

# THE CAXTONS - PART 2

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## PART II.

### CHAPTER I.

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

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

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

Now, this Dr. Herman was the son of a German music-master who had settled in England. He had completed his own education at the University of Bonn; but finding learning too common a drug in that market to bring the high price at which he valued his own, and having some theories as to political freedom which attached him to England, he resolved upon setting up a school, which he designed as an "Era in the History of the Human Mind." Dr. Herman was one of the earliest of those new-fashioned authorities in education who have, more lately, spread pretty numerous amongst us, and would have given, perhaps, a dangerous shake to the foundations of our great classical seminaries, if those last had not very wisely, though very cautiously, borrowed some of the more sensible principles which lay mixed and adulterated amongst the

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crotchets and chimeras of their innovating rivals and assailants.

Dr. Herman had written a great many learned works against every pre-existing method of instruction; that which had made the greatest noise was upon the infamous fiction of Spelling-Books: "A more lying, roundabout, puzzle-headed delusion than that by which we Confuse the clear instincts of truth in our accursed systems of spelling, was never concocted by the father of falsehood." Such was the exordium of this famous treatise. "For instance, take the monosyllable Cat. What a brazen forehead you must have when you say to an infant, c, a, t,—spell Cat: that is, three sounds, forming a totally opposite compound,—opposite in every detail, opposite in the whole,—compose a poor little monosyllable which, if you would but say the simple truth, the child will learn to spell merely by looking at it! How can three sounds, which run thus to the ear, see-eh-tee, compose the sound cat? Don't they rather compose the sound see-eh-te, or ceaty? How can a system of education flourish that begins by so monstrous a falsehood, which the sense of hearing suffices to contradict? No wonder that the horn-book is the despair of mothers! "From this instance the reader will perceive that Dr. Herman, in his theory of education, began at the beginning,—he took the bull fairly by the horns. As for the rest, upon a broad principle of eclecticism, he had combined together every new patent invention for youthful idea-shooting. He had taken his trigger from Hofwyl; he had bought his wadding from Hamilton; he had got his copper-caps from Bell and Lancaster. The youthful idea,—he had rammed it tight! he had rammed it loose! he had rammed it with pictorial illustrations! he had rammed it with the monitorial system! he had rammed it in every conceivable way, and with every imaginable ramrod! but I have mournful doubts whether he shot the youthful idea an inch farther than it did under the old mechanism of flint and steel! Nevertheless, as Dr. Herman really did teach a great many things too much neglected at schools; as, besides Latin and Greek, he taught a vast variety in that vague infinite nowadays called "useful knowledge;" as he engaged lecturers on chemistry, engineering, and natural history; as arithmetic and the elements of physical science were enforced with zeal and care; as all sorts of gymnastics were intermingled with the sports of the playground,—so the youthful idea, if it did not go farther, spread its shots in a wider direction, and a boy could not stay there five years without learning something: which is more than can be said of all schools! He learned at least to use his eyes and his ears and his limbs; order, cleanliness, exercise, grew into habits; and the school pleased the ladies and satisfied the gentlemen,—in a word, it thrived; and Dr. Herman, at the time I speak of, numbered more than one hundred pupils. Now, when the worthy man first commenced the task of tuition, he had proclaimed the humanest abhorrence to the barbarous system of corporal punishment. But alas! as his school increased in numbers, he had proportionately recanted these honorable and anti-birchen ideas. He had—reluctantly, perhaps, honestly, no doubt; but with full determination—come to the conclusion that there are secret springs which can only be detected by the twigs of the divining-rod; and having

discovered with what comparative ease the whole mechanism of his little government could be carried on by the admission of the birch-regulator, so, as he grew richer and lazier and fatter, the Philhellenic Institute spun along as glibly as a top kept in vivacious movement by the perpetual application of the lash.

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

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

"Vat," he would exclaim to some new boy fresh from some grammar-school on the Etonian system—"Vat do you mean by dranslating Zeus Jupiter? Is dat amatory, irascible, cloud-compelling god of Olympus, vid his eagle and his aegis, in the smallest degree resembling de grave, formal, moral Jupiter Optimus Maximus of the Roman Capitol?—a god, Master Simpkins, who would have been perfectly shocked at the idea of running after innocent Fraulein dressed up as a swan or a bull! I put dat question to you vonce for all, Master Simpkins." Master Simpkins took care to agree with the Doctor. "And how could you," resumed Dr. Herman majestically, turning to some other criminal alumnus,— "how could you presume to dranslate de Ares of Homer, sir, by the audacious vulgarism Mars?—Ares, Master Jones, who roared as loud as ten thousand men when he was hurt; or as you vill roar if I catch you calling him Mars again?—Ares, who covered seven plectra of ground? Confound Ares, the manslayer, with the Mars or Mavors whom de Romans stole from de Sabines!—Mars, de solemn and calm protector of Rome! Master Jones, Master Jones, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" And then waxing enthusiastic, and warming more and more into German gutturals and pronunciation, the good Doctor would lift up his hands, with two great rings on his thumbs, and exclaim: "Und Du! and dou, Aphrodite,—dou, whose bert de seasons vel-coined! dou, who didst put Atonis into a coffer, and den tid durn him

