BEYOND RECALL.

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CHAPTER XV.

RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

The inventive faculty which had led me in bygone days to model clay figures and then to carve them in wood, revived in me as I gained health and strength. My determination to do nothing which would bring back the past to my contemplation kept me from employing this faculty in artistic creation, and for a time I kept it in idle subjection, like a man holding his tongue for fear of saying something foolish; but the power to form ideas was alive within me, and sooner or later it was bound to find expression in some form or other.

I found great comfort in a book of physics that I got from the library. It took me out of myself, and gave a turn to my thoughts when they were in danger of wandering into vacancy. I have known the time when that idle wandering of the imagination is full of delight; but never in my prison. Many a night, for want of mental occupation, I have cried myself to sleep like a child for I would not think what. And so, as I say, that book upon physics was a source of comfort to me.

Every evening I had it out, and when I came upon a new problem I would ask myself why it was worked out in that way and not in another. Then I set myself to solve the problem in that other fashion—a task that gave occupation to my brain in the dark waking hours after the lights were out. In this way I came to invent all sorts of things, from gases to planetary systems.

Mechanics afforded me the greatest interest, for here I could give visible shape to my ideas. I had a slate and pencil, and with two splinters of wood that I brought in up my sleeves, an old screw found in the tool stores, and a darning needle picked up outside the tailor's shop, I contrived to make a useful pair of compasses. With these I drew my mechanical contrivances—plan, elevation, and section—all to scale as if they were working drawings.

Our chaplain was an excellent man—the very best that could have held that position. One could believe that the reforming of men was his vocation, and not a mere trade, chosen for its pecuniary or social advantages. He had the clear sense to see that, before we could be converted to angels, we must be humanised, and he sought to humanise us by encouraging our better tendencies, and developing any taste that might lift us above the condition of torpid brutes.

"Well," said he, one Sunday afternoon, as he seated himself on the stool in my cell, "what is the last invention?"

"A lamp, sir," said I, fetching my slate from the shelf. "You see the light here is very poor and trying to the eyes"—there was no gas in prison at that time—"and I've been thinking how it might be improved without expense or danger."

"Why, this is a subject that interests me," said he, cheerfully, as he took the slate, "for the girl has broken two chimneys in the week, and nearly set the house on fire last night; and it's a serious question whether I should not go to the expense of laying on gas."

"You ought to get gas from petroleum as good as that from coal, and cheaper."

"You shall show me how. Come explain it all. What's this—Fig. 1?"

"That's a reservoir for the oil, six inches in diameter, with a convex bottom of burnished tin or white enamelled iron to reflect the light, and fitted with a hemispherical glass below."

"No fear of breaking that How do you fix it? There's no foot."

"No, sir; that would show a shadow, for the same reason there is no burner or jet under the flame; the light parts in a spray from the circumference. I planned it to drop through a hole in the iron overhead; but it could be hung from a ceiling or hooked on a wall equally well."

"I see. It looks promising. Now let us come to the section, for I've no idea how it's to work."

I made my drawings clear to him. There is no need to repeat the explanation here. The invention is old now; my lamp has superseded the ordinary gas illumination on one of the Continental lines, and the system is sufficiently well known to those who interest themselves in such matters.

"It seems possible," said the chaplain, when I had shown all. "I don't see why it should not answer."

"The only proof is a practical trial, and that is not practicable."

"Why not? I should like to make the experiment. Will you let me have your slate?"

"Of course I will sir; you know that."

He nodded shaking my hand kindly, and went away with my slate.

About three weeks later he came with more than usual animation in his genial face.

"It's a success, your lamp," he said rubbing his hands. "A brilliant success."

We talked about it for some time. He told me he hoped to get the governor's permission to let me see it alight; then, growing grave, he seated himself on my stool and said, "Now, my good fellow, I want to speak to you upon a subject that I have hitherto avoided in reference to your wishes."

"There's no one I should be more loth to deny, sir," I replied. "I am sure you would not wish to speak about that"—I knew that it was the past he meant—"unless you felt it was my duty, to hear what you have to say."

