

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WHICH BELISARIUS RETURNS FROM EXILE.

I was sitting in the dusk in my room at the Hôtel des Bains, when the visitor for whom I hoped made his appearance in the person of Clive, with his broad shoulders, and broad hat, and a shaggy beard, which he had thought fit in his quality of painter to assume. Our greeting it need not be said was warm; and our talk, which extended far into the night, very friendly and confidential. If I make my readers confidants in Mr. Clive's private affairs, I ask my friend's pardon for narrating his history in their behoof. The world had gone very ill with my poor Clive, and I do not think that the pecuniary losses which had visited him and his father afflicted him near so sorely as the state of his home. In a pique with the woman he loved, and from that generous weakness which formed part of his character and which led him to acquiesce in most wishes of his good father, the young man had gratified the darling desire of the Colonel's heart, and taken the wife whom his two old friends brought to him. Rosey, who was also, as we have shown, of a very obedient and ductile nature, had acquiesced gladly enough in her mamma's opinion that she was in love with the rich and handsome young Clive, and accepted him for better or worse. So undoubtedly would this good child have accepted Captain Hoby, her previous adorer, have smilingly promised fidelity to the captain at church, and have made a very good, happy, and sufficient little wife for that officer—had not mamma commanded her to jilt him. What wonder that these elders should wish to see their two dear young ones united? They began with suitable age, money, good temper, and parents' blessings. It is not the first time that with all these excellent helps to prosperity and happiness, a marriage has turned out unfortunately—a pretty, tight ship gone to wreck that set forth on its voyage with cheers from the shore, and every prospect of fair wind and fine weather.

If Clive was gloomy and discontented even when the honeymoon had scarce waned, and he and his family sat at home in

state and splendor under the boughs of the famous silver coccoanut tree, what was the young man's condition now in poverty, when they had no love along with a scant dinner of herbs; when his mother-in-law grudged each morsel which his poor old father ate—when a vulgar, coarse-minded woman pursued with brutal sarcasm and deadly rancor one of the tenderest and noblest gentlemen in the world—when an ailing wife, always under someone's domination, received him with helpless hysterical cries and reproaches—when a coarse female tyrant, stupid, obstinate, utterly unable to comprehend the son's kindly genius, or the father's gentle spirit, bullied over both, using the intolerable undeniable advantage which her actual wrongs gave her to tyrannize over these two wretched men! He had never heard the last of that money which they had sent to Mrs. Mason, Clive said. When the knowledge of the fact came to the Campaigner's ears, she raised such a storm as almost killed the poor Colonel, and drove his son half mad. She seized the howling infant, vowing that its unnatural father and grandfather were bent upon starving it—she consoled and sent Rosey into hysterics—she took the outlawed parson to whose church they went, and the choice society of bankrupt captains, captains' ladies, fugitive stockbrokers' wives, and dingy frequenters of billiard rooms, and refugees from the Bench, into her counsels; and in her daily visits among these personages, and her walks on the pier, whither she trudged with poor Rosey in her train, Mrs. Mackenzie made known her own wrongs and her daughter's—showed how the Colonel, having robbed and cheated them previously, was now living upon them, insomuch that Mrs. Bolter, the levanting auctioneer's wife, would not make the poor old man a bow when she met him—that Mrs. Captain Kitely, whose husband had lain for seven years past in Boulogne jail, ordered her son to cut Clive; and when, the child being sick, the poor old Colonel went for arrowroot to the chemist's, young Snooks, the apothecary's assistant, refused to allow him to take the powder away without previously depositing the money.

He had no money, Thomas Newcome. He gave up every farthing. After having impoverished all around him, he had no right, he said, to touch a sixpence of the wretched pittance remaining to them—he had even given up his cigar, the poor old man, the companion and comforter of forty years. He was "not fit to be trusted with money," Mrs. Mackenzie said,

and the good man owned, as he ate his scanty crust, and bowed his noble old head in silence under that cowardly persecution.