into an anemone! dou to be called Venus by dat snivel-nosed little Master Budderfield!—Venus, who presided over Baumgartens and funerals and nasty tinkng sewers!—Venus Cloacina, O mein Gott! Come here, Master Budderfield: I must flog you for dat; I must indeed, liddle boy!” As our Philhellenic preceptor carried his archaeological purism into all Greek proper names, it was not likely that my unhappy baptismal would escape. The first time I signed my exercise I wrote ”Pisistratus Caxton” in my best round-hand. ”And dey call your baba a scholar!” said the Doctor, contemptuously. ”Your name, sir, is Greek; and, as Greek, you vill be dood enough to write it, vith vat you call an e and an o,—P,e,i,s,i,s,t,r,a,t,o,s. Vat can you expect for to come to, Master Caxton, if you don’t pay de care dat is proper to your own dood name,—de e, and de o? Ach? let me see no more of your vile corruptions! Mein Gott! Pi! ven de name is Pei!”

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

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

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

## CHAPTER II.

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

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

Uncle Jack disappeared, and went on his travels. The same spirit of philanthropy which characterized the speculations of his purse attended the risks of his person. Uncle Jack had a natural leaning towards all distressed communities: if any tribe, race, or nation was down in the world, Uncle Jack threw himself plump into the scale to redress the balance. Poles, Greeks (the last were then fighting the Turks), Mexicans, Spaniards,—Uncle Jack thrust his nose into all their squabbles! Heaven forbid I should mock thee, poor Uncle Jack! for those generous predilections towards the unfortunate; only, whenever a nation is in a misfortune, there is always a job going on! The Polish cause, the Greek cause, the Mexican cause, and the Spanish cause are necessarily mixed up with loans and subscriptions. These Continental patriots, when they take up the sword with one hand, generally contrive to thrust their other hand deep into their neighbor's breeches' pockets. Uncle Jack went to Greece, thence he went to Spain, thence to Mexico. No doubt he was of great service to those afflicted populations, for he came back with unanswerable proof of their gratitude in the shape of L3,000. Shortly after this appeared a prospectus of the "New, Grand, National, Benevolent Insurance Company, for the Industrial Classes." This invaluable document, after setting forth the immense benefits to society arising from habits of providence and the introduction of insurance companies,—proving the infamous rate of premiums exacted by the existent offices, and their inapplicability to the wants of the honest artisan, and declaring that nothing but the purest intentions of benefiting their fellow-creatures, and raising the moral tone of society, had led the directors to institute a new society, founded on the noblest principles and the most moderate calculations,—proceeded to

demonstrate that twenty-four and a half per cent was the smallest possible return the shareholders could anticipate. The company began under the fairest auspices; an archbishop was caught as president, on the condition always that he should give nothing but his name to the society. Uncle Jack—more euphoniously designated as "the celebrated philanthropist, John Jones Tibbets, Esquire"—was honorary secretary, and the capital stated at two millions. But such was the obtuseness of the industrial classes, so little did they perceive the benefits of subscribing one-and-ninepence a-week from the age of twenty-one to fifty, in order to secure at the latter age the annuity of L18, that the company dissolved into thin air, and with it dissolved also Uncle Jack's L3,000. Nothing more was then seen or heard of him for three years. So obscure was his existence that on the death of an aunt, who left him a small farm in Cornwall, it was necessary to advertise that "If John Jones Tibbets, Esq., would apply to Messrs. Blunt & Tin, Lothbury, between the hours of ten and four, he would hear of something to his advantage." But even as a conjurer declares that he will call the ace of spades, and the ace of spades, that you thought you had safely under your foot, turns up on the table,—so with this advertisement suddenly turned up Uncle Jack. With inconceivable satisfaction did the new landowner settle himself in his comfortable homestead. The farm, which was about two hundred acres, was in the best possible condition, and saving one or two chemical preparations, which cost Uncle Jack, upon the most scientific principles, thirty acres of buckwheat, the ears of which came up, poor things, all spotted and speckled as if they had been inoculated with the small-pox, Uncle Jack for the first two years was a thriving man. Unluckily, however, one day Uncle Jack discovered a coal-mine in a beautiful field of Swedish turnips; in another week the house was full of engineers and naturalists, and in another month appeared; in my uncle's best style, much improved by practice, a prospectus of the "Grand National Anti-Monopoly Coal Company, instituted on behalf of the poor householders of London, and against the Monster Monopoly of the London Coal Wharves.

