

# THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

CROCHET CASTLE

Thomas Love Peacock

**Crotchet Castle**

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### INTRODUCTION

Thomas Love Peacock was born at Weymouth in 1785. His first poem, "The Genius of the Thames," was in its second edition when he became one of the friends of Shelley. That was in 1812, when Shelley's age was twenty, Peacock's twenty-seven. The acquaintance strengthened, until Peacock became the friend in whose judgment Shelley put especial trust. There were many points of agreement. Peacock, at that time, shared, in a more practical way, Shelley's desire for root and branch reform; both were poets, although not equally gifted, and both loved Plato and the Greek tragedians. In "Crotchet Castle" Peacock has expressed his own delight in Greek literature through the talk of the Reverend Dr. Folliott.

But Shelley's friendship for Peacock included a trust in him that was maintained by points of unlikeness. Peacock was shrewd and witty. He delighted in extravagance of a satire which usually said more than it meant, but always rested upon a foundation of good sense. Then also there was a touch of the poet to give grace to the utterances of a clear-headed man of the world. It was Peacock who gave its name to Shelley's poem of "Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude," published in 1816. The "Spirit of Solitude" being treated as a spirit of evil, Peacock suggested calling it "Alastor," since the Greek ἀλάστωρ means an evil genius.

Peacock's novels are unlike those of other men: they are the genuine expressions of an original and independent mind. His reading and his thinking ran together; there is free quotation, free play of wit and satire, grace of invention too, but always unconventional. The story is always pleasant, although always secondary to the play of thought for which it gives occasion. He quarrelled with verse, whimsically but in all seriousness, in an article on "The Four Ages of Poetry," contributed in 1820 to a short-lived journal, "Ollier's Literary Miscellany." The four ages were, he said, the iron age, the Bardic; the golden, the Homeric; the silver, the Virgilian; and the brass, in which he himself lived. "A poet in our time," he said, "is a semi-barbarian in a civilised community . . . The highest inspirations of poetry are resolvable into three ingredients: the rant of unregulated passion, the whining of exaggerated feeling, and the cant of factitious sentiment; and can, therefore, serve only to ripen a splendid lunatic like Alexander, a puling driveller like Werter, or a morbid dreamer like Wordsworth." In another part of this essay he says: "While the historian and the philosopher are advancing in and accelerating the progress of knowledge, the poet is wallowing in the rubbish of departed ignorance, and raking up the ashes of dead savages to find gewgaws and rattles for the grown babies of the age. Mr. Scott digs up the poacher and cattle-stealers of the ancient Border. Lord Byron cruises for thieves and pirates on the shores of the Morea and among the Greek islands. Mr. Southey wades through ponderous volumes of travels and old chronicles, from which he carefully selects all that is false, useless, and absurd, as being essentially poetical; and when he has a commonplace book full of monstrosities, strings them into an epic." And so forth; Peacock going on to characterise, in further illustration of his argument, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Moore, and Campbell. He did not refer to Shelley; and Shelley read his friend's whimsical attack on poetry with all good humour, proceeding to reply to it with a "Defence of Poetry," which would have appeared in the same journal, if the journal had survived. In this novel of "Crotchet Castle" there is the same good-humoured exaggeration in the treatment of "our learned friend"—Lord Brougham—to whom and to whose labours for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge there are repeated allusions. In one case Peacock associates the labours of "our learned friend" for the general instruction of the masses with encouragement of robbery (page 172), and in another with body-snatching, or, worse,—murder for dissection (page 99). "The Lord deliver

me from the learned friend!” says Dr. Folliott. Brougham’s elevation to a peerage in November, 1830, as Lord Brougham and Vaux, is referred to on page 177, where he is called Sir Guy do Vaux. It is not to be forgotten, in the reading, that this story was written in 1831, the year before the passing of the Reform Bill. It ends with a scene suggested by the agricultural riots of that time. In the ninth chapter, again, there is a passage dealing with Sir Walter Scott after the fashion of the criticisms in the “Four Ages of Poetry.” But this critical satire gave nobody pain. Always there was a ground-work of good sense, and the broad sweep of the satire was utterly unlike the nibbling censure of the men whose wit is tainted with ill-humour. We may see also that the poet’s nature cannot be expelled.

In this volume we should find the touch of a poet’s hand in the tale itself when dealing with the adventures of Mr. Chainmail, while he stays at the Welsh mountain inn, if the story did not again and again break out into actual song, for it includes half-a-dozen little poems.

When Peacock wrote his attack on Poetry, he had, only two years before, produced a poem of his own—“Rhododaphne”—with a Greek fancy of the true and the false love daintily worked out.

It was his chief work in verse, and gave much pleasure to a few, among them his friend Shelley.

But he felt that, as the world went, he was not strong enough to help it by his singing, so he confined his writing to the novels, in which he could speak his mind in his own way, while doing his duty by his country in the East India House, where he obtained a post in 1818. From 1836 to 1856, when he retired on a pension, he was Examiner of India Correspondence. Peacock died in 1866, aged eighty-one.

#### *H. M.*

Note that in this tale Mac Quedy is Mac Q. E. D., son of a demonstration; Mr. Skionar, the transcendentalist, is named from Ski(as) onar, the dream of a shadow; and Mr. Philpot,—who loves rivers, is Phil(o)pot(amos).