And this, at the end of threescore and seven or eight years, was to be the close of a life which had been spent in freedom and splendor, and kindness and honor; this the reward of a noble heart—the tomb and prison of a gallant warrior who had ridden in twenty battles—whose course through life had been a bounty wherever it had passed—whose name had been followed by blessings, and whose career was to end here—here—in a mean room, in a mean alley of a foreign town—a low, furious woman standing over him and stabbing the kind, defenseless breast with killing insult and daily outrage.

As we sat together in the dark, Clive told me this wretched story, which was wrung from him with a passionate emotion that I could not but keenly share. He wondered the old man lived, Clive said. Some of the woman's taunts and gibes, as he could see, struck his father so that he gasped and started back as if someone had lashed him with a whip. "He would make away with himself," said poor Clive, "but he deems this is his punishment, and that he must bear it as long as it pleases God. He does not care for his own losses, as far as they concern himself; but these reproaches of Mrs. Mackenzie, and some things which were said to him in the Bankruptcy Court, by one or two widows of old friends, who were induced through his representations to take shares in that infernal bank, have affected him dreadfully. I hear him lying awake and groaning at night, God bless him. Great God! what can I do—what can I do?" burst out the young man in a dreadful paroxysm of grief. "I have tried to get lessons—I went to London on the deck of a steamer, and took a lot of drawings with me—tried the picture-dealers—pawnbrokers—Jews—Moss, whom you may remember at Gandish's, and who gave me, for forty-two drawings, £18. I brought the money back to Boulogne. It was enough to pay the doctor, and bury our last poor little dead baby. *Tenez*, Pen, you must give me some supper, I have had nothing all day but *pain de deux sous*, I can't stand it at home. My heart's almost broken—you must give me some money, Pen, old boy. I know you will. I thought of writing to you, but I wanted to support myself, you see. When I went to London with the drawings I tried George's chambers, but he was in the country. I saw Crackthorpe in the street, in Oxford Street, but I could not

face him, and bolted down Hanway Yard. I tried, and I could not ask him, and I got the £18 from Moss that day, and came home with it."

Give him money? of course I will give him money—my dear old friend! And, as an alternative and a wholesome shock to check that burst of passion and grief in which the poor fellow indulged, I thought fit to break into a very fierce and angry invective on my part, which served to disguise the extreme feeling of pain and pity that I did not somehow choose to exhibit. I rated Clive soundly, and taxed him with unfriendliness and ingratitude for not having sooner applied to friends who would think shame of themselves while he was in need. Whatever he wanted was his as much as mine. I could not understand how the necessity of the family should, in truth, be so extreme as he described it, for after all many a poor family lived upon very much less; but I uttered none of these objections, checking them with the thought that Clive, on his first arrival at Boulogne, entirely ignorant of the practice of economy, might have imprudently engaged in expenses which had reduced him to this present destitution.*

I took the liberty of asking about debts, and of these Clive gave me to understand there was none—at least none of his, or his father's, contracting. "If we were too proud to borrow, and I think we were wrong, Pen, my dear old boy—I think we were wrong now—at least, we were too proud to owe. My colorman takes his bill out in drawings, and I think owes me a trifle. He got me some lessons at fifty sous a ticket—a pound the ten—from an economical swell who has taken a chateau here, and has two flunkeys in livery. He has four daughters, who take advantage of the lessons, and screws ten per cent. upon the poor colorman's pencils and drawing paper. It's pleasant work to give the lessons to the children and to be patronized by the swell; and not expensive to him is it, Pen? But I don't mind that, if I could but get lessons enough; for, you see, besides our expenses here, we must have some more money, and the dear old governor would die outright if poor old Sarah Mason did not get her £50 a year."