"A vein of the finest coal has been discovered on the estates of the celebrated philanthropist, John Jones Tibbets, Esq. This new mine, the Molly Wheel, having been satisfactorily tested by that eminent engineer, Giles Compass, Esq., promises an inexhaustible field to the energies of the benevolent and the wealth of the capitalist. It is calculated that the best coals may be delivered, screened, at the mouth of the Thames for 18s. per load, yielding a profit of not less than forty-eight per cent to the shareholders. Shares L50, to be paid in five instalments. Capital to be subscribed, one million. For shares, early application must be made to Messrs. Blunt & Tin, solicitors, Lothbury."

Here, then, was something tangible for fellow-creatures to go on: there was land, there was a mine, there was coal, and there actually came shareholders and capital. Uncle Jack was so persuaded that his fortune was now to be made, and had, moreover, so great a desire to share the glory of ruining the monster monopoly of the London wharves, that he

refused a very large offer to dispose of the property altogether, remained chief shareholder, and removed to London, where he set up his carriage and gave dinners to his fellow-directors. For no less than three years did this company flourish, having submitted the entire direction and working of the mines to that eminent engineer, Giles Compass. Twenty per cent was paid regularly by that gentleman to the shareholders, and the shares were at more than cent per cent, when one bright morning Giles Compass, Esq., unexpectedly removed himself to that wider field for genius like his, the United States; and it was discovered that the mine had for more than a year run itself into a great pit of water, and that Mr. Compass had been paying the shareholders out of their own capital. My uncle had the satisfaction this time of being ruined in very good company; three doctors of divinity, two county members, a Scotch lord, and an East India director were all in the same boat,—that boat which went down with the coal-mine into the great water-pit!

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

All plump people are more popular than thin people. There is something jovial and pleasant in the sight of a round face! What conspiracy could succeed when its head was a lean and hungry-looking fellow, like Cassius? If the Roman patriots had had Uncle Jack amongst them, perhaps they would never have furnished a tragedy to Shakspeare. Uncle Jack was as plump as a partridge,—not unwieldy, not corpulent, not obese, not vastus, which Cicero objects to in an orator, but every crevice comfortably filled up. Like the ocean, "time wrote no wrinkles on his glassy [or brassy] brow." His natural lines were all upward curves, his smile most ingratiating, his eye so frank, even his trick of rubbing his clean, well-feel, English-looking hands, had something about it coaxing and debonnaire, something that actually decoyed you into trusting your money into hands so prepossessing. Indeed, to him might be fully applied the expression—*Sedem animce in extremis digitis habet*,—"He had his soul's seat in his finger-ends." The critics observe that few men have ever united in equal perfection the imaginative with the scientific faculties. "Happy he," exclaims Schiller, "who combines the enthusiast's warmth with the worldly man's light:" light and warmth, Uncle Jack had them both. He was a perfect symphony of bewitching enthusiasm and convincing calculation. *Dicaeopolis* in the "Aeharnenses," in presenting a gentleman called Nicharchus to the audience, observes: "He is small, I confess, but, there is nothing lost in him: all is knave that is not fool." Parodying the equivocal compliment, I may say that though Uncle Jack was no giant, there was nothing lost in him. Whatever was not philanthropy was arithmetic, and whatever was not arithmetic was philanthropy. He would have been