## CHAPTER I

### THE VILLA

*Captain Jamy. I wad full fain hear some question 'tween you tway.*  
*Henry V.*

In one of those beautiful valleys, through which the Thames (not yet polluted by the tide, the scouring of cities, or even the minor defilement of the sandy streams of Surrey) rolls a clear flood through flowery meadows, under the shade of old beech woods, and the smooth mossy greensward of the chalk hills (which pour into it their tributary rivulets, as pure and pellucid as the fountain of Bandusium, or the wells of Scamander, by which the wives and daughters of the Trojans washed their splendid garments in the days of peace, before the coming of the Greeks); in one of those beautiful valleys, on a bold round-surfaced lawn, spotted with juniper, that opened itself in the bosom of an old wood, which rose with a steep, but not precipitous ascent, from the river to the summit of the hill, stood the castellated villa of a retired citizen. Ebenezer Mac Crotchet, Esquire, was the London-born offspring of a worthy native of the “north countrie,” who had walked up to London on a commercial adventure, with all his surplus capital, not very neatly tied up in a not very clean handkerchief, suspended over his shoulder from the end of a hooked stick, extracted from the first hedge on his pilgrimage; and who, after having worked himself a step or two up the ladder of life, had won the virgin heart of the only daughter of a highly respectable merchant of Duke’s Place, with whom he inherited the honest fruits of a long series of ingenuous dealings.

Mr. Mac Crotchet had derived from his mother the instinct, and from his father the rational principle, of enriching himself at the expense of the rest of mankind, by all the recognised modes of accumulation on the windy side of the law. After passing many years in the Alley, watching the turn of the market, and playing many games almost as desperate as that of the soldier of Lucullus, the fear of losing what he had so righteously gained predominated over the sacred thirst of paper-money; his caution got the better of his instinct, or rather transferred it from the department of acquisition to that of conservation. His friend, Mr. Ramsbottom, the zodiacal mythologist, told him that he had done well to withdraw from the region of Uranus or Brahma, the Maker, to that of Saturn or Veeshnu, the Preserver, before he fell under the eye of Jupiter or Seva, the Destroyer, who might have struck him down at a blow.

It is said that a Scotchman, returning home after some years’ residence in England, being asked what he thought of the English, answered: “They hanna ower muckle sense, but they are an unco braw people to live amang;” which would be a very good story, if it were not rendered apocryphal by the incredible circumstance of the Scotchman going back.

Mr. Mac Crotchet’s experience had given him a just title to make, in his own person, the last-quoted observation, but he would have known better than to go back, even if himself, and not his father, had been the first comer of his line from the north. He had married an English Christian, and, having none of the Scotch accent, was ungracious enough to be ashamed of his blood. He was desirous to obliterate alike the Hebrew and Caledonian vestiges in his name, and signed himself E. M. Crotchet, which by degrees induced the majority of his neighbours to think that his name was Edward Matthew. The more effectually to sink the Mac, he christened his villa “Crotchet Castle,” and determined to hand down to posterity the honours of Crotchet of Crotchet. He found it essential to his dignity to furnish himself with a coat of arms, which, after the proper ceremonies (payment being the principal), he obtained, videlicet: Crest, a crotchet rampant, in A sharp; Arms, three empty bladders, turgescant, to show how opinions are formed; three bags of gold, pendent, to show why



they are maintained; three naked swords, tranchant, to show how they are administered; and three barbers' blocks, gaspant, to show how they are swallowed.

Mr. Crotchet was left a widower, with two children; and, after the death of his wife, so strong was his sense of the blessed comfort she had been to him, that he determined never to give any other woman an opportunity of obliterating the happy recollection.

He was not without a plausible pretence for styling his villa a castle, for, in its immediate vicinity, and within his own enclosed domain, were the manifest traces, on the brow of the hill, of a Roman station, or *castellum*, which was still called the "Castle" by the country people. The primitive mounds and trenches, merely overgrown with greensward, with a few patches of juniper and box on the vallum, and a solitary ancient beech surmounting the place of the prætorium, presented nearly the same depths, heights, slopes, and forms, which the Roman soldiers had originally given them.

From this cartel Mr. Crotchet christened his villa. With his rustic neighbours he was, of course, immediately and necessarily a squire: Squire Crotchet of the Castle; and he seemed to himself to settle down as naturally into an English country gentleman, as if his parentage had been as innocent of both Scotland and Jerusalem, as his education was of Rome and Athens.

But as, though you expel nature with a pitch-fork, she will yet always come back; he could not become, like a true-born English squire, part and parcel of the barley-giving earth; he could not find in game-bagging, poacher-shooting, trespasser-pounding, footpath-stopping, common-enclosing, rack-renting, and all the other liberal pursuits and pastimes which make a country gentleman an ornament to the world and a blessing to the poor: he could not find in these valuable and amiable occupations, and in a corresponding range of ideas, nearly commensurate with that of the great King Nebuchadnezzar when he was turned out to grass; he could not find in this great variety of useful action, and vast field of comprehensive thought, modes of filling up his time that accorded with his Caledonian instinct. The inborn love of disputation, which the excitements and engagements of a life of business had smothered, burst forth through the calmer surface of a rural life. He grew as fain as Captain Jamy, "to hear some argument betwixt ony tway," and being very hospitable in his establishment, and liberal in his invitations, a numerous detachment from the advanced guard of the "march of intellect," often marched down to Crotchet Castle.

When the fashionable season filled London with exhibitors of all descriptions, lecturers and else, Mr. Crotchet was in his glory; for, in addition to the perennial literati of the metropolis, he had the advantage of the visits of a number of hardy annuals, chiefly from the north, who, as the interval of their metropolitan flowering allowed, occasionally accompanied their London brethren in excursions to Crotchet Castle.

