

Home as Found

Home as Found

by

James Fenimore Cooper

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS
PUBLISHING

classic texts



Home as Found, by James Fenimore Cooper

This book in its current typographical format first published 2009 by

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

The copyright in this publication is in the public domain

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-0504-1, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-0504-9

CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
CHAPTER I	3
CHAPTER II	15
CHAPTER III	24
CHAPTER IV	32
CHAPTER V	48
CHAPTER VI	62
CHAPTER VII	78
CHAPTER VIII	86
CHAPTER IX	95
CHAPTER X	106
CHAPTER XI	116
CHAPTER XII	125
CHAPTER XIII	138
CHAPTER XIV	148
CHAPTER XV	166
CHAPTER XVI	174
CHAPTER XVII	184
CHAPTER XVIII	198
CHAPTER XIX	209
CHAPTER XX	221
CHAPTER XXI	231
CHAPTER XXII	241

CHAPTER XXIII	252
CHAPTER XXIV	266
CHAPTER XXV	276
CHAPTER XXVI	286
CHAPTER XXVII	299
CHAPTER XXVIII	310
CHAPTER XXIX	322

PREFACE

THOSE who have done us the favor to read "Homeward Bound" will at once perceive that the incidents of this book commence at the point where those of the work just mentioned ceased. We are fully aware of the disadvantage of dividing the interest of a tale in this manner; but in the present instance, the separation has been produced by circumstances over which the writer had very little control. As any one who may happen to take up this volume will very soon discover that there is other matter which it is necessary to know, it may be as well to tell all such persons, in commencement, therefore, that their reading will be bootless, unless they have leisure to turn to the pages of "Homeward Bound" for their cue.

We remember the despair with which that admirable observer of men, Mr. Mathews the comedian, confessed the hopelessness of success, in his endeavors to obtain a sufficiency of prominent and distinctive features to compose an entertainment founded on American character. The whole nation struck him as being destitute of salient points, and as characterized by a respectable mediocrity, that, however useful it might be in its way, was utterly without poetry, humor, or interest to the observer. For one who dealt principally with the more conspicuous absurdities of his fellow-creatures, Mr. Mathews was certainly right; we also believe him to have been right in the main, in the general tenor of his opinion; for this country, in its ordinary aspects, probably presents as barren a field to the writer of fiction, and to the dramatist, as any other on earth; we are not certain that we might not say the most barren. We believe that no attempt to delineate ordinary American life, either on the stage or in the pages of a novel, has been rewarded with success. Even those works in which the desire to illustrate a principle has been the aim, when the picture has been brought within this homely frame, have had to contend with disadvantages that have been commonly found insurmountable. The latter being the intention of this book, the task has been undertaken with a perfect consciousness of all its difficulties, and with scarcely a hope of success. It would be indeed a desperate undertaking, to think of making anything interesting in the way of a *Roman de Société* in this country; still, useful glances may possibly be made even in that direction, and we trust that the fidelity of one or two of our portraits will be recognized by the looker-on, although they will very likely be denied by the sitters themselves.

There seems to be a pervading principle in things, which gives an accumulating energy to any active property that may happen to be in the ascendant at the time being: money produces money; knowledge is the parent of knowledge; and ignorance fortifies ignorance. In a word, like begets like. The governing social evil of America is provincialism; a misfortune that is perhaps inseparable from her

situation. Without a social capital, with twenty or more communities divided by distance and political barriers, her people, who are really more homogeneous than any other of the same numbers in the world perhaps, possess no standard for opinion, manners, social maxims, or even language. Every man, as a matter of course, refers to his own particular experience, and praises or condemns agreeably to notions contracted in the circle of his own habits, however narrow, provincial, or erroneous they may happen to be. As a consequence, no useful stage can exist; for the dramatist who should endeavor to delineate the faults of society, would find a formidable party arrayed against him, in a moment, with no party to defend. As another consequence, we see individuals constantly assailed with a wolf-like ferocity, while society is everywhere permitted to pass unscathed.

That the American nation is a great nation, in some particulars the greatest the world ever saw, we hold to be true, and are as ready to maintain as any one can be; but we are also equally ready to concede, that it is very far behind most polished nations in various essentials, and chiefly that it is lamentably in arrears to its own avowed principles. Perhaps this truth will be found to be the predominant thought, throughout the pages of "Home as Found."

CHAPTER I

"'Good morrow, coz.'

'Good morrow, sweet Hero.'"

—*Much Ado About Nothing*.

WHEN Mr. Effingham determined to return home, he sent orders to his agent to prepare his town-house in New York for his reception, intending to pass a month or two in it, then to repair to Washington for a few weeks, at the close of its season, and to visit his country residence when the spring should fairly open. Accordingly, Eve now found herself at the head of one of the largest establishments in the largest American town, within an hour after she had landed from the ship. Fortunately for her, however, her father was too just to consider a wife or a daughter a mere upper servant, and he rightly judged that a liberal portion of his income should be assigned to the procuring of that higher quality of domestic service, which can alone relieve the mistress of a household from a burden so heavy to be borne. Unlike so many of those around him, who would spend on a single pretending and comfortless entertainment, in which the ostentatious folly of one contended with the ostentatious folly of another, a sum that, properly directed, would introduce order and system into a family for a twelvemonth, by commanding the time and knowledge of those whose study they had been, and who would be willing to devote themselves to such objects, and then permit their wives and daughters to return to the drudgery to which the sex seems doomed in this country, he first bethought him of the wants of social life before he aspired to its parade. A man of the world, Mr. Effingham possessed the requisite knowledge, and a man of justice, the requisite fairness, to permit those who depended on him so much for their happiness, to share equitably in the good things that Providence had so liberally bestowed on himself. In other words, he made two people comfortable by paying a generous price for a housekeeper: his daughter, in the first place, by releasing her from cares that necessarily formed no more a part of her duties than it would be a part of her duty to sweep the pavement before the door; and in the next place a very respectable woman, who was glad to obtain so good a home on so easy terms. To this simple and just expedient Eve was indebted for being at the head of one of the quietest, most truly elegant, and best ordered establishments in America, with no other demands on her time than that which was necessary to issue a few orders in the morning, and to examine a few accounts once a week.