equally dear to Howard and to Cocker. Uncle Jack was comely too,—clear-skinned and florid, had a little mouth, with good teeth, wore no whiskers, shaved his beard as close as if it were one of his grand national companies; his hair, once somewhat sandy, was now rather grayish, which increased the respectability of his appearance; and he wore it flat at the sides and raised in a peak at the top; his organs of constructiveness and ideality were pronounced by Mr. Squills to be prodigious, and those freely developed bumps gave great breadth to his forehead. Well-shaped, too, was Uncle Jack, about five feet eight,—the proper height for an active man of business. He wore a black coat; but to make the nap look the fresher, he had given it the relief of gilt buttons, on—which were wrought a small crown and anchor; at a distance this button looked like the king’s button, and gave him the air of one who has a place about Court. He always wore a white neckcloth without starch, a frill, and a diamond pin, which last furnished him with observations upon certain mines of Mexico, which he had a great, but hitherto unsatisfied, desire of seeing worked by a grand National United Britons Company. His waistcoat of a morning was pale buff—of an evening, embroidered velvet; wherewith were connected sundry schemes of an “association for the improvement of native manufactures.” His trousers, matutinally, were of the color vulgarly called “blotting-paper;” and he never wore boots,—which, he said, unfitted a man for exercise,—but short drab gaiters and square-toed shoes. His watch-chain was garnished with a vast number of seals; each seal, indeed, represented the device of some defunct company, and they might be said to resemble the scalps of the slain worn by the aboriginal Iroquois,—concerning whom, indeed, he had once entertained philanthropic designs, compounded of conversion to Christianity on the principles of the English Episcopal Church, and of an advantageous exchange of beaver-skins for Bibles, brandy, and gunpowder.

That Uncle Jack should win my heart was no wonder; my mother’s he had always won, from her earliest recollection of his having persuaded her to let her great doll (a present from her godmother) be put up to a raffle for the benefit of the chimney-sweepers. “So like him,—so good!” she would often say pensively. “They paid sixpence apiece for the raffle,—twenty tickets,—and the doll cost L2. Nobody was taken in, and the doll, poor thing (it had such blue eyes!) went for a quarter of its value. But Jack said nobody could guess what good the ten shillings did to the chimney-sweepers.” Naturally enough, I say, my mother liked Uncle Jack; but my father liked him quite as well,—and that was a strong proof of my uncle’s powers of captivation. However, it is noticeable that when some retired scholar is once interested in an active man of the world, he is more inclined to admire him than others are. Sympathy with such a companion gratifies at once his curiosity and his indolence; he can travel with him, scheme with him, fight with him, go with him through all the adventures of which his own books speak so eloquently, and all the time never stir from his easy-chair. My father said “that it was like listening to Ulysses to hear Uncle Jack!” Uncle Jack, too, had been in Greece and Asia Minor, gone over the site of the

siege of Troy, eaten figs at Marathon, shot hares in the Peloponnesus, and drunk three pints of brown stout at the top of the Great Pyramid.

Therefore, Uncle Jack was like a book of reference to my father. Verily at times he looked on him as a book, and took him down after dinner as he would a volume of Dodwell or Pausanias. In fact, I believe that scholars who never move from their cells are not the less an eminently curious, bustling, active race, rightly understood. Even as old Burton saith of himself—"Though I live a collegiate student, and lead a monastic life, sequestered from those tumults and troubles of the world, I hear and see what is done abroad, how others run, ride, turmoil, and macerate themselves in town and country,"—which citation sufficeth to show that scholars are naturally the most active men of the world; only that while their heads plot with Augustus, fight with Julius, sail with Columbus, and change the face of the globe with Alexander, Attila, or Mahomet, there is a certain mysterious attraction, which our improved knowledge of mesmerism will doubtless soon explain to the satisfaction of science, between that extremer and antipodal part of the human frame, called in the vulgate "the seat of honor," and the stuffed leather of an armed chair. Learning somehow or other sinks down to that part into which it was first driven, and produces therein a leaden heaviness and weight, which counteract those lively emotions of the brain that might otherwise render students too mercurial and agile for the safety of established order. I leave this conjecture to the consideration of experimentalists in the physics.

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

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

We took long walks together, and in the midst of his most diverting conversation my uncle was always an observer. He would stop to examine the nature of the soil, fill my pockets (not his own) with great lumps of clay, stones, and rubbish, to analyze when he got home, by the help of some chemical apparatus he had borrowed from Mr. Squills. He would stand an hour at a cottage door, admiring the little girls who were straw-platting, and then walk into the nearest farmhouses, to suggest the feasibility of "a national straw-plat association." All this fertility of intellect was, alas! wasted in that ingrata terra into which Uncle Jack had fallen. No squire could be persuaded into the belief that his mother-stone was pregnant with minerals; no farmer talked into weaving straw-plat into a proprietary association. So, even as an ogre, having devastated the surrounding country, begins to cast a hungry eye on his own little ones, Uncle Jack's mouth, long defrauded of juicier and more legitimate morsels, began to water for a bite of my innocent father.