Amongst other things, he took very naturally to political economy, read all the books on the subject which were put forth by his own countrymen, attended all lectures thereon, and boxed the technology of the sublime science as expertly as an able seaman boxes the compass.

With this agreeable mania he had the satisfaction of biting his son, the hope of his name and race, who had borne off from Oxford the highest academical honours; and who, treading in his father's footsteps to honour and fortune, had, by means of a portion of the old gentleman's surplus capital, made himself a junior partner in the eminent loan-jobbing firm of Catchflat and Company. Here, in the days of paper prosperity, he applied his science-illuminated genius to the blowing of bubbles, the bursting of which sent many a poor devil to the gaol, the workhouse, or the bottom of the river, but left young Crotchet rolling in riches.

These riches he had been on the point of doubling, by a marriage with the daughter of Mr. Touchandgo, the great banker, when, one foggy morning, Mr. Touchandgo and the contents of his till were suddenly reported absent; and as the fortune which the young gentleman had intended to marry was not forthcoming, this tender affair of the heart was nipped in the bud.

Miss Touchandgo did not meet the shock of separation quite so complacently as the young gentleman: for he lost only the lady, whereas she lost a fortune as well as a lover. Some jewels, which



had glittered on her beautiful person as brilliantly as the bubble of her father's wealth had done in the eyes of his gudgeons, furnished her with a small portion of paper-currency; and this, added to the contents of a fairy purse of gold, which she found in her shoe on the eventful morning when Mr. Touchandgo melted into thin air, enabled her to retreat into North Wales, where she took up her lodging in a farm-house in Merionethshire, and boarded very comfortably for a trifling payment, and the additional consideration of teaching English, French, and music, to the little Ap-Llymrys.

In the course of this occupation she acquired sufficient knowledge of Welsh to converse with the country people.

She climbed the mountains, and descended the dingles, with a foot which daily habit made by degrees almost as steady as a native's. She became the nymph of the scene; and if she sometimes pined in thought for her faithless Strephon, her melancholy was anything but green and yellow: it was as genuine white and red as occupation, mountain air, thyme-fed mutton, thick cream, and fat bacon could make it: to say nothing of an occasional glass of double X, which Ap-Llymry, who yielded to no man west of the Wrekin in brewage, never failed to press upon her at dinner and supper.

He was also earnest, and sometimes successful, in the recommendation of his mead, and most pertinacious on winter nights in enforcing a trial of the virtues of his elder wine. The young lady's personal appearance, consequently, formed a very advantageous contrast to that of her quondam lover, whose physiognomy the intense anxieties of his bubble-blowing days, notwithstanding their triumphant result, had left blighted, sallowed, and crow's-footed, to a degree not far below that of the fallen spirit who, in the expressive language of German romance, is described as "scathed by the ineradicable traces of the thunderbolts of Heaven;" so that, contemplating their relative geological positions, the poor deserted damsel was flourishing on slate, while her rich and false young knight was pining on chalk.

Squire Crotchet had also one daughter, whom he had christened Lemma, and who, as likely to be endowed with a very ample fortune was, of course, an object very tempting to many young soldiers of fortune, who were marching with the march of mind, in a good condition for taking castles, as far as not having a groat is a qualification for such exploits. She was also a glittering bait to divers young squires expectant (whose fathers were too well acquainted with the occult signification of mortgage), and even to one or two sprigs of nobility, who thought that the lining of a civic purse would superinduce a very passable factitious nap upon a thread-bare title. The young lady had received an expensive and complicated education, complete in all the elements of superficial display. She was thus eminently qualified to be the companion of any masculine luminary who had kept due pace with the "astounding progress" of intelligence. It must be confessed, that a man who has not kept due pace with it, is not very easily found: this march being one of that "astounding" character in which it seems impossible that the rear can be behind the van. The young lady was also tolerably good looking: north of Tweed, or in Palestine, she would probable have been a beauty; but for the valleys of the Thames she was perhaps a little too much to the taste of Solomon, and had a nose which rather too prominently suggested the idea of the tower of Lebanon, which looked towards Damascus.

In a village in the vicinity of the Castle was the vicarage of the Reverend Doctor Folliott, a gentleman endowed with a tolerable stock of learning, an interminable swallow, and an indefatigable pair of lungs. His pre-eminence in the latter faculty gave occasion to some etymologists to ring changes on his name, and to decide that it was derived from Follis Optimus, softened through an Italian medium into Folle Ottimo, contracted poetically into Folleotto, and elided Anglicé into Folliott, signifying a first-rate pair of bellows. He claimed to be descended lineally from the illustrious Gilbert Folliott, the eminent theologian, who was a Bishop of London in the twelfth century, whose studies were interrupted in the dead of night by the Devil, when a couple of epigrams passed between them, and the Devil, of course, proved the smaller wit of the two.

This reverend gentleman, being both learned and jolly, became by degrees an indispensable ornament to the new squire's table. Mr. Crotchet himself was eminently jolly, though by no means

eminently learned. In the latter respect he took after the great majority of the sons of his father's land; had a smattering of many things, and a knowledge of none; but possessed the true northern art of making the most of his intellectual harlequin's jacket, by keeping the best patches always bright and prominent.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MARCH OF MIND

Quoth Ralpho: nothing but the abuse  
Of human learning you produce.—Butler.