One of the first and most acceptable of the visits that Eve received was from her cousin, Grace Van Cortlandt, who was in the country at the moment of her arrival, but who hurried back to town to meet her old schoolfellow and kinswoman, the

instant she heard of her having landed. Eve Effingham and Grace Van Cortlandt were sisters' children, and had been born within a month of each other. As the latter was without father or mother, most of their time had been passed together, until the former was taken abroad, when a separation unavoidably ensued. Mr. Effingham ardently desired, and had actually designed to take his niece with him to Europe, but her paternal grandfather, who was still living, objected his years and affection, and the scheme was reluctantly abandoned. This grandfather was now dead, and Grace had been left, with a very ample fortune, almost entirely the mistress of her own movements.

The moment of the meeting between these two warm-hearted and sincerely attached young women was one of great interest and anxiety to both. They retained for each other the tenderest love, though the years that had separated them had given rise to so many new impressions and habits, that they did not prepare themselves for the interview without apprehension. This interview took place about a week after Eve was established in Hudson Square, and at an hour earlier than was usual for the reception of visits. Hearing a carriage stop before the door, and the bell ring, our heroine stole a glance from behind a curtain, and recognized her cousin as she alighted.

"*Qu'avez-vous, ma chère?*" demanded Mademoiselle Viefville, observing that her *élève* trembled and grew pale.

"It is my cousin, Miss Van Cortlandt—she whom I loved as a sister; we now meet for the first time in so many years!"

"*Bien—c'est une très jolie jeune personne!*" returned the governess, taking a glance from the spot Eve had just quitted. "*Sur le rapport de la personne, ma chère, vous devriez être contente, au moins.*"

"If you will excuse me, Mademoiselle, I will go down alone; I think I should prefer to meet Grace without witnesses, in the first interview."

"*Très volontiers. Elle est parente, et c'est bien naturel.*"

Eve, on this expressed approbation, met her maid at the door, as she came to announce that Mademoiselle de Cortlandt was in the library, and descended slowly to meet her. The library was lighted from above by means of a small dome, and Grace had unconsciously placed herself in the very position that a painter would have chosen, had she been about to sit for her portrait. A strong, full, rich light fell obliquely on her, as Eve entered, displaying her fine person and beautiful features to the very best advantage, and they were features and a person that are not seen every day, even in a country where female beauty is so common. She was in a carriage dress, and her toilette was rather more elaborate than Eve had been accustomed to see at that hour, but still Eve thought she had seldom seen a more lovely young creature. Some such thoughts also passed through the mind of Grace herself, who, though struck, with a woman's readiness in such matters, with the

severe simplicity of Eve's attire, as well as with its entire elegance, was more struck with the charms of her countenance and figure. There was, in truth, a strong resemblance between them, though each was distinguished by an expression suited to her character, and to the habits of her mind.

"Miss Effingham!" said Grace, advancing a step to meet the lady who entered, while her voice was scarcely audible and her limbs trembled.

"Miss Van Cortlandt!" said Eve, in the same low, smothered tone.

This formality caused a chill in both, and each unconsciously stopped and courtesied. Eve had been so much struck with the coldness of the American manner during the week she had been at home, and Grace was so sensitive on the subject of the opinion of one who had seen so much of Europe, that there was great danger, at that critical moment, the meeting would terminate unpropitiously.

Thus far, however, all had been rigidly decorous, though the strong feelings that were glowing in the bosoms of both had been so completely suppressed. But the smile, cold and embarrassed as it was, that each gave as she courtesied, had the sweet character of her childhood in it, and recalled to both the girlish and affectionate intercourse of their younger days.

"Grace!" said Eve, eagerly advancing a step or two impetuously, and blushing like the dawn.

"Eve!"

Each opened her arms, and in a moment they were locked in a long and fervent embrace. This was the recommencement of their former intimacy, and before night Grace was domesticated in her uncle's house. It is true that Miss Effingham perceived certain peculiarities about Miss Van Cortlandt that she had rather were absent; and Miss Van Cortlandt would have felt more at her ease had Miss Effingham a little less reserve of manner on certain subjects that the latter had been taught to think interdicted. Notwithstanding these slight separating shades in character, however, the natural affection was warm and sincere; and if Eve, according to Grace's notions, was a little stately and formal, she was polished and courteous; and if Grace, according to Eve's notions, was a little too easy and unreserved, she was feminine and delicate.

We pass over the three or four days that succeeded, during which Eve had got to understand something of her new position, and we will come at once to a conversation between the cousins, that will serve to let the reader more intimately into the opinions, habits, and feelings of both, as well as to open the real subject of our narrative. This conversation took place in that very library which had witnessed their first interview, soon after breakfast, and while the young ladies were still alone.

"I suppose, Eve, you will have to visit the Greens. They are Hajjis, and were much in society last winter."

"Hajjis! You surely do not mean, Grace, that they have been to Mecca?"

"Not at all: only to Paris, my dear; that makes a Hajji in New York."

"And does it entitle the pilgrim to wear the green turban?" asked Eve, laughing.

"To wear anything, Miss Effingham; green, blue, or yellow, and to cause it to pass for elegance."

"And which is the favorite color with the family you have mentioned?"

"It ought to be the first, in compliment to the name, but, if truth must be said, I think they betray an affection for all, with not a few of the half tints in addition."

"I am afraid they are too *prononcées* for us, by this description. I am no great admirer, Grace, of walking rainbows."

"Too Green, you would have said, had you dared; but you are a Hajji too, and even the Greens know that a Hajji never puns, unless, indeed, it might be one from Philadelphia. But you will visit these people?"

"Certainly, if they are in society and render it necessary by their own civilities."

"They are in society, in virtue of their rights as Hajjis, but as they passed three months at Paris, you probably know something of them."

"They may not have been there at the same time with ourselves," returned Eve, quietly, "and Paris is a very large town. Hundreds of people come and go that one never hears of. I do not remember those you have mentioned."

"I wish you may escape them, for, in my untravelled judgment, they are anything but agreeable, notwithstanding all they have seen, or pretend to have seen."

"It is very possible to have been all over Christendom, and to remain exceedingly disagreeable; besides, one may see a great deal, yet see very little of a good quality."

A pause of two or three minutes followed, during which Eve read a note, and her cousin played with the leaves of a book.