### CHAPTER III.

At this time we were living in what may be called a very respectable style for people who made no pretence to ostentation. On the skirts of a large village stood a square red-brick house, about the date of Queen Anne. Upon the top of the house was a balustrade,—why, Heaven knows, for nobody, except our great tom-cat, Ralph, ever walked upon the leads; but so it was, and so it often is in houses from the time of Elizabeth, yea, even to that of Victoria. This balustrade was divided by low piers, on each of which was placed a round ball. The centre of the house was distinguishable by an architrave in the shape of a triangle, under which was a niche,—probably meant for a figure; but the figure was not forthcoming. Below this was the window (encased with carved pilasters) of my dear mother's little sitting-room; and lower still, raised on a flight of six steps, was a very handsome-looking door, with a projecting porch. All the windows, with smallish panes and largish frames, were relieved with stone copings; so that the house had an air of solidity and well-to-do-ness about it,—nothing tricky on the one hand, nothing decayed on the other. The house stood a little back from the garden gates, which were large, and set between two piers surmounted with vases. Many might object that in wet weather you had to walk some way to your carriage; but we obviated that objection by not keeping a carriage. To the right of the house the enclosure contained a little lawn, a laurel hermitage, a square pond, a modest greenhouse, and half-a-dozen plots of mignonette, heliotrope, roses, pinks, sweet-William, etc. To the left spread the kitchen-garden, lying screened by espaliers yielding the finest apples in the neighborhood, and divided by three winding gravel-walks, of which the extremest was backed by a wall, whereon, as it lay full south, peaches, pears, and nectarines sunned themselves early into well-remembered flavor. This walk was appropriated to my father. Book in hand, he would, on fine days, pace to and fro, often stopping, dear man, to jot down a pencil-note, gesticulate, or soliloquize. And there, when not in his study, my mother would be sure to find him. In these deambulations, as he called them, he had generally a companion so extraordinary that I expect to be met with a hillalu of incredulous contempt when I specify it. Nevertheless I vow and protest that it is strictly true, and no invention of an exaggerating romancer. It happened one day that my mother had coaxed Mr. Caxton to walk with her to market. By the way they passed a sward of green, on which sundry little boys were engaged upon the lapidation of a lame duck. It seemed that the duck was to have been taken to market, when it was discovered not only to be lame, but dyspeptic,—perhaps some weed had disagreed with its ganglionic apparatus, poor thing. However that be, the good-wife had declared that the duck was good for nothing; and upon the petition of her children, it had been consigned to them for a little innocent amusement, and to keep them out of harm's way. My mother declared that she never before saw her lord and master roused to such animation. He dispersed the urchins,

released the duck, carried it home, kept it in a basket by the fire, fed it and physicked it till it recovered; and then it was consigned to the square pond. But lo! the duck knew its benefactor; and whenever my father appeared outside his door, it would catch sight of him, flap from the pond, gain the lawn, and hobble after him (for it never quite recovered the use of its left leg) till it reached the walk by the peaches; and there sometimes it would sit, gravely watching its master's deambulations, sometimes stroll by his side, and, at all events, never leave him till, at his return home, he fed it with his own hands; and, quacking her peaceful adieus, the nymph then retired to her natural element.

With the exception of my mother's favorite morning-room, the principal sitting-rooms—that is, the study, the diningroom, and what was emphatically called "the best drawing-room," which was only occupied on great occasions—looked south. Tall beeches, firs, poplars, and a few oaks backed the house, and indeed surrounded it on all sides but the south; so that it was well sheltered from the winter cold and the summer heat. Our principal domestic, in dignity and station, was Mrs. Primmins, who was waiting gentlewoman, housekeeper, and tyrannical dictatrix of the whole establishment. Two other maids, a gardener, and a footman, composed the rest of the serving household. Save a few pasture-fields, which he let, my father was not troubled with land. His income was derived from the interest of about £15,000, partly in the Three per Cents, partly on mortgage; and what with my mother and Mrs. Primmins, this income always yielded enough to satisfy my father's single hobby for books, pay for my education, and entertain our neighbors, rarely indeed at dinner, but very often at tea. My dear mother boasted that our society was very select. It consisted chiefly of the clergyman and his family; two old maids who gave themselves great airs; a gentleman who had been in the East India service, and who lived in a large white house at the top of the hill; some half-a-dozen squires and their wives and children; Mr. Squills, still a bachelor; and once a year cards were exchanged—and dinners too—with certain aristocrats who inspired my mother with a great deal of unnecessary awe, since she declared they were the most good-natured, easy people in the world, and always stuck their cards in the most conspicuous part of the looking-glass frame over the chimney-piece of the best drawing-room. Thus you perceive that our natural position was one highly creditable to us, proving the soundness of our finances and the gentility of our pedigree,—of which last more hereafter. At present I content myself with saying on that head that even the proudest of the neighboring squirearchs always spoke of us as a very ancient family. But all my father ever said, to evince pride of ancestry, was in honor of William Caxton, citizen and printer in the reign of Edward IV.,—*Clarum et venerabile nomen!* an ancestor a man of letters might be justly vain of.