“God bless my soul, sir!” exclaimed the Reverend Doctor Folliott, bursting, one fine May morning, into the breakfast-room at Crotchet Castle, “I am out of all patience with this march of mind. Here has my house been nearly burned down by my cook taking it into her head to study hydrostatics in a sixpenny tract, published by the Steam Intellect Society, and written by a learned friend who is for doing all the world’s business as well as his own, and is equally well qualified to handle every branch of human knowledge. I have a great abomination of this learned friend; as author, lawyer, and politician, he is *triformis*, like Hecate; and in every one of his three forms he is *bifrons*, like Janus; the true Mr. Facing-both-ways of Vanity Fair. My cook must read his rubbish in bed; and, as might naturally be expected, she dropped suddenly fast asleep, overturned the candle, and set the curtains in a blaze. Luckily, the footman went into the room at the moment, in time to tear down the curtains and throw them into the chimney, and a pitcher of water on her nightcap extinguished her wick; she is a greasy subject, and would have burned like a short mould.”

The reverend gentleman exhaled his grievance without looking to the right or to the left; at length, turning on his pivot, he perceived that the room was full of company, consisting of young Crotchet, and some visitors whom he had brought from London. The Reverend Doctor Folliott was introduced to Mr. Mac Quedy, the economist; Mr. Skionar, the transcendental poet; Mr. Firedamp, the meteorologist; and Lord Bossnowl, son of the Earl of Foolincourt, and member for the borough of Rogueingrain.

The divine took his seat at the breakfast-table, and began to compose his spirits by the gentle sedative of a large cup of tea, the demulcent of a well-buttered muffin, and the tonic of a small lobster.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—You are a man of taste, Mr. Crotchet. A man of taste is seen at once in the array of his breakfast-table. It is the foot of Hercules, the far-shining face of the great work, according to Pindar’s doctrine: ἀρχομένου έργου πρόσωπον χρή θέμεν πηλαυγές. The breakfast is the πρόσωπον of the great work of the day. Chocolate, coffee, tea, cream, eggs, ham, tongue, cold fowl, all these are good, and bespeak good knowledge in him who sets them forth: but the touchstone is fish: anchovy is the first step, prawns and shrimps the second; and I laud him who reaches even to these: potted char and lampreys are the third, and a fine stretch of progression; but lobster is, indeed, matter for a May morning, and demands a rare combination of knowledge and virtue in him who sets it forth.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—Well, sir, and what say you to a fine fresh trout, hot and dry, in a napkin? or a herring out of the water into the frying-pan, on the shore of Loch Fyne?

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Sir, I say every nation has some eximious virtue; and your country is pre-eminent in the glory of fish for breakfast. We have much to learn from you in that line at any rate.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—And in many others, sir, I believe. Morals and metaphysics, politics and political economy, the way to make the most of all the modifications of smoke; steam, gas, and paper currency; you have all these to learn from us; in short, all the arts and sciences. We are the modern Athenians.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—I, for one, sir, am content to learn nothing from you but the art and science of fish for breakfast. Be content, sir, to rival the Boeotians, whose redeeming virtue was in fish, touching which point you may consult Aristophanes and his scholiast in the passage of Lysistrata,

ἀλλ' ἄφελε τὰς ἐγγέλεις, and leave the name of Athenians to those who have a sense of the beautiful, and a perception of metrical quantity.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—Then, sir, I presume you set no value on the right principles of rent, profit, wages, and currency?

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—My principles, sir, in these things are, to take as much as I can get, and pay no more than I can help. These are every man's principles, whether they be the right principles or no. There, sir, is political economy in a nutshell.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—The principles, sir, which regulate production and consumption are independent of the will of any individual as to giving or taking, and do not lie in a nutshell by any means.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Sir, I will thank you for a leg of that capon.

*Lord Bosnowl.*—But, sir, by-the-bye, how came your footman to be going into your cook's room? It was very providential to be sure, but—

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Sir, as good came of it, I shut my eyes, and ask no questions. I suppose he was going to study hydrostatics, and he found himself under the necessity of practising hydraulics.

*Mr. Firedamp.*—Sir, you seem to make very light of science.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Yes, sir, such science as the learned friend deals in: everything for everybody, science for all, schools for all, rhetoric for all, law for all, physic for all, words for all, and sense for none. I say, sir, law for lawyers, and cookery for cooks; and I wish the learned friend, for all his life, a cook that will pass her time in studying his works; then every dinner he sits down to at home, he will sit on the stool of repentance.

*Lord Bosnowl.*—Now really that would be too severe: my cook should read nothing but Ude.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—No, sir! let Ude and the learned friend singe fowls together; let both avaunt from my kitchen. Θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε βεβήλοις. Ude says an elegant supper may be given with sandwiches. *Horresco referens.* An elegant supper. *Dî meliora piis.* No Ude for me. Conviviality went out with punch and suppers. I cherish their memory. I sup when I can, but not upon sandwiches.