"I wish I knew your real opinion of us, Eve," the last suddenly exclaimed. "Why not be frank with so near a relative; tell me honestly, now—are you reconciled to your country?"

"You are the eleventh person who has asked me this question, which I find very extraordinary, as I have never quarrelled with my country."

"Nay, I do not mean exactly that. I wish to hear how our society has struck one who has been educated abroad."

"You wish, then, for opinions that can have no great value, since my experience at home extends only to a fortnight. But you have many books on the country, and some written by very clever persons; why not consult them?"

"Oh! you mean the travellers. None of them are worth a second thought, and we hold them, one and all, in great contempt."

"Of that I can have no manner of doubt, as one and all, you are constantly protesting it, in the highways and byways. There is no more certain sign of contempt than to be incessantly dwelling on its intensity!"

Grace had great quickness, as well as her cousin, and though provoked at Eve's quiet hit, she had the good sense and the good-nature to laugh.

"Perhaps we do protest and disdain a little too strenuously for good taste, if not to gain believers; but surely, Eve, you do not support these travellers in all that they have written of us?"

"Not in half, I can assure you. My father and cousin Jack have discussed them too often in my presence to leave me in ignorance of the very many political blunders they have made, in particular."

"Political blunders! I know nothing of them, and had rather thought them right in the most of what they said about our politics. But, surely, neither your father nor Mr. John Effingham corroborates what they say of our society!"

"I cannot answer for either, on that point."

"Speak, then, for yourself. Do you think them right?"

"You should remember, Grace, that I have not yet seen any society in New York."

"No society, dear! Why, you were at the Hendersons', and the Morgans', and the Drewetts'; three of the greatest *réunions* that we have had in two winters!"

"I did not know that you meant those unpleasant crowds, by society."

"Unpleasant crowds! Why, child, that is society, is it not?"

"Not what I have been taught to consider such; I rather think it would be better to call it company."

"And is not this what is called society in Paris?"

"As far from it as possible; it may be an excrescence of society; one of its forms; but by no means society itself. It would be as true to call cards, which are sometimes introduced in the world, society, as to call a ball, given in two small and crowded rooms, society. They are merely two of the modes in which idlers endeavor to vary their amusements."

"But we have little else than these balls, the morning visits, and an occasional evening in which there is no dancing."

"I am sorry to hear it; for, in that case, you can have no society."

"And is it different at Paris—or Florence—or Rome?"

"Very. In Paris there are many houses open every evening to which we can go with little ceremony. Our sex appears in them, dressed according to what a gentleman I overheard conversing at Mrs. Henderson's would call their 'ulterior intentions' for the night; some attired in the simplest manner, others dressed for concerts, for the opera, for court even; some on the way from a dinner, and others going to a late ball. All this matter-of-course variety adds to the ease and grace of the company, and coupled with perfect good manners, a certain knowledge of passing events, pretty modes of expression, an accurate and even utterance, the women usually find the means of making themselves agreeable. Their sentiment is sometimes a little heroic, but this one must overlook, and it is a taste, moreover, that is falling into disuse, as people read better books."

"And you prefer this heartlessness, Eve, to the nature of your own country!"

"I do not know that quiet *retenue* and a good tone are a whit more heartless than flirting, giggling, and childishness. There may be more nature in the latter, certainly, but it is scarcely as agreeable, after one has fairly got rid of the nursery."

Grace looked vexed, but she loved her cousin too sincerely to be angry. A secret suspicion that Eve was right, too, came in aid of her affection, and while her little foot moved, she maintained her good-nature, a task not always attainable for those who believe that their own "superlatives" scarcely reach to other people's "positives." At this critical moment, when there was so much danger of a jar in the feelings of these two young females, the library door opened, and Pierre, Mr. Effingham's own man, announced—

"Monsieur Bragg."

"Monsieur who?" asked Eve, in surprise.

"Monsieur Bragg," returned Pierre, in French, "desires to see Mademoiselle."

"You mean my father—I know no such person."

"He inquired first for Monsieur, but understanding Monsieur was out, he next asked to have the honor of seeing Mademoiselle."

"Is it what they call a person in England, Pierre?"

Old Pierre smiled, as he answered,—

"He has the air, Mademoiselle, though he esteems himself a personage, if I might take the liberty of judging."

"Ask him for his card—there must be a mistake, I think."

While this short conversation took place, Grace Van Cortlandt was sketching a cottage with a pen, without attending to a word that was said. But, when Eve received the card from Pierre and read aloud, with the tone of surprise that the name would be apt to excite in a novice in the art of American nomenclature, the words "Aristabulus Bragg," her cousin began to laugh.

"Who can this possibly be, Grace? Did you ever hear of such a person, and what right can he have to wish to see me?"

"Admit him, by all means; it is your father's land agent, and he may wish to leave some message for my uncle. You will be obliged to make his acquaintance, sooner or later, and it may as well be done now as at another time."

"You have shown this gentleman into the front drawing-room, Pierre?"

"*Oui, Mademoiselle.*"

"I will ring when you are wanted."

Pierre withdrew, and Eve opened her *secrétaire*, out of which she took a small manuscript book, over the leaves of which she passed her fingers rapidly.

"Here it is," she said, smiling, "'Mr. Aristabulus Bragg, Attorney and Counsellor at Law, and the agent of the Templeton estate.' This precious little work, you must understand, Grace, contains sketches of the characters of such persons as I shall be most likely to see, by John Effingham, A. M. It is a sealed volume, of course, but there can be no harm in reading the part that treats of our present visitor, and, with your permission, we will have it in common. 'Mr. Aristabulus Bragg was born in one of the western counties of Massachusetts, and emigrated to New York, after receiving his education, at the mature age of nineteen; at twenty-one he was admitted to the bar, and for the last seven years he has been a successful practitioner in all the courts of Otsego, from the justice's to the circuit. His talents are undeniable, as he commenced his education at fourteen and terminated it at twenty-one, the law course included. This man is an epitome of all that is good and all that is bad, in a very large class of his fellow-citizens. He is quick-witted, prompt in action, enterprising in all things in which he has nothing to lose, but wary and cautious in all things in which he has a real stake, and ready to turn not only his hand, but his heart and his principles, to anything that offers an advantage. With him, literally, "Nothing is too high to be aspired to, nothing too low to be done." He will run for governor, or for town clerk, just as opportunities occur, is expert in all the practices of his profession, has had a quarter's dancing, with three years in the classics, and turned his attention towards medicine and divinity, before he finally settled down into the law. Such a compound of shrewdness, impudence, common-sense, pretension, humility, cleverness, vulgarity, kind-heartedness, duplicity, selfishness, law-honesty, moral fraud, and mother-wit, mixed up with a smattering of learning and much penetration in practical things, can hardly be described, as any one of his prominent qualities is certain to be met by another