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

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

My father smiled approvingly. "I see you comprehend true urbanity, or politeness, as we phrase it. There is an elegance in addressing the husband of your sister as brother. Erasmus commends it in his opening chapter, under the head of Salutandi formuloe. And indeed," added my father, thoughtfully, "there is no great difference between politeness and affection. My author here observes that it is polite to express salutation in certain minor distresses of nature. One should salute a gentleman in yawning, salute him in hiccuping, salute him in sneezing, salute him in coughing,—and that evidently because of your interest in his health; for he may dislocate his jaw in yawning, and the hiccup is often a symptom of grave disorder, and sneezing is perilous to the small blood-vessels of the head, and coughing is either a tracheal, bronchial, pulmonary, or ganglionic affection."

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

"Trees .....	300
Labor .....	1,000
Paving holes ....	100
Rent .....	150
----	
Total .....	L1,550

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What an intelligent lad it is! Good head there. Oh, he'll do credit to his great fortune, brother," said Uncle Jack, approvingly. "True, my boy. But in the mean while we could fill the ground, as they do in Kent, with gooseberries and currants, or onions and cabbages. Nevertheless, considering we are not great capitalists, I am afraid we must give up a share of our profits to diminish our outlay. So harkye, Pisistratus—look at him, brother, simple as he stands there, I think he is born with a silver spoon in his mouth—harkye, now to the mysteries of speculation. Your father shall quietly buy the land, and then, presto! we will issue a prospectus and start a company. Associations can wait five years for a return. Every year, meanwhile, increases the value of the shares. Your father takes, we say, fifty shares at L50 each, paying only an instalment of L2 a share. He sells 35 shares at cent per cent. He keeps the remaining 15, and his fortune's made all the same; only it is not quite so large as if he had kept the whole concern in his own hands. What say you now, brother Caxton? *Visne edere pomum?* as we used to say at school."

"I don't want a shilling more than I have got," said my father,

resolutely. "My wife would not love me better; my food would not nourish me more; my boy would not, in all probability, be half so hardy, or a tenth part so industrious; and—"

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

"Papoe!" exclaimed my father; "to think that England can't get on without turning Austin Caxton into an apple-merchant! My dear Jack, listen. You remind me of a colloquy in this book,—wait a bit, here it is, 'Pamphagus and Cocles.' Cocles recognizes his friend, who had been absent for many years, by his eminent and remarkable nose. Pamphagus says, rather irritably, that he is not ashamed of his nose. 'Ashamed of it! no, indeed,' says Cocles; 'I never saw a nose that could be put to so many uses!' 'Ha!' says Pamphagus (whose curiosity is aroused), 'uses! what uses?' Whereon (lepidissime frater!) Cocles, with eloquence as rapid as yours, runs on with a countless list of the uses to which so vast a development of the organ can be applied. 'If the cellar was deep, it could sniff up the wine like an elephant's trunk; if the bellows were missing, it could blow the fire; if the lamp was too glaring, it could suffice for a shade; it would serve as a speaking-trumpet to a herald; it could sound a signal of battle in the field; it would do for a wedge in wood-cutting, a spade for digging, a scythe for mowing, an anchor in sailing,'—till Pamphagus cries out, 'Lucky dog that I am! and I never knew before what a useful piece of furniture I carried about with me.'" My father paused and strove to whistle; but that effort of harmony failed him, and he added, smiling, "So much for my apple-trees, brother John. Leave them to their natural destination of filling tarts and dumplings."