To offer me a sandwich, when I am looking for a supper, is to add insult to injury. Let the learned friend, and the modern Athenians, sup upon sandwiches.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—Nay, sir; the modern Athenians know better than that. A literary supper in sweet Edinbro' would cure you of the prejudice you seem to cherish against us.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Well, sir, well; there is cogency in a good supper; a good supper in these degenerate days bespeaks a good man; but much more is wanted to make up an Athenian. Athenians, indeed! where is your theatre? who among you has written a comedy? where is your Attic salt? which of you can tell who was Jupiter's great-grandfather? or what metres will successively remain, if you take off the three first syllables, one by one, from a pure antispastic acatalectic tetrameter? Now, sir, there are three questions for you: theatrical, mythological, and metrical; to every one of which an Athenian would give an answer that would lay me prostrate in my own nothingness.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—Well, sir, as to your metre and your mythology, they may e'en wait a wee. For your comedy there is the "Gentle Shepherd" of the divine Allan Ramsay.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—The "Gentle Shepherd"! It is just as much a comedy as the Book of Job.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—Well, sir, if none of us have written a comedy, I cannot see that it is any such great matter, any more than I can conjecture what business a man can have at this time of day with Jupiter's great-grandfather.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—The great business is, sir, that you call yourselves Athenians, while you know nothing that the Athenians thought worth knowing, and dare not show your noses before the civilised world in the practice of any one art in which they were excellent. Modern Athens, sir! the assumption is a personal affront to every man who has a Sophocles in his library. I will thank you for an anchovy.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—Metaphysics, sir; metaphysics. Logic and moral philosophy. There we are at home. The Athenians only sought the way, and we have found it; and to all this we have added political economy, the science of sciences.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—A hyperbarbarous technology, that no Athenian ear could have borne. Premises assumed without evidence, or in spite of it; and conclusions drawn from them so logically, that they must necessarily be erroneous.

*Mr. Skionar.*—I cannot agree with you, Mr. Mac Quedy, that you have found the true road of metaphysics, which the Athenians only sought. The Germans have found it, sir: the sublime Kant and his disciples.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—I have read the sublime Kant, sir, with an anxious desire to understand him, and I confess I have not succeeded.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—He wants the two great requisites of head and tail.

*Mr. Skionar.*—Transcendentalism is the philosophy of intuition, the development of universal convictions; truths which are inherent in the organisation of mind, which cannot be obliterated, though they may be obscured, by superstitious prejudice on the one hand, and by the Aristotelian logic on the other.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—Well, sir, I have no notion of logic obscuring a question.

*Mr. Skionar.*—There is only one true logic, which is the transcendental; and this can prove only the one true philosophy, which is also the transcendental. The logic of your Modern Athens can prove everything equally; and that is, in my opinion, tantamount to proving nothing at all.

*Mr. Crotchet.*—The sentimental against the rational, the intuitive against the inductive, the ornamental against the useful, the intense against the tranquil, the romantic against the classical; these are great and interesting controversies, which I should like, before I die, to see satisfactorily settled.

*Mr. Firedamp.*—There is another great question, greater than all these, seeing that it is necessary to be alive in order to settle any question; and this is the question of water against human life. Wherever there is water, there is malaria, and wherever there is malaria, there are the elements of death. The great object of a wise man should be to live on a gravelly hill, without so much as a duck-pond within ten miles of him, eschewing cisterns and waterbutts, and taking care that there be no gravel-pits for lodging the rain. The sun sucks up infection from water, wherever it exists on the face of the earth.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Well, sir, you have for you the authority of the ancient mystagogue, who said: Ἔστιν ὕδωρ ψυχῇ θάνατος. For my part I care not a rush (or any other aquatic and inesculent vegetable) who or what sucks up either the water or the infection. I think the proximity of wine a matter of much more importance than the longinquity of water. You are here within a quarter of a mile of the Thames, but in the cellar of my friend, Mr. Crotchet, there is the talismanic antidote of a thousand dozen of old wine; a beautiful spectacle, I assure you, and a model of arrangement.

*Mr. Firedamp.*—Sir, I feel the malignant influence of the river in every part of my system. Nothing but my great friendship for Mr. Crotchet would have brought me so nearly within the jaws of the lion.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—After dinner, sir, after dinner, I will meet you on this question. I shall then be armed for the strife. You may fight like Hercules against Achelous, but I shall flourish the Bacchic thyrsus, which changed rivers into wine: as Nonnus sweetly sings, Οἶνω κυματόεντι μέλας κελάρυζεν Ὑδάσπη.

*Mr. Crotchet, jun.*—I hope, Mr. Firedamp, you will let your friendship carry you a little closer into the jaws of the lion. I am fitting up a flotilla of pleasure-boats, with spacious cabins, and a good cellar, to carry a choice philosophical party up the Thames and Severn, into the Ellesmere canal, where we shall be among the mountains of North Wales; which we may climb or not, as we think proper; but we will, at any rate, keep our floating hotel well provisioned, and we will try to settle all the questions over which a shadow of doubt yet hangs in the world of philosophy.

*Mr. Firedamp.*—Out of my great friendship for you, I will certainly go; but I do not expect to survive the experiment.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—*Alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quæ vehat Argo Delectos Heroas.* I will be of the party, though I must hire an officiating curate, and deprive poor dear Mrs. Folliott, for several weeks, of the pleasure of combing my wig.

*Lord Bossnowl.*—I hope, if I am to be of the party, our ship is not to be the ship of fools: He! he!

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—If you are one of the party, sir, it most assuredly will not: Ha! ha!

*Lord Bossnowl.*—Pray sir, what do you mean by Ha! ha!?

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Precisely, sir, what you mean by He! he!

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—You need not dispute about terms; they are two modes of expressing merriment, with or without reason; reason being in no way essential to mirth. No man should ask another why he laughs, or at what, seeing that he does not always know, and that, if he does, he is not a responsible agent. Laughter is an involuntary action of certain muscles, developed in the human species by the progress of civilisation. The savage never laughs.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—No, sir, he has nothing to laugh at. Give him Modern Athens, the “learned friend,” and the Steam Intellect Society. They will develop his muscles.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ROMAN CAMP

He loved her more then seven yere,  
Yet was he of her love never the nere;  
He was not ryche of golde and fe,  
A gentyll man forsoth was he.

