I hold with Dante; for which, if I were so pleased, or if at this period of my memoirs I had half a dozen pages to spare, I could give many good reasons. One thing, however, is quite clear, that whether Fortune be more like Plutus or an angel, it is no use abusing her,—one may as

well throw stones at a star. And I think, if one looked narrowly at her operations, one might perceive that she gives every man a chance at least once in his life if he take and make the best of it, she will renew her visits; if not, itur ad astra! And therewith I am reminded of an incident quaintly narrated by Mariana in his "History of Spain," how the army of the Spanish kings got out of a sad hobble among the mountains at the Pass of Losa by the help of a shepherd who showed them the way. "But," saith Mariana, parenthetically, "some do say the shepherd was an angel; for after he had shown the way, he was never seen more." That is, the angelic nature of the guide was proved by being only once seen, and after having got the army out of the hobble, leaving it to fight or run away, as it had most mind to. Now, I look upon that shepherd, or angel, as a very good type of my fortune at least. The apparition showed me my way in the rocks to the great "Battle of Life;" after that—hold fast and strike hard!

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

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

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

CHAPTER II.

The House-Tops! What a soberizing effect that prospect produces on the mind. But a great many requisites go towards the selection of the right point of survey. It is not enough to secure a lodging in the attic; you must not be fobbed off with a front attic that faces the street. First, your attic must be unequivocally a back attic; secondly, the house in which it is located must be slightly elevated above its neighbors; thirdly, the window must not lie slant on the roof, as is common with attics,—in which case you can only catch a peep of that leaden canopy which infatuated Londoners call the sky,—but must be a window perpendicular, and not half blocked up by the parapets of that fosse called the gutter; and, lastly, the sight must be so humored that you cannot catch a glimpse of the pavements: if you once see the world beneath, the whole charm of that world above is destroyed. Taking it for granted that you have secured these requisites, open your window, lean your chin on both hands, the elbows propped commodiously on the sill, and contemplate the extraordinary scene which spreads before you. You find it difficult to believe life can be so tranquil on high, while it is so noisy and turbulent below. What astonishing stillness! Eliot Warburton (seductive enchanter!) recommends you to sail down the Nile if you want to lull the vexed spirit. It is easier and cheaper to hire an attic in Holborn! You don't have the crocodiles, but you have animals no less hallowed in Egypt,—the cats! And how harmoniously the tranquil creatures blend with the prospect; how noiselessly they glide along at the distance, pause, peer about, and disappear! It is only from the attic that you can appreciate the picturesque which belongs to our domesticated tiger-kin! The goat should be seen on the Alps, and the cat on the house-top.

By degrees the curious eye takes the scenery in detail; and first, what fantastic variety in the heights and shapes of the chimney-pots! Some all level in a row, uniform and respectable, but quite uninteresting; others, again, rising out of all proportion, and imperatively tasking the reason to conjecture why they are so aspiring. Reason answers that it is but a homely expedient to give freer vent to the smoke; wherewith Imagination steps in, and represents to you all the fretting and fuming and worry and care which the owners of that chimney, now the tallest of all, endured before, by building it higher, they got rid of the vapors. You see the distress of the cook when the sooty invader rushed down,

"like a wolf on the fold," full spring on the Sunday joint. You hear the exclamations of the mistress (perhaps a bride,—house newly furnished) when, with white apron and cap, she ventured into the drawing-room, and was straightway saluted by a joyous dance of those monads called vulgarly "smuts." You feel manly indignation at the brute of a bridegroom who rushes out from the door, with the smuts dancing after him, and swears, "Smoked out again! By the Arch-smoker himself, I'll go and dine at the club!" All this might well have been, till the chimney-pot was raised a few feet nearer heaven; and now perhaps that long-suffering family owns the happiest home in the Row. Such contrivances to get rid of the smoke! It is not every one who merely heightens his chimney; others clap on the hollow tormentor all sorts of odd head-gear and cowls. Here, patent contrivances act the purpose of weather-cocks, swaying to and fro with the wind; there, others stand as fixed as if, by a sic jubeo, they had settled the business.