"It is your duty. Well, there, you must know that your lamp is worth a great deal of money. The manufacturer who has worked out your idea—a personal friend of mine in whose integrity I have the utmost confidence—is prepared to patent it, and pay you a royalty on all that are sold. It would seem that money would be of no use to one in your position; but you and I know better, don't we."

He took my hand and held it in his, speaking with touching earnestness. It was not responsive gratitude that shook my frame and thrilled me with an emotion impossible to express—not the thought of such kindness and delicacy being shown by a stainless man to a convicted criminal, that awoke my heart from the torpor in which it had existed so long, driving the hot blood tingling through my veins, where for four years it had flowed sluggishly, never for one moment a generous glow to my breast. It was the consciousness that I lived again, and had the power to spend my life in the service of that dear soul in the outer world to whom I was linked.

"Raised from the dead?" I cried, my spirit exalted almost to madness. "Raised from the dead!"

But indeed even that did not express all I felt. For the dead are better than those who live only because they cannot die.

"I see I was not mistaken, 365," said the chaplain, "You know what to do with the money."

"Yes, sir. It shall all go to my poor wife. I can talk about her now; I can think about her night and day now. I have had to drive her away from my thoughts all these years, for fear I should go mad with the knowledge that I could not in any way alleviate the misfortune and suffering I have brought upon her. You can understand how a poor fellow feels in here, sir. Think what it would be, sir, if you had to keep the thought of heaven and God's mercy out of it for a day—think if you had to keep the place they filled a blank?"

Something of the frenzy I felt as I looked back upon the terrible struggle I had gone through must have been in my looks, for the chaplain stopped me with an admonishing gesture.

"That will do. No need to think of that now," he said.

"No, sir, no; I won't make a fool of myself." Then I burst out crying to prove the contrary. "If you knew how good and beautiful she was!" said I, between my sobs.

"Yes, I can believe that," said he. "Come, be a man."

"Ay, sir, but I must be a child first."

I laughed hysterically, like a girl; then, with a simplicity no less girlish as I strove to be calm, I continued; "She is but twenty-two now, sir. Her face was like Clytie's you have seen the bust. She can't have changed as I have. So sweet and gentle—yet bright, yet quickwitted, and bright and gay—then. We were married clandestinely, and then her father came home. A millionaire, they say he is; I was nothing but a poor cabinet-maker. He hasn't a good heart—a selfish man with a great desire to make a position in society. If he has found out my poor dear's secret, he will make her life unendurable, even if he does not send her away. And now she may be dependent for subsistence on her own resources. What can a girl, trained as she has been, do? It's difficult to those who have been brought up in hardship. Perhaps she may be dependent on the charity of friends—in terrible misery. That's why I dared not think of her; but I may now. This money will give her independence; that will be some relief to her, dear soul! And there's no reason to keep this a secret from you; I will tell you all."

"Better not just yet, 365."

"You can tell me Wyndham now, sir, if you like. I am a man again."

"Well, Wyndham, that is a great deal. But you must not let your hopes carry you too far. My friend is too good a man of business to venture upon an undertaking without a tolerable assurance of commercial success. Still the result may be less remunerative than I have led you to expect."

"What of that, sir! If I could only throw a bunch of violets in her path it would be something to live for."

"Limit your hopes to that for the present. I will speak to the governor about this matter. I don't think he will object to your seeing my friend in the ordinary way, and hearing what he has to say about the lamp; at the same time it may be contrary to the regulations of the prison, in which case you may entrust the affair to a personal friend. Individually I fear that my position will not allow me to do more than I have said. I think," he added, rising, "we shall do well to say no more upon this subject until the governor has considered it."

"I understand you, sir," said I. "You shall not hear another word about it from my lips until you give me permission to speak."