And now there arrived a plentiful supper, and a bottle of

*I did not know at the time that Mrs. Mackenzie had taken entire superintendence of the family treasury—and that this exemplary woman was putting away, as she had done previously, sundry little sums to meet rainy days.

good wine, of which the giver was not sorry to partake after the meager dinner at three o'clock to which I had been invited by the Campaigner; and it was midnight when I walked back with my friend to his house in the upper town; and all the stars of heaven were shining cheerily; and my dear Clive's face wore an expression of happiness, such as I remembered in old days, as we shook hands and parted with a "God bless you."

To Clive's friend, revolving these things in his mind, as he lay in one of those most snug and comfortable beds at the excellent Hôtel des Bains, it appeared that this town of Boulogne was a very bad market for the artist's talents; and that he had best bring them to London, where a score of old friends would assuredly be ready to help him. And if the Colonel, too, could be got away from the domination of the Campaigner, I felt certain that the dear old gentleman could but profit by his leave of absence. My wife and I at this time inhabited a spacious old house in Queen's Square, Westminster, where there was plenty of room for father and son. I knew that Laura would be delighted to welcome these guests—may the wife of every worthy gentleman who reads these pages be as ready to receive her husband's friends. It was the state of Rosey's health, and the Campaigner's authority and permission, about which I was in doubt, and whether this lady's two slaves would be allowed to go away.

These cogitations kept the present biographer long awake, and he did not breakfast next day until an hour before noon. I had the coffee-room to myself by chance, and my meal was not ended when the waiter announced a lady to visit Mr. Pendennis, and Mrs. Mackenzie made her appearance. No signs of care or poverty were visible in the attire or countenance of the buxom widow. A handsome bonnet decorated within with a profusion of poppies, blue-bells, and ears of corn; a jewel on her forehead, not costly, but splendid in appearance, and glittering artfully over that central spot from which her wavy chestnut hair parted to cluster in ringlets round her ample cheeks; a handsome India shawl, smart gloves, a rich silk dress, a neat parasol of blue with pale yellow lining, a multiplicity of glittering rings, and a very splendid gold watch and chain, which I remembered in former days as hanging round poor Rosey's white neck—all these adornments set off the widow's person, so that you might have thought her a wealthy capitalist's lady, and never could have supposed that

she was a poor, cheated, ruined, robbed, unfortunate Campaigner.

Nothing could be more gracious than the *accueil* of this lady. She paid me many handsome compliments about my literary works—asked most affectionately for dear Mrs. Pendennis and the dear children—and then, as I expected, coming to business, contrasted the happiness and genteel position of my wife and family with the misery and wrongs of her own blessed child and grandson. She never could call that child by the odious name which he received at his baptism. I knew what bitter reasons she had to dislike the name of Thomas Newcome.

She again rapidly enumerated the wrongs she had received at the hands of that gentleman; mentioned the vast sums of money out of which she and her soul's darling had been tricked by that poor muddle-headed creature, to say no worse of him; and described finally their present pressing need. The doctors, the burial, Rosey's delicate condition, the cost of sweetbreads, calf's-foot jelly, and cod-liver oil, were again passed in a rapid calculation before me; and she ended her speech by expressing her gratification that I had attended to her advice of the previous day, and not given Clive Newcome a direct loan; that the family wanted it, the Campaigner called upon Heaven to witness; that Clive and his absurd poor father would fling guineas out of the window was a fact equally certain; the rest of the argument was obvious, namely, that Mr. Pendennis should administer a donation to herself.

I had brought but a small sum of money in my pocket-book, though Mrs. Mackenzie, intimate with bankers, and having, thank heaven, in spite of all her misfortunes, the utmost confidence of all her tradesmen, hinted a perfect willingness on her part to accept an order upon her friends, Hobson Brothers of London.