But of all those houses that in the street one passes by, unsuspicious of what's the matter within, there is not one in a hundred but what there has been the devil to do to cure the chimneys of smoking! At that reflection Philosophy dismisses the subject, and decides that, whether one lives in a but or a palace, the first thing to do is to look to the hearth and get rid of the vapors.

New beauties demand us. What endless undulations in the various declivities and ascents,—here a slant, there a zigzag! With what majestic disdain yon roof rises up to the left! Doubtless a palace of Genii, or Gin (which last is the proper Arabic word for those builders of halls out of nothing, employed by Aladdin). Seeing only the roof of that palace boldly breaking the sky-line, how serene your contemplations! Perhaps a star twinkles over it, and you muse on soft eyes far away; while below at the threshold—No, phantoms! we see you not from our attic. Note, yonder, that precipitous fall,—how ragged and jagged the roof-scene descends in a gorge! He who would travel on foot through the pass of that defile, of which we see but the picturesque summits, stops his nose, averts his eyes, guards his pockets, and hurries along through the squalor of the grim London lazzaroni. But seen above, what a noble break in the sky-line! It would be sacrilege to exchange that fine gorge for a dead flat of dull rooftops. Look here, how delightful! that desolate house with no roof at all,—gutted and skinned by the last London fire! You can see the poor green-and-white paper still clinging to the walls, and the chasm that once was a cupboard, and the shadows gathering black on the aperture that once was a hearth! Seen below, how quickly you would cross over the way! That great crack forebodes an avalanche; you hold your breath, not to bring it down on your head. But seen above, what a compassionate, inquisitive charm in the skeleton ruin! How your fancy runs riot,—re-peopling the chambers, hearing the last cheerful good- night of that destined Pompeii, creeping on tiptoe with the mother when she gives her farewell look to the baby. Now all is midnight and silence; then the red, crawling serpent comes out. Lo! his breath; hark! his hiss. Now, spire after spire he winds and he coils; now he soars up erect,—crest superb, and forked tongue,—the beautiful horror! Then the start from the sleep, and the doubtful awaking, and the run here and there, and the mother's rush to the cradle; the cry from the window, and the knock at the door, and the spring of those on high towards the stair that leads to safety below, and the smoke rushing up like the surge of a hell! And they run back stifled and blinded, and the floor heaves beneath them like a bark on the sea. Hark! the grating wheels thundering low; near and nearer comes the engine. Fix the ladders,—there! there! at the window, where the mother stands with the babe! Splash and hiss comes the water; pales, then flares out, the fire! Foe defies foe; element, element. How sublime is the war! But the ladder, the ladder,—there, at the window! All else are saved,—the clerk and his books; the lawyer with that tin box of title-deeds; the landlord, with his policy of insurance; the miser, with his bank-notes and gold: all are saved,—all but the babe and the mother. What a crowd in the streets; how the light crimsons over the gazers, hundreds on hundreds! All those faces seem as one face, with fear. Not a than mounts the ladder. Yes, there,—gallant fellow! God inspires, God shall speed thee! How plainly I see him! his eyes are closed, his teeth set. The serpent leaps up, the forked tongue darts upon him, and the reek of the breath wraps him round. The crowd has ebbed back like a sea, and the smoke rushes over them all. Ha! what dim forms are those on the ladder? Near and nearer,—crash come the roof-tiles! Alas and alas! no! a cry of joy,—a "Thank Heaven!" and the women force their way through the men to come round the child and the mother. All is gone save that skeleton ruin. But the ruin is seen from above. O Art! study life from the roof-tops!

CHAPTER III.

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

much depressed in spirits, and looked wan and careworn.

After the kindest inquiries relative to my parents and the Captain, she entered with much sympathy into my schemes and plans, which she said Trevanion had confided to her. The sterling kindness that belonged to my old patron (despite his affected anger at my not accepting his proffered loan) had not only saved me and my fellow-adventurer all trouble as to allotment orders, but procured advice as to choice of site and soil, from the best practical experience, which we found after wards exceedingly useful. And as Lady Ellinor gave me the little packet of papers, with Trevanion's shrewd notes on the margin, she said, with a half sigh, "Albert bids me say that he wishes he were as sanguine of his success in the Cabinet as of yours in the Bush." She then turned to her husband's rise and prospects, and her face began to change; her eyes sparkled, the color came to her cheeks. "But you are one of the few who know him," she said, interrupting herself suddenly; "you know how he sacrifices all things,—joy, leisure, health,—to his country. There is not one selfish thought in his nature. And yet such envy,—such obstacles still! And [her eyes dropped on her dress, and I perceived that she was in mourning, though the mourning was not deep], and," she added, "it has pleased Heaven to withdraw from his side one who would have been worthy his alliance."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He never blamed you, Lady Ellinor!"