I shall never forget the joy of that day. It was impossible to sit still for two minutes together. I walked up and down my little cell with feverish haste, revolving in my mind all the inventions that had occurred to me, with a view to finding the best material for building up a fortune for her. I saw nothing clearly, for the host of ideas that chased each other. "Never mind," thought I, "I shall calm down presently, and do good work; I can afford to do nothing this evening." Then I stretched my arms out, spreading and closing my fingers strenuously, as if feeling for some object on which to expand my overflowing energy; I felt I must be doing something, after all; and so, impatient already of idleness, I sat down and opened my book. How often had I buried myself in it that I might not think of her; now I could not follow out a sentence for thinking of her. Oh, I might take her back into my heart again! I might conjure her up before my eyes in the darkness! I was no longer a dead incubus, crushing the life out of her dead body, chilling the life-blood in her heart. I could think of her future without that maddening sense of impotency. It was in my power now to lighten her burden, to smooth her path, to make life endurable to her. What should I do, thought I, if our relative positions were reversed—if I were free and she a prisoner? Assuredly my heart would ache whenever I thought of her, and nothing in the world could console me for her loss; but I could find distraction in travelling abroad, in visiting the cities of Europe, and searching out all that was beautiful in nature and arts. What I might do she also could do if only she had an independent fortune. "And that she shall have," said I, shutting up the book and starting to my feet. "It is in my power to give you that, dear Hebe!"

To be doing something I took down my bedding and rolled it up anew, polished up my tin vessels, and dusted the cell from end to end. I had never seen my cell look so nice. I was in a humor to be pleased with anything, and unconsciously I fell to singing snatches of songs I knew years and years ago. My own voice sounded strange to me after so long a silence; it seemed not less astonishing to the warder.

"What's the matter?" he asked, coming in as I was standing a little way from the shelf, with my head on one side admiring the effect of my neatly folded blanket with the bright tins on each side. "What are you doing of?"

"I'm just looking around my cell and thinking how happy a man may be even in prison."

"Is that all?" he asked, with a suspicious glance. I really think I was losing my senses at this moment, when they were, as I may say, coming back to me.

I woke in the morning with the old buoyant feeling of vigor and freshness; and though I had slept but a few hours of the night, I sprang up at once, and was dressed before the bell rang. It was as if not only life had come back to me, but youth with it. I could almost think myself back in my home at Feltenham, with a half-finished panel in the workshop that promised to be a real masterpiece when it was done. When the time came to go down in the yard, I marched off cheerfully with a springy step. My aspect must have changed with this alteration in my feelings—the lost expression came back to my features, for that morning old Beeton, who I met in the yard, recognised me. I noticed his brows met in perplexity as he scanned my face, and then expanded as he jerked his head. The gesture seemed to say, "Oh, it's you, is it?" and I nodded with a grin in reply. I was no longer afraid to think of the past, or anxious to avoid recollection of the world outside.

Two or three days after that, a convict who was drifted into our gang from the road-mending set, in which Beeton worked getting alongside of me, said—

"Is your name Kit Wyndham, what's got put up for a job at Richmond?"

"Yes," said I.

"Well old Beeton told me to let you know as he wants to speak to you. He's got something to tell you about your wife."

CHAPTER XVI.

BEETON'S TERRIBLE NEWS.

I was now tremulous with excitement to know what Beeton had to tell me. At times I quaked with apprehension lest the news should be bad. Her secret might have been found out; her father might have cut her off; she might be friendless and in want; but still a more terrible foreboding lay beyond these possibilities—a foreboding that I dared not to whisper to myself, but was present in my mind, for all that. She might be dead. My hand trembles as I write the words with a recollection of the terror that unnamed suspicion carried to my soul. At other times and more frequently—for Hope predominated over Fear—I anticipated better things. Hebe might have charged him with a message of love and comfort to deliver to me.

Again and again I tried to get near him in the exercise yard, but all to no purpose, for though in the fields it was impossible to prevent communication between prisoners, the rule was rigidly enforced in the prison. There was no alternative but to wait until a favorable opportunity came. Meanwhile I was not idle.