This direct thrust I gently and smilingly parried by asking Mrs. Mackenzie whether she supposed a gentleman who had just paid an electioneering bill, and had, at the best of times, but a very small income, might sometimes not be in a condition to draw satisfactorily upon Messrs. Hobson or any other banker? Her countenance fell at this remark, nor was her cheerfulness much improved by the tender of one of the two banknotes which then happened to be in my possession. I said that I had a use for the remaining note, and that it would

not be more than sufficient to pay my hotel bill and the expenses of my party back to London.

My party? I had here to divulge with some little trepidation the plan which I had been making overnight; to explain how I thought that Clive's great talents were wasted at Boulogne, and could only find a proper market in London; how I was pretty certain, through my connection with Booksellers, to find some advantageous employment for him, and would have done so months ago had I known the state of the case; but I had believed, until within a very few days since, that the Colonel, in spite of his bankruptcy, was still in the enjoyment of considerable military pensions.

This statement, of course, elicited from the widow a number of remarks not complimentary to my dear old Colonel. He might have kept his pensions, had he not been a fool—he was a baby about money matters—mised himself and everybody—was a log in the house, etc., etc., etc.

I suggested that his annuities might possibly be put into some more satisfactory shape—that I had trustworthy lawyers with whom I would put him in communication—that he had best come to London to see to these matters—and that my wife had a large house where she would most gladly entertain the two gentlemen.

This I said with some reasonable dread—fearing, in the first place, her refusal; in the second, her acceptance of the invitation, with a proposal, as our house was large, to come herself and inhabit it for awhile. Had I not seen that Campaigner arrive for a month at poor James Binnie's house in Fitzroy Square, and stay there for many years? Was I not aware that when she once set her foot in a gentleman's establishment, terrific battles must ensue before she could be dislodged? Had she not once been routed by Clive? and was she not now in command and possession? Do I not, finally, know something of the world; and have I not a weak, easy temper? I protest it was with terror that I awaited the widow's possible answer to my proposal.

To my great relief, she expressed the utmost approval of both my plans. I was uncommonly kind, she was sure, to interest myself about the two gentlemen, and for her blessed Rosey's sake, a fond mother thanked me. It was most advisable that Clive should earn some money by that horrid profession which he had chosen to adopt—trade, she called

it. She was clearly anxious to get rid of both father and son, and agreed that the sooner they went the better.

We walked back arm-in-arm to the Colonel's quarters in the Old Town, Mrs. Mackenzie, in the course of our walk, doing me the honor to introduce me by name to several dingy acquaintances whom we met sauntering up the street, and imparting to me, as each moved away, the pecuniary cause of his temporary residence in Boulogne. Spite of Rosey's delicate state of health, Mrs. Mackenzie did not hesitate to break the news to her of the gentlemen's probable departure, abruptly and eagerly, as if the intelligence was likely to please her; and it did rather than otherwise. The young woman, being in the habit of letting mamma judge for her, continued it in this instance; and whether her husband stayed or went, seemed to be equally content or apathetic. "And is it not most kind and generous of dear Mr. and Mrs. Pendennis to propose to receive Mr. Newcome and the Colonel?" This opportunity for gratitude being pointed out to Rosey, she acquiesced in it straightway—it was very kind of me, Rosey was sure. "And why don't you ask after dear Mrs. Pendennis and the dear children—you poor dear suffering darling child?" Rosey, who had neglected this inquiry, immediately hoped Mrs. Pendennis and the children were well. The overpowering mother had taken utter possession of this poor little thing. Rosey's eyes followed the Campaigner about, and appealed to her at all moments. She sat under Mrs. Mackenzie as a bird before a boa-constrictor, doomed—fluttering—fascinated; scared and fawning as a whipped spaniel before a keeper.

The Colonel was on his accustomed bench on the rampart at this sunny hour. I repaired thither, and found the old gentleman seated by his grandson, who lay, as yesterday, on the little bonne's lap, one of his little purple hands closed round the grandfather's finger. "Hush!" says the good man, lifting up his other finger to his mustache, as I approached. "Boy's asleep. Il est bien joli quand il dort—le Boy, n'est-ce pas, Marie?" The maid believed Monsieur well—the boy was a little angel. "This maid is a most trustworthy, valuable person, Pendennis," the Colonel said with much gravity.