"He had a right to do so,—though I doubt if he would have blamed me on the true ground. Yet no; he never could have done me the wrong that your uncle did when, long years ago, Mr. de Caxton in a letter—the very bitterness of which disarmed all anger—accused me of having trifled with Austin,—nay, with himself! And he, at least, had no right to reproach me," continued Lady Ellinor warmly, and with a curve of her haughty lip; "for if I felt interest in his wild thirst for some romantic glory, it was but in the hope that what made the one brother so restless might at least wake the other to the ambition that would have become his intellect and aroused his energies. But these are old tales of follies and delusions now no more: only this will I say, that I have ever felt, in thinking of your father, and even of

your sterner uncle, as if my conscience reminded me of a debt which I longed to discharge,— if not to them, to their children. So when we knew you, believe me that your interests, your career, instantly became to me an object. But mistaking you, when I saw your ardent industry bent on serious objects, and accompanied by a mind so fresh and buoyant, and absorbed as I was in schemes or projects far beyond a woman's ordinary province of hearth and home, I never dreamed, while you were our guest,— never dreamed of danger to you or Fanny. I wound you,—pardon me; but I must vindicate myself. I repeat that if we had a son to inherit our name, to bear the burden which the world lays upon those who are born to influence the world's destinies, there is no one to whom Trevanion and myself would sooner have intrusted the happiness of a daughter. But my daughter is the sole representative of the mother's line, of the father's name: it is not her happiness alone that I have to consult, it is her duty,— duty to her birthright, to the career of the noblest of England's patriots; duty, I may say, without exaggeration, to the country for the sake of which that career is run!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Independence for myself, and ease to those for whom life is still sweet. This is my twofold object; and the means to effect it must be my own heart and my own hands. And now, convey all my thanks to your noble husband, and accept my warm prayers for yourself and her—whom I will not name. Farewell, Lady Ellinor!"

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

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

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

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

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

"My uncle Roland has no son."

"How!"

"His son is dead."

"How such a loss must grieve him!"

I did not speak.

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

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

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

"That—what?"

"That—that his son still survives."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER IV.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Pshaw!"

"You will not?"

"No!"

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

"To Blanche?"

"No, no; the cousin I never saw."

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

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

"What!—how dare you!—who doubts it? Dead,—dead to me forever! Boy, would you have him live to dishonor these gray hairs?"

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

"Nothing to wound me, yet relate to him!"

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

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

"Repented—ha, ha!"

"Or if he be not dead—"

"Hush, boy, hush!"

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

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

prayer, and you know it,—the heart-broken prayer that his name never more may come to my ears!"

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

CHAPTER V.

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

Then, for the first time since the young lord's death, I remembered Sir Sedley's expressions of gratitude to Lady Castleton and the waters of Ems for having saved him from "that horrible marquisate." Meanwhile my old friend had perceived me, exclaiming,—

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

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

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

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

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

The carriage drove on.

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

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

"So fitted in every way to bear the burden of the great Castleton name and property. And yet you see it killed him! Ah! if he had been but a simple gentleman, or if he had had a less conscientious desire to do his duties, he would have lived to a good old age. I know what it is already. Oh, if you saw the piles of letters on my table! I positively dread the post. Such colossal improvement on the property which the poor boy had began, for me to finish. What do you think takes me to Fudge & Fidget's? Sir, they are the agents for an infernal coal-mine which my cousin had re-opened in Durham, to plague my life out with another thirty thousand pounds a year! How am I to spend the money?— how am I to spend it? There's a cold-blooded head steward who says that charity is the greatest crime a man in high station can commit,—it demoralizes the poor. Then, because some half-a-dozen farmers sent me a round-robin to the effect that their rents were too high, and I wrote them word that the rents should be lowered, there