*The Squyr of Lowe Degre.*

The Reverend Doctor Folliott having promised to return to dinner, walked back to his vicarage, meditating whether he should pass the morning in writing his next sermon, or in angling for trout, and had nearly decided in favour of the latter proposition, repeating to himself, with great unction, the lines of Chaucer:

And as for me, though that I can but lite,  
On bokis for to read I me delite,  
And to 'hem yeve I faithe and full credence,  
And in mine herte have 'hem in reverence,  
So hertily, that there is gamé none,  
That fro my bokis makith me to gone,  
But it be seldome, on the holie daie;  
Save certainly whan that the month of Maie  
Is cousin, and I here the foulis sing,  
And that the flouris ginnin for to spring,  
Farwell my boke and my devocion:

when his attention was attracted by a young gentleman who was sitting on a camp stool with a portfolio on his knee, taking a sketch of the Roman Camp, which, as has been already said, was within the enclosed domain of Mr. Crotchet. The young stranger, who had climbed over the fence, espying the portly divine, rose up, and hoped that he was not trespassing. "By no means, sir," said the divine, "all the arts and sciences are welcome here; music, painting, and poetry; hydrostatics and political economy; meteorology, transcendentalism, and fish for breakfast."

*The Stranger.*—A pleasant association, sir, and a liberal and discriminating hospitality. This is an old British camp, I believe, sir?

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Roman, sir; Roman; undeniably Roman. The vallum is past controversy.

It was not a camp, sir, a *castrum*, but a *castellum*, a little camp, or watch-station, to which was attached, on the peak of the adjacent hill, a beacon for transmitting alarms. You will find such here and there, all along the range of chalk hills, which traverses the country from north-east to south-west, and along the base of which runs the ancient Ikniel road, whereof you may descry a portion in that long straight white line.

*The Stranger.*—I beg your pardon, sir; do I understand this place to be your property?

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—It is not mine, sir: the more is the pity; yet is it so far well, that the owner is my good friend, and a highly respectable gentleman.

*The Stranger.*—Good and respectable, sir, I take it, means rich?

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—That is their meaning, sir.



*The Stranger.*—I understand the owner to be a Mr. Crotchet. He has a handsome daughter, I am told.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—He has, sir. Her eyes are like the fish-pools of Heshbon, by the gate of Bethrabbim; and she is to have a handsome fortune, to which divers disinterested gentlemen are paying their addresses. Perhaps you design to be one of them?

*The Stranger.*—No, sir; I beg pardon if my questions seem impertinent; I have no such design. There is a son too, I believe, sir, a great and successful blower of bubbles?

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—A hero, sir, in his line. Never did angler in September hook more gudgeons.

*The Stranger.*—To say the truth, two very amiable young people, with whom I have some little acquaintance, Lord Bossnowl, and his sister, Lady Clarinda, are reported to be on the point of concluding a double marriage with Miss Crotchet and her brother; by way of putting a new varnish on old nobility. Lord Foolincourt, their father, is terribly poor for a lord who owns a borough.

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Well, sir, the Crotchets have plenty of money, and the old gentleman's weak point is a hankering after high blood. I saw your acquaintance, Lord Bossnowl, this morning, but I did not see his sister. She may be there, nevertheless, and doing fashionable justice to this fine May morning, by lying in bed till noon.

*The Stranger.*—Young Mr. Crotchet, sir, has been, like his father, the architect of his own fortune, has he not? An illustrious example of the reward of honesty and industry?

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—As to honesty, sir, he made his fortune in the city of London, and if that commodity be of any value there, you will find it in the price current. I believe it is below par, like the shares of young Crotchet's fifty companies. But his progress has not been exactly like his father's. It has been more rapid, and he started with more advantages. He began with a fine capital from his father. The old gentleman divided his fortune into three not exactly equal portions; one for himself, one for his daughter, and one for his son, which he handed over to him, saying, "Take it once for all, and make the most of it; if you lose it where I won it, not another stiver do you get from me during my life." But, sir, young Crotchet doubled, and trebled, and quadrupled it, and is, as you say, a striking example of the reward of industry; not that I think his labour has been so great as his luck.

*The Stranger.*—But, sir, is all this solid? is there no danger of reaction? no day of reckoning to cut down in an hour prosperity that has grown up like a mushroom?

*The Rev. Dr. Folliott.*—Nay, sir, I know not. I do not pry into these matters. I am, for my own part, very well satisfied with the young gentleman. Let those who are not so look to themselves. It is quite enough for me that he came down last night from London, and that he had the good sense to bring with him a basket of lobsters. Sir, I wish you a good morning.

The stranger having returned the reverend gentleman's good morning, resumed his sketch, and was intently employed on it when Mr. Crotchet made his appearance with Mr. Mac Quedy and Mr. Skionar, whom he was escorting round his grounds, according to his custom with new visitors; the principal pleasure of possessing an extensive domain being that of showing it to other people. Mr. Mac Quedy, according also to the laudable custom of his countrymen, had been appraising everything that fell under his observation; but, on arriving at the Roman camp, of which the value was purely imaginary, he contented himself with exclaiming: "Eh! this is just a curiosity, and very pleasant to sit in on a summer day."

*Mr. Skionar.*—And call up the days of old, when the Roman eagle spread its wings in the place of that beechen foliage. It gives a fine idea of duration, to think that that fine old tree must have sprung from the earth ages after this camp was formed.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—How old, think you, may the tree be?

*Mr. Crotchet.*—I have records which show it to be three hundred years old.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—That is a great age for a beech in good condition. But you see the camp is some fifteen hundred years, or so, older; and three times six being eighteen, I think you get a clearer idea of duration out of the simple arithmetic, than out of your eagle and foliage.