Uncle Jack looked a little discomposed for a moment; but he then laughed with his usual heartiness, and saw that he had not yet got to my father's blind side. I confess that my revered parent rose in my estimation after that conference; and I began to see that a man may not be quite without common sense, though he is a scholar. Indeed, whether it was that Uncle Jack's visit acted as a gentle stimulant to his relaxed faculties, or that I, now grown older and wiser, began to see his character more clearly, I date from those summer holidays the commencement of that familiar and endearing intimacy which ever after existed between my father and myself. Often I deserted the more extensive rambles of Uncle Jack, or the greater allurements of a cricket-match in the village, or a day's fishing in Squire Rollick's preserves, for a quiet stroll with my father by the old peach wall,—sometimes silent, indeed, and already musing over the future, while he

was busy with the past, but amply rewarded when, suspending his lecture, he would pour forth hoards of varied learning, rendered amusing by his quaint comments, and that Socratic satire which only fell short of wit because it never passed into malice. At some moments, indeed, the vein ran into eloquence; and with some fine heroic sentiment in his old books, his stooping form rose erect, his eye flashed, and you saw that he had not been originally formed and wholly meant for the obscure seclusion in which his harmless days now wore contentedly away.

## CHAPTER IV.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Uncle Jack was clearly in the wrong box. He drew out of it cautiously,—"I mean," said he, "our respectable fellow-creatures;" and then suddenly it occurred to him that a "County Mercury" would naturally represent the agricultural interest, and that if Mr. Rollick said that the "'County Mercury' ought to be hanged," he was one of those politicians who had already begun to call the agricultural interest "a Vampire." Flushed with that fancied discovery, Uncle Jack rushed on, intending to bear along with the stream, thus fortunately directed, all the "rubbish" (1) subsequently shot into Covent Garden and Hall of Commerce.

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

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

"Bought up the 'Mercury,' have they, the villains?" cried Uncle Jack, interrupting the Squire, and now bursting into full scent. "Depend upon it, sir, it is a part of a diabolical system of buying up,—which must be exposed manfully. Yes, as I was saying, what is that agricultural interest which they desire to ruin; which they declare to be so bloated; which they call 'a Vampire!'—they the true blood-suckers, the venomous millocrats? Fellow-creatures, Sir! I may well call distressed fellow-creatures the members of that much-suffering class of which you yourself are an ornament. What can be more deserving of our best efforts for relief than a country gentleman like yourself, we'll say,—of a nominal £5,000 a-year,—compelled to keep up an establishment, pay for his fox-hounds, support the whole population by contributions to the poor-rates, support the whole church by tithes; all justice, jails, and prosecutions of the county-rates; all thoroughfares by the highway-rates; ground down by mortgages, Jews, or jointures; having to provide for younger children; enormous expenses for cutting his woods, manuring his model farm, and fattening huge oxen till every pound of flesh costs him five pounds sterling in oil-cake; and then the lawsuits necessary to protect his rights,—plundered on all hands by poachers, sheep-stealers, dog-stealers, churchwardens, overseers, gardeners, gamekeepers, and that necessary rascal, his steward. If ever there was a distressed fellow-creature in the world, it is a country gentleman with a great estate."

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

Squire Rollick, who had interrupted the speech by sundry approving exclamations, particularly at the mention of poor-rates, tithes, county-rates, mortgages, and poachers, here pushed the bottle to Uncle Jack, and said, civilly: "There's a great deal of truth in what you say, Mr. Tibbets. The agricultural interest is going to ruin; and when it does,

I would not give that for Old England!" and Mr. Rollick snapped his finger and thumb. "But what is to be done,—done for the county? There's the rub."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Um!" said my father, "there's a great deal to be said on both sides of the question. You see, my boy, that Mrs. Primmins has a great many moulds for our butter-pats: sometimes they come up with a crown on them, sometimes with the more popular impress of a cow. It is all very well for those who dish up the butter to print it according to their taste or

in proof of their abilities; it is enough for us to butter our bread, say grace, and pay for the dairy. Do you understand?"

"Not a bit, sir."

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

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

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

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

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

## CHAPTER V.

I seemed to myself to have made a leap in life when I returned to school. I no longer felt as a boy. Uncle Jack, out of his own purse, had presented me with my first pair of Wellington boots; my mother had been coaxed into allowing me a small tail to jackets hitherto tail-less; my collars, which had been wont, spaniel-like, to flap and fall about my neck, now, terrier-wise, stood erect and rampant, encompassed with a circumvallation of whalebone, buckram, and black silk. I was, in truth, nearly seventeen, and I gave myself the airs of a man. Now, be it observed that that crisis in adolescent existence wherein we first pass from Master Sisty into Mr. Pisistratus, or Pisistratus Caxton, Esq.; wherein we arrogate, and with tacit concession from our elders, the long-envied title of young man,—always seems a sudden and impromptu upshooting and elevation. We do not mark the gradual preparations thereto; we remember only one distinct period, in which all the signs and symptoms burst and effloresced together,—Wellington boots, coat-tail, cravat, down on the upper lip, thoughts on razors, reveries on

young ladies, and a new kind of sense of poetry.