quite as obvious that is almost its converse. Mr. Bragg, in short, is purely a creature of circumstances, his qualities pointing him out for either a member of congress, or a deputy sheriff, offices that he is equally ready to fill. I have employed him to watch over the estate of your father, in the absence of the latter, on the principle that one practised in tricks is the best qualified to detect and expose them, and with the certainty that no man will trespass with impunity, so long as the courts continue to tax bills of costs with their present liberality.' You appear to know the gentleman, Grace; is this character of him faithful?"

"I know nothing of bills of cost and deputy sheriffs, but I do know that Mr. Aristabulus Bragg is an amusing mixture of strut, humility, roguery, and cleverness. He is waiting all this time in the drawing-room, and you had better see him, as he may now be almost considered part of the family. You know he has been living in the house at Templeton, ever since he was installed by Mr. John Effingham. It was there I had the honor first to meet him."

"First! Surely you have never seen him anywhere else!"

"Your pardon, my dear. He never comes to town without honoring me with a call. This is the price I pay for having had the honor of being an inmate of the same house with him for a week."

Eve rang the bell, and Pierre made his appearance.

"Desire Mr. Bragg to walk into the library."

Grace looked demure while Pierre was gone to usher in their visitor, and Eve was thinking of the medley of qualities John Effingham had assembled in his description, as the door opened, and the subject of her contemplation entered.

"Monsieur Aristabule," said Pierre, eyeing the card, but sticking at the first name.

Mr. Aristabulus Bragg was advancing with an easy assurance, to make his bow to the ladies, when the more finished air and quiet dignity of Miss Effingham, who was standing, so far disconcerted him, as completely to upset his self-possession. As Grace had expressed it, in consequence of having lived three years in the old residence at Templeton, he had begun to consider himself a part of the family, and at home he never spoke of the young lady without calling her "Eve," or "Eve Effingham." But he found it a very different thing to affect familiarity among his associates, and to practise it in the very face of its subject; and, although seldom at a loss for words of some sort or another, he was now actually dumfounded. Eve relieved his awkwardness by directing Pierre, with her eye, to hand a chair, and first speaking.

"I regret that my father is not in," she said, by way of turning the visit from herself; "but he is to be expected every moment. Are you lately from Templeton?"

Aristabulus drew his breath, and recovered enough of his ordinary tone of manner to reply with a decent regard to his character for self-command. The intimacy that

he had intended to establish on the spot, was temporarily defeated, it is true, and without his exactly knowing how it had been effected; for it was merely the steadiness of the young lady, blended as it was with a polished reserve, that had thrown him to a distance he could not explain. He felt immediately, and with taste that did his sagacity credit, that his footing in this quarter was only to be obtained by unusually slow and cautious means. Still Mr. Bragg was a man of great decision, and, in his way, of very far-sighted views; and singular as it may seem, at that unpropitious moment, he mentally determined that, at no very distant day, he would make Miss Eve Effingham his wife.

"I hope Mr. Effingham enjoys good health," he said, with some such caution as a rebuked school-girl enters on the recitation of her task; "he enjoyed bad health I hear" (Mr. Aristabulus Bragg, though so shrewd, was far from critical in his modes of speech) "when he went to Europe, and after travelling so far in such bad company, it would be no more than fair that he should have a little respite as he approaches home and old age."

Had Eve been told that the man who uttered this nice sentiment, and that too in accents as uncouth and provincial as the thought was finished and lucid, actually presumed to think of her as his bosom companion, it is not easy to say which would have predominated in her mind, mirth or resentment. But Mr. Bragg was not in the habit of letting his secrets escape him prematurely, and certainly this was one that none but a wizard could have discovered without the aid of a direct oral or written communication.

"Are you lately from Templeton?" repeated Eve, a little surprised that the gentleman did not see fit to answer the question, which was the only one that, as it seemed to her, could have common interest with them both.

"I left home the day before yesterday," Aristabulus now deigned to reply. "It is so long since I saw our beautiful mountains, and I was then so young, that I feel a great impatience to revisit them, though the pleasure must be deferred until spring."

"I conclude they are the handsomest mountains in the known world, Miss Effingham!"

"That is much more than I shall venture to claim for them; but, according to my imperfect recollection, and, what I esteem of far more importance, according to the united testimony of Mr. John Effingham and my father, I think they must be very beautiful."

Aristabulus looked up, as if he had a facetious thing to say, and he even ventured on a smile, while he made his answer.

"I hope Mr. John Effingham has prepared you for a great change in the house?"

"We know that it has been repaired and altered under his directions. That was done at my father's request."

"We consider it denationalized, Miss Effingham, there being nothing like it, west of Albany at least."

"I should be sorry to find that my cousin had subjected us to this imputation," said Eve, smiling—perhaps a little equivocally; "the architecture of America being generally so simple and pure. Mr. Effingham laughs at his own improvements, however, in which, he says, he has only carried out the plans of the original *artiste*, who worked very much in what was called the composite order."

"You allude to Mr. Hiram Doolittle, a gentleman I never saw; though I hear that he has left behind him many traces of his progress in the newer States. *Ex pede Herculem*, as we say in the classics, Miss Effingham. I believe it is the general sentiment that Mr. Doolittle's designs have been improved on, though most people think that the Grecian or Roman architecture, which is so much in use in America, would be more republican. But everybody knows that Mr. John Effingham is not much of a republican."

Eve did not choose to discuss her kinsman's opinions with Mr. Aristabulus Bragg, and she quietly remarked that she "did not know that the imitations of the ancient architecture, of which there are so many in the country, were owing to attachment to republicanism."

"To what else can it be owing, Miss Eve?"