The boa-constrictor had fascinated him too—the lash of that woman at home had cowed that helpless, gentle, noble spirit. As I looked at the head so upright and manly, now so beautiful and resigned, the year of his past life seemed to

pass before me somehow in a flash of thought; I could fancy the accursed tyranny—the dumb acquiescence—the brutal jeer—the helpless remorse—the sleepless nights of pain and recollection—the gentle heart lacerated with deadly stabs—and the impotent hope. I own I burst into a sob at the sight, and thought of the noble suffering creature, and hid my face and turned away.

He sprang up, releasing his hand from the child's, and placing it, the kind, shaking hand, on my shoulder. "What is it, Arthur—my dear boy?" he said, looking wistfully in my face. "No bad news from home, my dear? Laura and the children well?"

The emotion was mastered in a moment; I put his arm under mine, and, as we slowly sauntered up and down the sunny walk of the old rampart, I told him how I had come with special commands from Laura to bring him for awhile to stay with us, and to settle his business, which I was sure had been woefully mismanaged, and to see whether we could not find the means of getting some little out of the wreck of the property for the boy yonder.

At first Colonel Newcome would not hear of quitting Boulogne, where Rosey would miss him—he was sure she would want him—but before the ladies of his family, to whom we presently returned, Thomas Newcome's resolution was quickly recalled. He agreed to go, and Clive coming in at this time was put in possession of our plan and gladly acquiesced in it. On that very evening I came with a carriage to conduct my two friends to the steamboat. Their little packets were made and ready. There was no pretense of grief at parting on the women's side, but Marie, the little maid, with Boy in her arms, cried sadly; and Clive heartily embraced the child; and the Colonel, going back to give it one more kiss, drew out of his neckcloth a little gold brooch which he wore, and which, trembling, he put into Marie's hand, bidding her to take care of Boy till his return.

"She is a good girl—a most faithful, attached girl, Arthur, do you see?" the kind old gentleman said; "and I had no money to give her—no, not one single rupee."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN WHICH CLIVE BEGINS THE WORLD.

We are ending our history, and yet poor Clive is but beginning the world. He has to earn the bread which he eats henceforth; and, as I saw his labors, his trials, and his disappointments, I could not but compare his calling with my own.

The drawbacks and penalties attendant upon our profession are taken into full account, as we well know, by literary men and their friends. Our poverty, hardships, and disappointments are set forth with great emphasis, and often with too great truth by those who speak of us; but there are advantages belonging to our trade which are passed over, I think, by some of those who exercise it and describe it, and for which, in striking the balance of our accounts, we are not always duly thankful. We have no patron, so to speak—we sit in ante-chambers no more, waiting the present of a few guineas from my lord, in return for a fulsome dedication. We sell our wares to the book-purveyor, between whom and us there is no greater obligation than between him and his paper-maker or printer. In the great towns in our country immense stores of books are provided for us, with librarians to class them, kind attendants to wait upon us, and comfortable appliances for study. We require scarce any capital wherewith to exercise our trade. What other so-called learned profession is equally fortunate? A doctor, for example, after carefully and expensively educating himself, must invest in house and furniture, horses, carriage, and men-servants, before the public patient will think of calling him in. I am told that such gentlemen have to coax and wheedle dowagers, to humor hypochondriacs, to practice a score of little subsidiary arts in order to make that of healing profitable. How many, many hundreds of pounds has a barrister to sink upon his stock in trade before his returns are available? There are the costly charges of university education—the costly chambers in the Inn of Court—the clerk and his maintenance—the inevitable travels on circuit—certain expenses, all to be defrayed before the possible client makes his appearance, and the chance of