was such a hullabaloo, you would have thought heaven and earth were coming together. 'If a man in the position of the Marquis of Castleton set the example of letting land below its value, how could the poorer squires in the country exist? Or if they did exist, what injustice to expose them to the charge that they were grasping landlords, vampires, and bloodsuckers! Clearly if Lord Castleton lowered his rents (they were too low already), he struck a mortal blow at the property of his neighbors if they followed his example, or at their characters if they did not.' No man can tell how hard it is to do good, unless fortune gives him a hundred thousand pounds a-year, and says—'Now, do good with it!' Sedley Beaudesert might follow his whims, and all that would be said against him was 'good-natured, simple fellow!' But if Lord Castleton follow his whims, you would think he was a second Catiline,—unsettling the peace and undermining the prosperity of the entire nation!" Here the wretched man paused, and sighed heavily; then, as his thoughts wandered into a new channel of woe, he resumed: "Ah! if you could but see the forlorn great house I am expected to inhabit, cooped up between dead walls instead of my pretty rooms with the windows full on the park; and the balls I am expected to give; and the parliamentary interest I am to keep up; and the villanous proposal made to me to become a lord-steward or lord- chamberlain, because it suits my rank to be a sort of a servant. Oh, Pisistratus, you lucky dog,—not twenty-one, and with, I dare say, not two hundred pounds a-year in the world!"

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

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

Despite my causes for seriousness, I could not help laughing; my companion turned on me a look of reproach.

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

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

"Perfectly true."

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

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

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

"Yes,—this morning."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And where is he now,—with Mr. Trevanion?"

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

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

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

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

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

"At twelve to-morrow, then?"

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

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

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

"Three o'clock?"

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

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

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

CHAPTER VI.

On my way towards our lodgings I resolved to look in at a humble tavern, in the coffee-room of which

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

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

"So you shall, my dear,—so you shall; just come in, will you?"

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

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

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

"There'll be no change, you may be sure. Positively tomorrow,—not too early: you understand?"

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

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

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

"Where to, sir?" asked the cabman.

"To—to London Bridge," said Mr. Peacock. The man mounted the box and drove on.

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

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

"Oh, you know my weak point, sir! Any man who can quote Will—sweet Will—has me on the hip," rejoined Mr. Peacock, smoothing his countenance and spreading his palms on his knees. "But if a man does fall in the world, and after keeping servants of his own, is obliged to be himself a servant,—

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

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

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

Pisistratus.—"Proceed."

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

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

"Upon my life he will,—like a Colossus;

"'And we petty men—'"

Pisistratus (savagely).—"Go on with your story."

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

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

Pisistratus (lowering the glass).—"To St. James's Square?"

Peacock.—"No, no; to London Bridge.

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

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

"'Horatio,—or I do forget myself."'

Pisistratus puts his hand on the check-string.

Peacock (correcting himself).—I mean—"Why, Johnson, my good fellow."'

Pisistratus.—"Johnson! Oh, that's your name,—not Peacock."

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

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

Pisistratus.—"Take care!"

Peacock (hurriedly).—"Then says Mr. Vivian, 'If you don't mind wearing a livery till I can provide for you more suitably, my old friend, there's a vacancy in the establishment of Mr. Trevanion.' Sir, I accepted the proposal; and that's why I wear this livery."

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

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

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

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

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

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

> "'All adoration, duty, and observance;

All humbleness and patience and impatience,'

the young woman won't marry a livery servant,—proud creature!—very proud! and Mr. Gower, you see, knowing how it was, felt for me, and told her, if I may take such liberty with the Swan, that she should—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"`Woo me, now I am in a holiday humor,
And like enough to consent'

"Swan again, sir."

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

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

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

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

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

And if Mr. Vivian has some reason to keep himself concealed still; if his fortune or ruin depend on your not divulging his secret for a while,—I can't think you are the man he need fear. 'Pon my life,—

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

as the Swan touchingly exclaims. I dare swear that was a wish often on the Swan's lips in the privacy of his domestic life!"