In thinking about my lamp it occurred to me that the expansive force developed by the flame in vaporising the oil or spirit to give light might be employed as a motive power. If the force were thus got direct from the fuel, there would no longer be a necessity to use water as a medium. That would be an advantage, opening up boundless possibility in locomotion. Even aerial navigation might be made practicable with a powerful motor, disencumbered of the weight of water necessary to produce steam by the old system. Gradually my notion took practicable shape upon my slate. Night after night I worked steadily on, devising, simplifying, improving until at length I began to feel satisfied with the result. The cylinders of my engine I jacketed in the boiler itself to prevent loss of heat by radiation. The vapor, after producing the stroke, was carried off by the exhaust to the furnace, where, in combination with atmospheric air, it produced the heat requisite for the further development of vapor. The same governor I had designed for the lamp served to carry off the excess vapor to a condenser, whence it was returned in a liquid state to the boiler. By a diaphragm in the cylinder, and by enclosing every valve in the boiler itself, there was no possibility of the vapor escaping unused. Here, then, as I said, was an engine in which heat was converted into motion with the least possible waste, capable of being set in motion at once, throwing off neither smoke nor steam, and by its portability applicable to any purpose in which the ordinary steam engine is employed.

I had carried my alterations to a point whence I could see nothing left to improve, when the chaplain came to tell me that the governor had acceded to his request, and that his friend had telegraphed to say that he would come to Prince Town that evening and see me next morning according to the rules of the prison.

"I thought it advisable to let you know nothing until the last moment, in case of any hitch," said the chaplain. "The delay has given Mr. Renshaw time to consider the affair, and his coming proves that he is prepared to make terms with you."

"I wish I knew how to thank you, sir," I began. "But if you knew the light you have let in upon my darkened heart—the wonderful joy and happiness I have felt since you changed me from a hopeless, useless clod—"

"If I knew all that I should need no better reward, hey? Well, I think I do know it," he said, patting me on the shoulder "so we will say no more about it. What's this?"

He took up my slate to change the subject.

"Why, sir, that's something else for Mr. Renshaw, if he will have it."

"He will have to enlarge his works if you go on this way," said he, smiling; "is this another lamp?"

I told him all about my engine, and he listened attentively, sitting down and examining my drawings as I explained them.

"An engine without smoke or steam—that ought to be taken up by the underground railways; they need it badly enough," said he; "and an engine lightened of water and fed from the nearest oil shop should be acceptable to the Fire Brigade. That's good enough; your aerial navigators need not be pressed for the moment."

I feared from his tone that he did not regard my new invention as capable of serious development; but he undeceived me on this point when he spoke again.

"I am not very good at mechanics: don't think that my perception goes beyond lamps; but my friend is an authority upon such matters, and I will show him your drawings, and do my best to explain them to-night. You will know the result when you see him to-morrow. In that way two birds may be killed with one stone, which is advisable, because it seems to be a moot point whether the governor is quite within his right in according you permission to enter into business transactions of this kind."

The next morning I was taken up to the visiting room; there brought face to face with Mr. Renshaw, a warder standing in the divided space between us. I trembled violently with excitement; it seemed hardly possible that my new born hopes could be realized. He began to speak at once about my lamp. With my hand against my ear I leant forward, listening greedily, fearful of losing a word. He told me that acting on the chaplain's authority, he had already protected my invention, and put specimens into the market.

"You think it will be a success," I said, when he paused.

"Oh, that is beyond doubt," he replied. "Orders are already taken for a considerable number. A suburban tramway company are going to give it a trial; that will be an excellent advertisement. Fifty are wanted for a hat factory in the North. The success, indeed, is so well assured that I am prepared to buy your invention right out at once. In your own interest, however, I should advise you to hold your patent and take a royalty on what are sold. I am prepared to give you a couple of hundred in advance if you need a sum for immediate use; further payments to be paid at the half-yearly balancing of accounts."

"Thank you, sir, for your advice" said I, eagerly. "I accept the offer of course. The two hundred pounds down I should like as soon as possible."

"I will draw out the cheque to-morrow; you have only to let me know what I am to do with it."

The question had never occurred to me how I was to convey the money to my wife. I had not even settled whether I should let her know where the money came from. I did not know her address, or how I was to learn it.

"I will let you know where to send the cheque," said I, after a little consideration. "Meanwhile if you will take care of it for me—"

"Certainly, certainly. At the same time if you can give me the name of any friend of yours who will enter into a legal agreement on your behalf—"

I told him I knew no one in whose honesty I could place greater trust than his, and that I should be quite content to leave the matter of payment entirely to his sense of justice.