"Sure enough," said Grace Van Cortlandt; "it is unsuited to the materials, the climate, and the uses; and some very powerful motive, like that mentioned by Mr. Bragg, could alone overcome these obstacles."

Aristabulus started from his seat, and making sundry apologies, declared his previous unconsciousness that Miss Van Cortlandt was present; all of which was true enough, as he had been so much occupied mentally with her cousin as not to have observed her, seated as she was partly behind a screen. Grace received the excuses favorably, and the conversation was resumed.

"I am sorry that my cousin should offend the taste of the country," said Eve, "but as we are to live in the house, the punishment will fall heaviest on the offenders."

"Do not mistake me, Miss Eve," returned Aristabulus in a little alarm, for he too well understood the influence and wealth of John Effingham, not to wish to be on good terms with him, "do not mistake me. I admire the house, and know it to be a perfect specimen of a pure architecture in its way, but then public opinion is not yet quite up to it. I see all its beauties, I would wish you to know, but then there are many, a majority perhaps, who do not, and these persons think they ought to be consulted about such matters."

"I believe Mr. John Effingham thinks less of his own work than you seem to think of it yourself, sir, for I have frequently heard him laugh at it as a mere enlargement of the merits of the composite order. He calls it a caprice rather than a taste: nor do I see what concern a majority, as you term them, can have with a house that does not belong to them."

Aristabulus was surprised that any one could disregard a majority; for in this respect he a good deal resembled Mr. Dodge, though running a different career; and the look of surprise he gave was natural and open.

"I do not mean that the public has a legal right to control the tastes of the citizen," he said, "but in a republican government, you undoubtedly understand, Miss Eve, it will rule in all things."

"I can understand that one would wish to see his neighbor use good taste, as it helps to embellish a country; but the man who should consult the whole neighborhood before he built would be very apt to cause a complicated house to be erected, if he paid much respect to the different opinions he received; or, what is quite as likely, apt to have no house at all."

"I think you are mistaken, Miss Effingham, for the public sentiment just now runs almost exclusively and popularly into the Grecian school. We build little besides temples for our churches, our banks, our taverns, our court-houses, and our dwellings. A friend of mine has just built a brewery on the model of the Temple of the Winds."

"Had it been a mill, one might understand the conceit," said Eve, who now began to perceive that her visitor had some latent humor, though he produced it in a manner to induce one to think him anything but a droll. "The mountains must be doubly beautiful if they are decorated in the way you mention. I sincerely hope, Grace, that I shall find the hills as pleasant as they now exist in my recollection."

"Should they not prove to be quite as lovely as you imagine, Miss Effingham," returned Aristabulus, who saw no impropriety in answering a remark made to Miss Van Cortlandt, or any one else, "I hope you will have the kindness to conceal the fact from the world."

"I am afraid that would exceed my power—the disappointment would be so strong. May I ask why you show so much interest in my keeping so cruel a mortification to myself?"

"Why, Miss Eve," said Aristabulus, looking grave, "I am afraid that our people would hardly bear the expression of such an opinion from you."

"From me!—and why not from me, in particular?"

"Perhaps it is because they think you have travelled, and have seen other countries."

"And is it only those who have not travelled, and who have no means of knowing the value of what they say, that are privileged to criticise?"

"I cannot exactly explain my own meaning, perhaps, but I think Miss Grace will understand me. Do you not agree with me, Miss Van Cortlandt, in thinking it would be safer for one who never saw any other mountains, to complain of the tameness and monotony of our own, than for one who had passed a whole life among the Andes and the Alps?"

Eve smiled, for she saw that Mr. Bragg was capable of detecting and laughing at provincial pride, even while he was so much under its influence; and Grace colored, for she had the consciousness of having already betrayed some of this very silly sensitiveness in her intercourse with her cousin, in connection with other subjects. A reply was unnecessary, however, as the door just then opened, and John Effingham made his appearance. The meeting between the two gentlemen, for we suppose Aristabulus must be included in the category, by courtesy, if not of right, was more cordial than Eve had expected to witness, for each really entertained a respect for the other, in reference to a merit of a particular sort; Mr. Bragg esteeming Mr. John Effingham as a wealthy and caustic cynic, and Mr. John Effingham regarding Mr. Bragg much as the owner of a dwelling regards a valuable house-dog. After a few moments of conversation the two withdrew together; and just as the ladies were about to descend to the drawing-room, previously to dinner, Pierre announced that a plate had been ordered for the land agent.

CHAPTER II

"I know that Deformed; he has been a vile thief this seven years; he goes up and down like a gentleman."

—*Much Ado About Nothing*.

EVE and her cousin found Sir George Templemore and Captain Truck in the drawing-room, the former having lingered in New York, with a desire to be near his friends, and the latter being on the point of sailing for Europe, in his regular turn. To these must be added Mr. Bragg and the ordinary inmates of the house, when the reader will get a view of the whole party.

Aristabulus had never before sat down to as brilliant a table, and for the first time in his life he saw candles lighted at a dinner; but he was not a man to be disconcerted at a novelty. Had he been a European of the same origin and habits, awkwardness would have betrayed him fifty times before the dessert made its appearance; but being the man he was, one who overlooked a certain prurient politeness that rather illustrated his deportment, might very well have permitted him to pass among the *oi polloi* of the world, were it not for a peculiar management in the way of providing for himself. It is true, he asked every one near him to eat of everything he could himself reach, and that he used his knife as a coal-heaver uses his shovel; but the company he was in, though fastidious in its own deportment, was altogether above the silver-forkisms, and this portion of his demeanor, if it did not escape undetected, passed away unnoticed. Not so, however, with the peculiarity already mentioned as an exception. This touch of deportment (or management, perhaps, is the better word) being characteristic of the man, it deserves to be mentioned a little in detail.