*Mr. Skionar.*—That is a very unpoetical, if not unphilosophical, mode of viewing antiquities. Your philosophy is too literal for our imperfect vision. We cannot look directly into the nature of things; we can only catch glimpses of the mighty shadow in the camera obscura of transcendental intelligence. These six and eighteen are only words to which we give conventional meanings. We can reason, but we cannot feel, by help of them. The tree and the eagle, contemplated in the ideality of space and time, become subjective realities, that rise up as landmarks in the mystery of the past.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—Well, sir, if you understand that, I wish you joy. But I must be excused for holding that my proposition, three times six are eighteen, is more intelligible than yours. A worthy friend of mine, who is a sort of amateur in philosophy, criticism, politics, and a wee bit of many things more, says: “Men never begin to study antiquities till they are saturated with civilisation.”

*Mr. Skionar.*—What is civilisation?

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—It is just respect for property. A state in which no man takes wrongfully what belongs to another, is a perfectly civilised state.

*Mr. Skionar.*—Your friend’s antiquaries must have lived in El Dorado, to have had an opportunity of being saturated with such a state.

*Mr. Mac Quedy.*—It is a question of degree. There is more respect for property here than in Angola.

*Mr. Skionar.*—That depends on the light in which things are viewed.

Mr. Crotchet was rubbing his hands, in hopes of a fine discussion, when they came round to the side of the camp where the picturesque gentleman was sketching. The stranger was rising up, when Mr. Crotchet begged him not to disturb himself, and presently walked away with his two guests.

Shortly after, Miss Crotchet and Lady Clarinda, who had breakfasted by themselves, made their appearance at the same spot, hanging each on an arm of Lord Bossnowl, who very much preferred their company to that of the philosophers, though he would have preferred the company of the latter, or any company to his own. He thought it very singular that so agreeable a person as he held himself to be to others, should be so exceedingly tiresome to himself: he did not attempt to investigate the cause of this phenomenon, but was contented with acting on his knowledge of the fact, and giving himself as little of his own private society as possible.

The stranger rose as they approached, and was immediately recognised by the Bossnowls as an old acquaintance, and saluted with the exclamation of “Captain Fitzchrome!” The interchange of salutations between Lady Clarinda and the Captain was accompanied with an amiable confusion on both sides, in which the observant eyes of Miss Crotchet seemed to read the recollection of an affair of the heart.

Lord Bossnowl was either unconscious of any such affair, or indifferent to its existence. He introduced the Captain very cordially to Miss Crotchet; and the young lady invited him, as the friend of their guests, to partake of her father’s hospitality, an offer which was readily accepted.

The Captain took his portfolio under his right arm, his camp stool in his right hand, offered his left arm to Lady Clarinda, and followed at a reasonable distance behind Miss Crotchet and Lord Bossnowl, contriving, in the most natural manner possible, to drop more and more into the rear.

*Lady Clarinda.*—I am glad to see you can make yourself so happy with drawing old trees and mounds of grass.

*Captain Fitzchrome.*—Happy, Lady Clarinda! oh, no! How can I be happy when I see the idol of my heart about to be sacrificed on the shrine of Mammon?

*Lady Clarinda.*—Do you know, though Mammon has a sort of ill name, I really think he is a very popular character; there must be at the bottom something amiable about him. He is certainly one of those pleasant creatures whom everybody abuses, but without whom no evening party is endurable.

I dare say, love in a cottage is very pleasant; but then it positively must be a cottage ornée: but would not the same love be a great deal safer in a castle, even if Mammon furnished the fortification?

*Captain Fitzchrome.*—Oh, Lady Clarinda! there is a heartlessness in that language that chills me to the soul.

*Lady Clarinda.*—Heartlessness! No: my heart is on my lips. I speak just what I think. You used to like it, and say it was as delightful as it was rare.

*Captain Fitzchrome.*—True, but you did not then talk as you do now, of love in a castle.

*Lady Clarinda.*—Well, but only consider: a dun is a horridly vulgar creature; it is a creature I cannot endure the thought of: and a cottage lets him in so easily. Now a castle keeps him at bay.

You are a half-pay officer, and are at leisure to command the garrison: but where is the castle? and who is to furnish the commissariat?

*Captain Fitzchrome.*—Is it come to this, that you make a jest of my poverty? Yet is my poverty only comparative. Many decent families are maintained on smaller means.

*Lady Clarinda.*—Decent families: ay, decent is the distinction from respectable. Respectable means rich, and decent means poor. I should die if I heard my family called decent. And then your decent family always lives in a snug little place: I hate a little place; I like large rooms and large looking-glasses, and large parties, and a fine large butler, with a tinge of smooth red in his face; an outward and visible sign that the family he serves is respectable; if not noble, highly respectable.

*Captain Fitzchrome.*—I cannot believe that you say all this in earnest. No man is less disposed than I am to deny the importance of the substantial comforts of life. I once flattered myself that in our estimate of these things we were nearly of a mind.

*Lady Clarinda.*—Do you know, I think an opera-box a very substantial comfort, and a carriage.

You will tell me that many decent people walk arm-in-arm through the snow, and sit in clogs and bonnets in the pit at the English theatre. No doubt it is very pleasant to those who are used to it; but it is not to my taste.

*Captain Fitzchrome.*—You always delighted in trying to provoke me; but I cannot believe that you have not a heart.