"Very good," said he; "and now with regard to this new invention shown to me by the chaplain last night. Are you willing to place that in my hands to develop in the best way I can?"

"With all my heart, sir, if you think favorably of it."

"I do think favorably of it—very favorably. Your engine has certain advantages over the ordinary gas engine which should lead to its employment where the other is impracticable. One can never answer beforehand for inventions of this kind; but if it answers one's expectations as well as your lamp has, there is reason to believe that your remuneration will be measured by thousands instead of hundreds."

I hardly know how I went back to my cell; I was intoxicated with the achievement of success, and the prospect of still greater.

I was tempted that night to write to my wife and tell her all. "Surely," thought I, "she will be glad to know of this change in me—glad to know that I am better and not worse than I was. Will it not enlighten her heart to hear that I have found happiness in a prison, just as it would rejoice me to learn that she also had found some such source of joy? To be sure, my long silence, my persistent refusal to accept letters or hold any communication with her, might have produced the effect I desired when I resolved upon that line of conduct. And if her heart under such treatment had grown callous, and she had become indifferent to my condition, was it kind or generous to soften that heart again, and revive a hopeless affliction in her dear bosom?" But my own feeling told me that her heart was not hardened and that as long as we lived she must think of me with a mournful longing for some return of her love—if it were only a written word. These healthier and more natural feelings overcame in the end the morbid sentiments I had fostered—one being just as much the result of a new condition as the other. And I wrote my letter—letting my pen go as my heart dictated, and altering nothing that it occurred to me to say.

When I had written my letter and read it through, I was glad, and lay down to sleep with a feeling that I had done right. She will cry over my letter, thought I, just as I should break down if she wrote to me; but she will be happier afterwards. Those who neither weep nor smile are not the happier, as I knew well enough.

Now how was I to send my letter to her? That perplexed me terribly. To send it through Mr. Lonsdale after four years of silence would inevitably arouse the suspicion of the vicar's wife, perhaps invoking a discussion which would involve Hebe in new difficulties. It seemed wiser to enclose it in a letter to the major, asking him to forward it privately; but I did not know what address to send it to. However, it was pretty certain that my friend the chaplain would help me; so I kept back the letter, with the hope that I should see him in the course of the day.

That afternoon it rained so heavily that the outdoor gangs were kept in, and put to work about the prison. I with some more hands were sent in to limewhite the wash-house. A brush and a bucket of whitewash was given to me, and I was sent off to help to do the passage leading to the baths. Some men were already at it; the wall was marked off into portions, each being the task for one man.

"Number 5's your lot," said the warder.

I set down my bucket and turned up my sleeves. While I was about this, I cast a glance at my neighbors.

To my delight I perceived that the man next to me was old Beeton. I can hear the major's address from him and hear what he has to tell me about Hebe as well, may be.

We went each to our buckets for a dip of whitewash at the same moment. He gave me an unmistakable wink, and, taking himself to the further side of his division, began to paint the wall with the air of an artist born to the trade.

"If he really wanted to speak to me he wouldn't get as far as possible away," thought I, as I drew my pail close to his division. A jerk of his eyebrows bade me go further away. I saw his design. By both beginning at the further extremity we must in the end work up side by side, without fear of being put back by a suspicious warder. I shifted my position and carried out my part of this manœuvre. As we got through our work we drew nearer to each other, and before long got within whispering distance. I was the first to begin.

"What is Major Cleveden's address?" I asked.

"Why do you want to know?"

"Want to send a letter through him to my wife."

He took a slap at the wall with his brush and coming back asked—

"What are you writing to her about?"

"Sending her some money."

Again he took a slap at the wall; it seemed to be the irresistible impulse of one who could not otherwise give expression to a feeling; and his puckered face showed that it was one of amusement.

"Why don't you answer?" I whispered, angrily, when I got the chance; "what are you grinning at?"

"You are such a d—d fool!" he replied, with another slap, wagging his wicked old head from side to side. I let him reopen the dialogue.