The service at Mr. Effingham's table was made in the quiet but thorough manner that distinguishes a French dinner. Every dish was removed, carved by the domestics, and handed in turn to each guest. But there were a delay and a finish in this arrangement that suited neither Aristabulus' go-ahead-ism, nor his organ of acquisitiveness. Instead of waiting, therefore, for the more graduated movements of the domestics, he began to take care of himself, an office that he performed with a certain dexterity that he had acquired by frequenting ordinaries—a school, by the way, in which he had obtained most of his notions of the proprieties of the table. One or two slices were obtained in the usual manner, or by means of the regular service; and then, like one who had laid the foundation of a fortune by some lucky windfall in the commencement of his career, he began to make accessions, right and left, as opportunity offered. Sundry *entremets*, or light dishes that had a peculiarly tempting appearance, came first under his grasp. Of these he soon

accumulated all within his reach, by taxing his neighbors, when he ventured to send his plate here and there, or wherever he saw a dish that promised to reward his trouble. By such means, which were resorted to, however, with a quiet and unobtrusive assiduity that escaped much observation, Mr. Bragg contrived to make his own plate a sample epitome of the first course. It contained in the centre, fish, beef, and ham; and around these staple articles he had arranged croquettes, rognons, r agouts, vegetables, and other light things, until not only was the plate completely covered, but it was actually covered in double and triple layers; mustard, cold butter, salt, and even pepper garnishing its edges. These different accumulations were work of time and address, and most of the company had repeatedly changed their plates before Aristabulus had eaten a mouthful, the soup excepted. The happy moment when his ingenuity was to be rewarded had now arrived, and the land agent was about to commence the process of mastication, or of deglutition rather, for he troubled himself very little with the first operation, when the report of a cork drew his attention towards the champagne. To Aristabulus this wine never came amiss, for, relishing its piquancy, he had never gone far enough into the science of the table to learn which were the proper moments for using it. As respected all the others at table, this moment had in truth arrived, though, as respected himself, he was no nearer to it, according to a regulated taste, than when he first took his seat. Perceiving that Pierre was serving it, however, he offered his own glass, and enjoyed a delicious instant as he swallowed a beverage that much surpassed anything he had ever known to issue out of the waxed and leaded nozzles that, pointed like so many enemies' batteries loaded with headaches and disordered stomachs, garnished sundry village bars of his acquaintance.

Aristabulus finished his glass at a draught, and when he took breath he fairly smacked his lips. That was an unlucky instant; his plate, burdened with all its treasures, being removed at this unguarded moment; the man who performed this unkind office fancying that a dislike to the dishes could alone have given rise to such an *omnium-gatherum*.

It was necessary to commence *de novo*, but this could no longer be done with the first course, which was removed, and Aristabulus set to with zeal forthwith on the game. Necessity compelled him to eat, as the different dishes were offered; and such was his ordinary assiduity with the knife and fork, that, at the end of the second remove, he had actually disposed of more food than any other person at table. He now began to converse, and we shall open the conversation at the precise point in the dinner when it was in the power of Aristabulus to make one of the interlocutors.

Unlike Mr. Dodge, he had betrayed no peculiar interest in the baronet, being a man too shrewd and worldly to set his heart on trifles of any sort; and Mr. Bragg no more hesitated about replying to Sir George Templemore or Mr. Effingham, than he would have hesitated about answering one of his own nearest associates. With

him age and experience formed no particular claims to be heard, and, as to rank, it is true he had some vague ideas about there being such a thing in the militia, but as it was unsalaried rank, he attached no great importance to it. Sir George Templemore was inquiring concerning the recording of deeds, a regulation that had recently attracted attention in England; and one of Mr. Effingham's replies contained some immaterial inaccuracy, which Aristabulus took occasion to correct, as his first appearance in the general discourse.

"I ask pardon, sir," he concluded his explanations by saying, "but I ought to know these little niceties, having served a short part of a term as a county clerk, to fill a vacancy occasioned by a death."

"You mean, Mr. Bragg, that you were employed to write in a county clerk's office," observed John Effingham, who so much disliked untruth, that he did not hesitate much about refuting it, or what he now fancied to be an untruth.

"As county clerk, sir. Major Pippin died a year before his time was out, and I got the appointment. As regular a county clerk, sir, as there is in the fifty-six counties of New York."

"When I had the honor to engage you as Mr. Effingham's agent, sir," returned the other, a little sternly, for he felt his own character for veracity involved in that of the subject of his selection, "I believed, indeed, that you were writing in the office, but I did not understand it was as the clerk."

"Very true, Mr. John," returned Aristabulus, without discovering the least concern, "I was then engaged by my successor as a clerk; but a few months earlier, I filled the office myself."

"Had you gone on, in the regular line of promotion, my dear sir," pithily inquired Captain Truck, "to what preferment would you have risen by this time?"

"I believe I understand you, gentlemen," returned the unmoved Aristabulus, who perceived a general smile. "I know that some people are particular about keeping pretty much on the same level, as to office: but I hold to no such doctrine. If one good thing cannot be had, I do not see that it is a reason for rejecting another. I ran that year for sheriff, and finding I was not strong enough to carry the county, I accepted my successor's offer to write in the office, until something better might turn up."

"You practised all this time, I believe, Mr. Bragg?" observed John Effingham.

"I did a little in that way, too, sir; or as much as I could. Law is flat with us of late, and many of the attorneys are turning their attention to other callings."

"And pray, sir," asked Sir George, "what is the favorite pursuit with most of them just now?"

"Some, our way, have gone into the horse line; but much the greater portion are just now dealing in Western cities."

"In Western cities!" exclaimed the baronet, looking as if he distrusted a mystification.

"In such articles, and in mill-seats, and railroad lines, and other expectations."

"Mr. Bragg means that they are buying and selling lands on which it is hoped all these conveniences may exist, a century hence," explained John Effingham.

"The hope is for next year, or next week even, Mr. John," returned Aristabulus with a sly look, "though you may be very right as to the reality. Great fortunes have been made on a capital of hopes, lately, in this country."

"And have you been able yourself to resist these temptations?" asked Mr. Effingham. "I feel doubly indebted to you, sir, that you should have continued to devote your time to my interests, while so many better things were offering."

"It was my duty, sir," said Aristabulus, bowing so much the lower, from the consciousness that he had actually deserted his post for some months, to embark in the Western speculations that were then so active in the country, "not to say my pleasure. There are many profitable occupations in this country, Sir George, that have been overlooked in the eagerness to embark in the town-trade—"

"Mr. Bragg does not mean trade in town, but trade in towns," explained John Effingham.

"Yes, sir, the traffic in cities. I never come this way without casting an eye about me, in order to see if there is anything to be done that is useful; and I confess that several available opportunities have offered, if one had capital. Milk is a good business."