*Lady Clarinda.*—You do not like to believe that I have a heart, you mean. You wish to think I have lost it, and you know to whom; and when I tell you that it is still safe in my own keeping, and that I do not mean to give it away, the unreasonable creature grows angry.

*Captain Fitzchrome.*—Angry! far from it; I am perfectly cool.

*Lady Clarinda.*—Why, you are pursing your brows, biting your lips, and lifting up your foot as if you would stamp it into the earth. I must say anger becomes you; you would make a charming Hotspur. Your every-day-dining-out face is rather insipid: but I assure you my heart is in danger when you are in the heroics. It is so rare, too, in these days of smooth manners, to see anything like natural expression in a man's face. There is one set form for every man's face in female society: a sort of serious comedy walking gentleman's face: but the moment the creature falls in love he begins to give himself airs, and plays off all the varieties of his physiognomy from the Master Slender to the Petruchio; and then he is actually very amusing.

*Captain Fitzchrome.*—Well, Lady Clarinda, I will not be angry, amusing as it may be to you: I listen more in sorrow than in anger. I half believe you in earnest: and mourn as over a fallen angel.

*Lady Clarinda.*—What, because I have made up my mind not to give away my heart when I can sell it? I will introduce you to my new acquaintance, Mr. Mac Quedy: he will talk to you by the hour about exchangeable value, and show you that no rational being will part with anything, except to the highest bidder.

*Captain Fitzchrome.*—Now, I am sure you are not in earnest. You cannot adopt such sentiments in their naked deformity.

*Lady Clarinda.*—Naked deformity! Why, Mr. Mac Quedy will prove to you that they are the cream of the most refined philosophy. You live a very pleasant life as a bachelor, roving about the

country with your portfolio under your arm. I am not fit to be a poor man's wife. I cannot take any kind of trouble, or do any one thing that is of any use. Many decent families roast a bit of mutton on a string; but if I displease my father I shall not have as much as will buy the string, to say nothing of the meat; and the bare idea of such cookery gives me the horrors.

By this time they were near the Castle, and met Miss Crotchet and her companion, who had turned back to meet them. Captain Fitzchrome was shortly after heartily welcomed by Mr. Crotchet, and the party separated to dress for dinner, the Captain being by no means in an enviable state of mind, and full of misgivings as to the extent of belief that he was bound to accord to the words of the lady of his heart.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PARTY

*En quoi cognoissez-vous la folie anticque? En quoi cognoissez-vous la sagesse présente?—Rabelais.*

“If I were sketching a bandit who had just shot his last pursuer, having outrun all the rest, that is the very face I would give him,” soliloquised the Captain, as he studied the features of his rival in the drawing-room, during the miserable half-hour before dinner, when dulness reigns predominant over expectant company, especially when they are waiting for some one last comer, whom they all heartily curse in their hearts, and whom, nevertheless, or indeed therefore-the-more, they welcome as a sinner, more heartily than all the just persons who had been punctual to their engagement. Some new visitors had arrived in the morning, and, as the company dropped in one by one, the Captain anxiously watched the unclosing door for the form of his beloved: but she was the last to make her appearance, and on her entry gave him a malicious glance, which he construed into a telegraphic communication that she had stayed away to torment him. Young Crotchet escorted her with marked attention to the upper end of the drawing-room, where a great portion of the company was congregated around Miss Crotchet. These being the only ladies in the company, it was evident that old Mr. Crotchet would give his arm to Lady Clarinda, an arrangement with which the Captain could not interfere.

He therefore took his station near the door, studying his rival from a distance, and determined to take advantage of his present position, to secure the seat next to his charmer. He was meditating on the best mode of operation for securing this important post with due regard to *bien-séance*, when he was twitched by the button by Mr. Mac Quedy, who said to him: “Lady Clarinda tells me, sir, that you are anxious to talk with me on the subject of exchangeable value, from which I infer that you have studied political economy, and as a great deal depends on the definition of value, I shall be glad to set you right on that point.” “I am much obliged to you, sir,” said the Captain, and was about to express his utter disqualification for the proposed instruction, when Mr. Skionar walked up and said: “Lady Clarinda informs me that you wish to talk over with me the question of subjective reality. I am delighted to fall in with a gentleman who daily appreciates the transcendental philosophy.” “Lady Clarinda is too good,” said the Captain; and was about to protest that he had never heard the word “transcendental” before, when the butler announced dinner. Mr. Crotchet led the way with Lady Clarinda: Lord Bossnowl followed with Miss Crotchet: the economist and transcendentalist pinned in the Captain, and held him, one by each arm, as he impatiently descended the stairs in the rear of several others of the company, whom they had forced him to let pass; but the moment he entered the dining-room he broke loose from them, and at the expense of a little *brusquerie*, secured his position.

“Well, Captain,” said Lady Clarinda, “I perceive you can still manœuvre.”

“What could possess you,” said the Captain, “to send two unendurable and inconceivable bores to intercept me with rubbish about which I neither know nor care any more than the man in the moon?”

“Perhaps,” said Lady Clarinda, “I saw your design, and wished to put your generalship to the test. But do not contradict anything I have said about you, and see if the learned will find you out.”

“There is fine music, as Rabelais observes, in the *cliquetis d’assiettes*, a refreshing shade in the *ombre de salle à manger*, and an elegant fragrance in the *fumée de rôti*,” said a voice at the Captain’s elbow. The Captain turning round, recognised his clerical friend of the morning, who knew him again immediately, and said he was extremely glad to meet him there; more especially as Lady Clarinda had assured him that he was an enthusiastic lover of Greek poetry.

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