"Playing into their hands from the first!" he whispered; "I warned you. I knew that major, and the game he was playing; and I saw through her game, too."

"What do you mean?" I gasped.

"Mean? Why the major and your wife were publicly married three weeks after they got you away for life, and they've been living together ever since!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PERSONAL.

Algernon Charles Swinburne, who is one of the candidates for the laureateship left vacant by the death of Tennyson, resembles some of the preceding laureates, particularly Wordsworth and Tennyson himself, in feats of pedestrianism. He likes to take long walks, though he is probably not fond of forty-mile tramps, such as Wordsworth used to take with his sister. Mr. Swinburne is quite unlike Tennyson in physical appearance. He is as insignificant as the laureate was imposing, and is as thin as Wordsworth was. His hair is red, and his whiskers are Parisian. He is said to have the lamented Hannibal Hamlin's antipathy to overcoats, and goes about without one in the teeth of the southeast winds he likes so well to describe in verse.

There was a curious Moslem religious ceremony at the opening of the Jaffa and Jerusalem railway for traffic. The Jerusalem terminus of the road was decorated with palms, when the Mohammedan priest had offered prayer, three sheep with snow-white fleece and gilded horns were dragged upon the rails and slaughtered. They were left there until the blood had run from their veins and reddened the ties, and then the locomotive, freed by this sacrifice from the machinations of evil genii, went puffing out of the Holy City.

Augustus J. C. Hare tells an interesting ancedote of Disraeli, who went to Liverpool, "a young man all curly and smart," with letters of introduction to Mr. Duncan Stewart. When he was shown the Exchange, crowded with busy merchants, he said: "My idea of greatness would be that a man should receive the applause of such an assemblage as this—that he should be cheered as he came into this room." At that time Disraeli remained in the building unnoticed, but when some years later Mr. Stewart again conducted him to the Exchange a cheer arose that deepened into a roar. The Prime Minister was greatly pleased by the demonstration, and recalled to his host the remark he had made years before.

General Benjamin F. Butler is said to make $100,000 a year from his law practice, but age is coming upon him with rapid strides, forcing him to give up some of the hard work necessary to earn such an income. He is now nearly seventy-five and visibly older than he was a few years ago. He is very much bent, and his eyesight is poor, but his mind is as keen as when young. For a man of his bluff nature he had always had a curious weakness for striking clothes. He used to like to wear fur overcoats and cowboy hats, the latter an adaptation of his army chapeau, but nowadays his tastes are quieter.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, who recently became eighty-three years old, had the good fortune, the distinguished honor, as he himself terms it, of being born the same year with Gladstone, Darwin, Tennyson, and Lincoln. The genial doctor, philosopher, and poet was very "smart" and active when his last birthday was celebrated. His eye was bright and his mind clear, and his sense of humor as keen as when the "Autocrat" was young. The only literary work which he now has in hand is a volume of reminiscences, to which he devotes a brief part of the morning. The remainder of the day is given to the enjoyment of life and the preservation of his health. To the latter the aged poet pays close attention, eating simply and regularly, walking half an hour every day, and driving for two hours, and adding to his night's sleep a short nap during the day in his easy chair.

The Rising Generation.

"Pa," said the boy, shaking his head dubiously as he looked up from his book. "I'm afraid I can never understand all these words."

"Tut, tut, my boy," returned the father, laying aside his paper—"you musn't get discouraged! Once you learn the definitions, you will have no trouble at all understanding how to use them. Take any word you wish."

"'Fast,' pa," suggested the boy.

"Yes, of course. 'Fast means rapid, speedy. Understanding that, you can't make any mistake."

"A fast horse is one that runs, isn't it?"

"Well, yes, sometimes. You're beginning to understand."

"But, pa, a fast man generally rides, doesn't he?"

"Um, my boy"—and the old gentlemen looked at his son over the top of his glasses—"you're beginning to get technical."

"And a fast colour is one that won't run, isn't it?"

"There, there—that'll do."

"But, pa, I want to know."

"Run out and play, and don't bother me any more when I'm reading the paper."