"*Le lait!*" exclaimed Mademoiselle Vieffville, involuntarily.

"Yes, ma'am, for ladies as well as gentlemen. Sweet potatoes I have heard well spoken of, and peaches are really making some rich men's fortunes."

"All of which are honester and better occupations than the traffic in cities, that you have mentioned," quietly observed Mr. Effingham.

Aristabulus looked up in a little surprise, for with him everything was eligible that returned a good profit, and all things honest that the law did not actually punish. Perceiving, however, that the company was disposed to listen, and having by this time recovered the lost ground, in the way of food, he cheerfully resumed his theme.

"Many families have left Otsego, this and the last summer, Mr. Effingham, as emigrants for the West. The fever has spread far and wide."

"The fever! Is old Otsego," for so its inhabitants loved to call a county of half a century's existence, it being venerable by comparison, "is old Otsego losing its well-established character for salubrity?"

"I do not allude to an animal fever, but to the Western fever."

"Ce pays de l'ouest, est-il bien malsain?" whispered Mademoiselle Viefville.

"Apparemment, Mademoiselle, sur plusieurs rapports."

"The Western fever has seized old and young, and it has carried off many active families from our part of the world," continued Aristabulus, who did not understand the little aside just mentioned, and who, of course, did not heed it; "most of the counties adjoining our own have lost a considerable portion of their population."

"And they who have gone, do they belong to the permanent families, or are they merely the floating inhabitants?" inquired Mr. Effingham.

"Most of them belong to the regular movers."

"Movers!" again exclaimed Sir George; "is there any material part of your population who actually deserve this name?"

"As much so as the man who shoes a horse ought to be called a smith, or a man who frames a house a carpenter," answered John Effingham.

"To be sure," continued Mr. Bragg, "we have a pretty considerable leaven of them in our political dough, as well as in our active business. I believe, Sir George, that in England men are tolerably stationary."

"We love to continue for generations on the same spot. We love the tree that our forefathers planted, the roof that they built, the fireside by which they sat, the sods that cover their remains."

"Very poetical, and I dare say there are situations in life in which such feelings come in without much effort. It must be a great check to business operations, however, in your part of the world, sir!"

"Business operations! what is business, as you term it, sir, to the affections, to the recollections of ancestry, and to the solemn feelings connected with history and tradition?"

"Why, sir, in the way of history, one meets with but few incumbrances in this country, but he may do very much as interest dictates, so far as that is concerned, at least. A nation is much to be pitied that is weighed down by the past, in this manner, since its industry and enterprise are constantly impeded by obstacles that grow out of its recollections. America may, indeed, be termed a happy and a free country, Mr John Effingham, in this, as well as in all other things!"

Sir George Templemore was too well-bred to utter all he felt at that moment, as it would unavoidably wound the feelings of his hosts, but he was rewarded for his forbearance by intelligent smiles from Eve and Grace, the latter of whom the young baronet fancied, just at that moment, was quite as beautiful as her cousin, and if less finished in manners, she had the most interesting *naïveté*.

"I have been told that most old nations have to struggle with difficulties that we escape," returned John Effingham, "though I confess this is a superiority on our part that never before presented itself to my mind."

"The political economists, and even the geographers, have overlooked it, but practical men see and feel its advantages every hour in the day. I have been told, Sir George Templemore, that in England, there are difficulties in running highways and streets through homesteads and dwellings; and that even a railroad or a canal is obliged to make a curve to avoid a churchyard or a tombstone?"

"I confess to the sin, sir."

"Our friend Mr. Bragg," put in John Effingham, "considers life as all means and no end."

"An end cannot be got at without the means, Mr. John Effingham, as I trust you will yourself admit. I am for the end of the road at least, and must say that I rejoice in being a native of a country in which as few impediments as possible exist to onward impulses. The man who should resist an improvement in our part of the country, on account of his forefathers, would fare badly among his contemporaries."

"Will you permit me to ask, Mr. Bragg, if you feel no local attachments yourself," inquired the baronet, throwing as much delicacy into the tones of his voice, as a question that he felt ought to be an insult to a man's heart would allow, "if one tree is not more pleasant than another; the house you were born in more beautiful than a house into which you never entered; or the altar at which you have long worshipped, more sacred than another at which you never knelt?"

"Nothing gives me greater satisfaction than to answer the questions of gentlemen that travel through our country," returned Aristabulus, "for I think, in making nations acquainted with each other, we encourage trade and render business more secure. To reply to your inquiry, a human being is not a cat, to love a locality rather than its own interests. I have found some trees much pleasanter than others, and the pleasantest tree I can remember was one of my own, out of which the sawyers made a thousand feet of clear stuff, to say nothing of middlings. The house I was born in was pulled down shortly after my birth, as indeed has been its successor, so I can tell you nothing on that head; and as for altars, there are none in my persuasion."

"The church of Mr. Bragg has stripped itself as naked as he would strip everything else, if he could," said John Effingham. "I much question if he ever knelt even; much less before an altar."

"We are of the standing order, certainly," returned Aristabulus, glancing towards the ladies to discover how they took his wit, "and Mr. John Effingham is as near right as a man need be, in a matter of faith. In the way of houses, Mr. Effingham, I believe it is the general opinion you might have done better with your own, than to have repaired it. Had the materials been disposed of, they would have sold well, and by running a street through the property, a pretty sum might have been realized."

"In which case I should have been without a home, Mr. Bragg."

"It would have been no great matter to get another on cheaper land. The old residence would have made a good factory, or an inn."

"Sir, I am a cat, and like the places I have long frequented."

Aristabulus, though not easily daunted, was awed by Mr. Effingham's manner, and Eve saw that her father's fine face had flushed. This interruption, therefore, suddenly changed the discourse, which has been related at some length, as likely to give the reader a better insight into a character that will fill some space in our narrative, than a more labored description.

"I trust your owners, Captain Truck," said John Effingham, by way of turning the conversation into another channel, "are fully satisfied with the manner in which you saved their property from the hands of the Arabs?"

"Men, when money is concerned, are more disposed to remember how it was lost than how it was recovered, religion and trade being the two poles, on such a point," returned the old seaman, with a serious face. "On the whole, my dear sir, I have reason to be satisfied, however; and so long as you, my passengers and my friends, are not inclined to blame me, I shall feel as if I had done at least a part of my duty."