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

I had no more to ask, yet still there was some uneasy curiosity in my mind, which I could hardly

define to myself, was it not jealousy? Vivian so handsome and so daring,—he at least might see the great heiress; Lady Ellinor perhaps thought of no danger there. But—I—I was a lover still, and—nay, such thoughts were folly indeed!

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

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

CHAPTER VII.

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

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

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

There was such a pathos in the stern sufferer's attitude that it spoke those words as plainly as if his lips had said them. Old soldier, thou hast done a soldier's part in many a bloody field; but if I could make visible to the world thy brave soldier's soul, I would paint thee as I saw thee then!—Out on this tyro's hand!

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER VIII.

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

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

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

Thus I found myself in Regent Street, when a carriage, borne by post- horses, whirled rapidly over the pavement, scattering to the right and left all humbler equipages, and hurried, as if on an errand of life and death, up the broad thoroughfare leading into Portland Place. But rapidly as the wheels dashed by, I had seen distinctly the face of Fanny Trevanion in the carriage; and that face wore a strange expression, which seemed to me to speak of anxiety and grief; and by her side—Was not that the woman I had seen with Peacock? I did not see the face of the woman, but I thought I recognized the cloak, the bonnet, and peculiar turn of the head. If I could be mistaken there, I was not mistaken at least as to the servant on the seat behind. Looking back at a butcher's boy who had just escaped being run over, and was revenging himself by all the imprecations the Dirae of London slang could suggest, the face of Mr. Peacock was exposed in full to my gaze.

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

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

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

"Worse news of what, of whom? Of Mr. Trevanion?"

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

"At ten o'clock last night?"

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

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

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

"Never mind that. Miss Trevanion,—I saw her just now,—she did not go with her mother: where was she going, then?"

"Why, sir,—but pray step into the parlor."

"No, no; speak!"

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

"Who is Mrs. Mole?"

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

gone. And then she would order fresh horses and go on, though Mrs. Bates (the housekeeper, you know, sir) was very angry with Mrs. Mole, who encouraged Miss; and—"

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

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

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

"Mr. Gower, sir!"

"Yes! Can't you answer?"

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

"In the North,—what is the address!"

"Lord N—, C— Hall, near W—"

I heard no more.

The conviction of some villanous snare struck me as with the swiftness and force of lightning. Why, if Trevanion were really ill, had the false servant concealed it from me? Why suffered me to waste his time, instead of hastening to Lady Ellinor? How, if Mr. Trevanion's sudden illness had brought the man to London,—how had he known so long beforehand (as he himself told me, and his appointment with the waiting- woman proved) the day he should arrive? Why now, if there were no design of which bliss Trevanion was the object, why so frustrate the provident foresight of her mother, and take advantage of the natural yearning of affection, the quick impulse of youth, to hurry off a girl whose very station forbade her to take such a journey without suitable protection,—against what must be the wish, and what clearly were the instructions, of Lady Ellinor? Alone, worse than alone! Fanny Trevanion was then in the hands of two servants who were the instruments and confidants of an adventurer like Vivian; and that conference between those servants, those broken references to the morrow coupled with the name Vivian had assumed,—needed the unerring instincts of love more cause for terror?—terror the darker because the exact shape it should assume was obscure and indistinct.

I sprang from the house.

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

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

"Oh, the man I had loved as a friend; the man whom I myself helped to make known to Trevanion,—Vivian, Vivian!"

"Vivian! Ah, the youth I have heard you speak of! But how? Villany to whom,—to Trevanion?"

"You torture me with your questions. Listen: this Vivian (I know him), —he has introduced into the house, as a servant, an agent capable of any trick and fraud; that servant has aided him to win over her maid,— Fanny's—Miss Trevanion's. Miss Trevanion is an heiress, Vivian an adventurer. My head swims round; I cannot explain now. Ha! I will write a line to Lord Castleton,—tell him my fears and suspicions; he will follow us, I know, or do what is best."

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

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

"Vivian or Gower,—the same person."

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

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

himself.

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

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

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

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CAXTONS: A FAMILY PICTURE — VOLUME 14 ***

United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of

works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation’s EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-

6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.