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

1.—FROM AUGUSTINE CAXTON, Esq.

My Dear Son,—I have informed Dr. Herman that you will not return to him after the approaching holidays. You are old enough now to look forward to the embraces of our beloved Alma Mater, and I think studious enough to hope for the honors she bestows on her worthier sons. You are already entered at Trinity,—and in fancy I see my youth return to me in your image. I see you wandering where the Cam steals its way through those noble gardens; and, confusing you with myself, I recall the old dreams that haunted me when the chiming bells swung over the placid waters. *Verum secretumque Mouseion, quam multa dictatis, quam multa invenitis!* There at that illustrious college, unless the race has indeed degenerated, you will measure yourself with young giants. You will see those who, in the Law, the Church, the State, or the still cloisters of Learning, are destined to become the eminent leaders of your age. To rank amongst them you are not forbidden to aspire; he who in youth "can scorn delights, and love laborious days," should pitch high his ambition.

Your Uncle Jack says he has done wonders with his newspaper; though Mr. Rollick grumbles, and declares that it is full of theories, and that it puzzles the farmers. Uncle Jack, in reply, contends that he creates an audience, not addresses one, and sighs that his genius is thrown away in a provincial town. In fact, he really is a very clever man, and might do much in London, I dare say. He often comes over to dine and sleep, returning the next morning. His energy is wonderful—and contagious. Can you imagine that he has actually stirred up the flame of my vanity, by constantly poking at the bars? Metaphor apart, I find myself collecting all my notes and commonplaces, and wondering to see how easily they fall into method, and take shape in chapters and books. I cannot help smiling when I add, that I fancy I am going to become an author; and smiling more when I think that your Uncle Jack should have provoked me into so egregious an ambition. However, I have read some passages of my book to your mother, and she says, "it is vastly fine," which is encouraging. Your mother has great good sense, though I don't mean to say that she has much learning,—which is a wonder, considering that Pic de la Mirandola was nothing to her father. Yet he died, dear great man, and never printed a line; while I—positively I blush to think of my temerity! Adieu, my son; make the best of the time that remains with you at the

Philhellenic. A full mind is the true Pantheism, plena Jovis. It is only in some corner of the brain which we leave empty that Vice can obtain a lodging. When she knocks at your door, my son, be able to say, "No room for your ladyship; pass on." Your affectionate father,  
A. CAXTON.

2.—FROM Mrs. CAXTON.

My Dearest Sisty,—You are coming home! My heart is so full of that thought that it seems to me as if I could not write anything else. Dear child, you are coming home; you have done with school, you have done with strangers,—you are our own, all our own son again! You are mine again, as you were in the cradle, the nursery, and the garden, Sisty, when we used to throw daisies at each other! You will laugh at me so when I tell you that as soon as I heard you were coming home for good, I crept away from the room, and went to my drawer where I keep, you know, all my treasures. There was your little cap that I worked myself, and your poor little nankeen jacket that you were so proud to throw off—oh! and many other relics of you when you were little Sisty, and I was not the cold, formal "Mother" you call me now, but dear "Mamma." I kissed them, Sisty, and said, "My little child is coming back to me again!" So foolish was I, I forgot all the long years that have passed, and fancied I could carry you again in my arms, and that I should again coax you to say "God bless papa." Well, well! I write now between laughing and crying. You cannot be what you were, but you are still my own dear son,—your father's son; dearer to me than all the world,—except that father.

I am so glad, too, that you will come so soon,—come while your father is really warm with his book, and while you can encourage and keep him to it. For why should he not be great and famous? Why should not all admire him as we do? You know how proud of him I always was; but I do so long to let the world know why I was so proud. And yet, after all, it is not only because he is so wise and learned, but because he is so good, and has such a large, noble heart. But the heart must appear in the book too, as well as the learning. For though it is full of things I don't understand, every now and then there is something I do understand,—that seems as if that heart spoke out to all the world.

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

All are quite well except poor Mrs. Jones, who has the ague very bad indeed; Primmins has made her wear a charm for it, and Mrs. Jones actually declares she is already much better. One can't deny that there may be a great deal in such things, though it seems

quite against the reason. Indeed your father says, "Why not? A charm must be accompanied by a strong wish on the part of the charmer that it may succeed,—and what is magnetism but a wish?" I don't quite comprehend this; but, like all your father says, it has more than meets the eye, I am quite sure.

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

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

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

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

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