Eve rose from the table, went to a sideboard, and returned, when she gracefully placed before the master of the Montauk a rich and beautifully chased punch-bowl in silver. Almost at the same moment, Pierre offered a salver that contained a capital watch, a pair of small silver tongs to hold a coal, and a deck trumpet, in solid silver.

"These are so many faint testimonials of our feelings," said Eve; "and you will do us the favor to retain them, as evidences of the esteem created by skill, kindness, and courage."

"My dear young lady!" cried the old tar, touched to the soul by the feeling with which Eve acquitted herself of this little duty, "my dear young lady—well, God bless you—God bless you all—you too, Mr. John Effingham, for that matter—and Sir George—that I should ever have taken that runaway for a gentleman and a

baronet—though I suppose there are some silly baronets, as well as silly lords—retain them?" glancing furiously at Mr. Aristabulus Bragg, "may the Lord forget me in the heaviest hurricane, if I ever forget whence these things came, and why they were given."

Here the worthy captain was obliged to swallow some wine, by way of relieving his emotions, and Aristabulus, profiting by the opportunity, coolly took the bowl, which, to use a word of his own, he hefted in his hand, with a view to form some tolerably accurate notion of its intrinsic value. Captain Truck's eye caught the action, and he reclaimed his property quite as unceremoniously as it had been taken away, nothing but the presence of the ladies preventing an outbreaking that would have amounted to a declaration of war.

"With your permission, sir," said the captain, dryly, after he had recovered the bowl, not only without the other's consent, but in some degree against his will; "this bowl is as precious in my eyes as if it were made of my father's bones."

"You may indeed think so," returned the land-agent, "for its cost could not be less than a hundred dollars."

"Cost, sir! But, my dear young lady, let us talk of the real value. For what part of these things am I indebted to you?"

"The bowl is my offering," Eve answered smilingly, though a tear glistened in her eye, as she witnessed the strong, unsophisticated feeling of the old tar. "I thought it might serve sometimes to bring me to your recollection, when it was well filled in honor of 'sweethearts and wives.'"

"It shall—it shall, by the Lord; and Mr. Saunders needs look to it, if he do not keep this work as bright as a cruising frigate's bottom. To whom do I owe the coal-tongs?"

"Those are from Mr. John Effingham, who insists that he will come nearer to your heart than any of us, though the gift be of so little cost."

"He does not know me, my dear young lady—nobody ever got as near my heart as you; no, not even my own dear pious old mother. But I thank Mr. John Effingham from my inmost spirit, and shall seldom smoke without thinking of him. The watch I know is Mr. Effingham's, and I ascribe the trumpet to Sir George."

The bows of the several gentlemen assured the captain he was right, and he shook each of them cordially by the hand, protesting, in the fulness of his heart, that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to be able to go through the same perilous scenes as those from which they had so lately escaped, in their good company again.

While this was going on, Aristabulus, notwithstanding the rebuke he had received, contrived to get each article, in succession, into his hands, and by dint of poisoning it on a finger, or by examining it, to form some approximative notion of its inherent

value. The watch he actually opened, taking as good a survey of its works as the circumstances of the case would very well allow.

"I respect these things, sir, more than you respect your father's grave," said Captain Truck, sternly, as he rescued the last article from what he thought the impious grasp of Aristabulus again, "and cat or no cat, they sink or swim with me for the remainder of the cruise. If there is any virtue in a will, which I am sorry to say I hear there is not any longer, they shall share my last bed with me, be it ashore or be it afloat. My dear young lady, fancy all the rest, but depend on it, punch will be sweeter than ever taken from this bowl, and 'sweethearts and wives' will never be so honored again."

"We are going to a ball this evening, at the house of one with whom I am sufficiently intimate to take the liberty of introducing a stranger, and I wish, gentlemen," said Mr. Effingham, bowing to Aristabulus and the captain, by way of changing the conversation, "you would do me the favor to be of our party."

Mr. Bragg acquiesced very cheerfully, and quite as a matter of course; while Captain Truck, after protesting his unfitness for such scenes, was finally prevailed on by John Effingham to comply with the request also. The ladies remained at table but a few minutes longer, when they retired, Mr. Effingham having dropped into the old custom of sitting at the bottle until summoned to the drawing-room, a usage that continues to exist in America, for a reason no better than the fact that it continues to exist in England; it being almost certain that it will cease in New York, the season after it is known to have ceased in London.

CHAPTER III

"Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful."

—SHAKESPEARE.

AS Captain Truck asked permission to initiate the new coal-tongs by lighting a cigar, Sir George Templemore contrived to ask Pierre, in an aside, if the ladies would allow him to join them. The desired consent having been obtained, the baronet quietly stole from table, and was soon beyond the odors of the dining-room.

"You miss the censer and the frankincense," said Eve, laughing, as Sir George entered the drawing-room; "but you will remember we have no Church establishment, and dare not take such liberties with the ceremonials of the altar."

"That is a short-lived custom with us, I fancy, though far from an unpleasant one. But you do me injustice in supposing I am merely running away from the fumes of the dinner."

"No, no; we understand perfectly well that you have something to do with the fumes of flattery, and we will at once fancy all has been said that the occasion requires. Is not our honest old captain a jewel in his way?"

"Upon my word, since you allow me to speak of your father's guests, I do not think it possible to have brought together two men who are so completely the opposites of each other, as Captain Truck and this Mr. Aristabulus Bragg. The latter is quite the most extraordinary person in his way it was ever my good fortune to meet with."

"You call him a person, while Pierre calls him a personage; I fancy he considers it very much as a matter of accident, whether he is to pass his days in the one character or in the other. Cousin Jack assures me, that while this man accepts almost any duty that he chooses to assign him, he would not deem it at all a violation of the *convenances* to aim at the throne in the White House."

"Certainly with no hopes of ever attaining it!"

"One cannot answer for that. The man must undergo many essential changes, and much radical improvement, before such a climax to his fortunes can ever occur; but the instant you do away with the claims of hereditary power, the door is opened to a new chapter of accidents. Alexander of Russia styles himself *un heureux accident*; and should it ever be our fortune to receive Mr. Bragg as President, we