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WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

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BY

PISISTRATUS CAXTON.

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VOL. II.

L E I P Z I G

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VOL. II.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER IX.

The Nomad, entering into civilised life, adopts its arts, shaves his poodle, and puts on a black coat. Hints at the process by which a Cast-off exalts himself into a Take-in.

At twilight they stopped at a quiet inn within eight miles of Gatesboro'. Sophy, much tired, was glad to creep to bed. Waife sate up long after her; and, in preparation for the eventful morrow, washed and shaved Sir Isaac. You would not have known the dog again; he was dazzling. Not Ulysses, rejuvenated by Pallas Athenè, could have been more changed for the better. His flanks revealed a skin most daintily mottled; his tail became leonine with an imperial tuft; his mane fell in long curls, like the beard of a Ninevite king; his boots were those of a courtier

in the reign of Charles II.; his eyes looked forth in dark splendour from locks white as the driven snow. This feat performed, Waife slept the peace of the righteous, and Sir Isaac, stretched on the floor beside the bed, licked his mottled flanks and shivered — “*Il faut souffrir pour être beau.*” Much marvelling, Sophy the next morn beheld the dog; but before she was up, Waife had paid the bill and was waiting for her on the road, impatient to start. He did not heed her exclamations, half compassionate, half admiring; he was absorbed in thought. Thus they proceeded slowly on till within two miles of the town, and then Waife turned aside, entered a wood, and there, with the aid of Sophy, put the dog upon a deliberate rehearsal of the anticipated drama. The dog was not in good spirits, but he went through his part with mechanical accuracy, though slight enthusiasm.

“He is to be relied upon, in spite of his French origin,” said Waife. “All national prejudice fades before the sense of a common interest. And we shall always find more genuine solidity of character in a French poodle than in an English mastiff, whenever a poodle is of use to us, and a mastiff is not. But oh, waste of care! oh sacrifice of time to empty names! oh emblem of fashionable education! It never struck me before — does it not, child though thou art, strike thee now — by the necessities of our drama, this animal must be a French dog?”

"Well, grandfather?"

"And we have given him an English name! Precious result of our own scholastic training; taught at preparatory academies precisely that which avails us nought when we are to face the world! What is to be done? Unlearn him his own cognomen — teach him another name; too late, too late! We cannot afford the delay."

"I don't see why he should be called any name at all. He observes your signs just as well without."

"If I had but discovered that at the beginning. Pity! Such a fine name, too! Sir Isaac! *Vanitus vanitatum!* What desire chiefly kindles the ambitious? To create a name — perhaps bequeath a title — exalt into Sir Isaac a progeny of Mops! And after all, it is possible (let us hope it in this instance) that a sensible young dog may learn his letters and shoulder his musket just as well though all the appellations by which humanity knows him be condensed into a pitiful monosyllable. Nevertheless (as you will find when you are older), people are obliged in practice to renounce for themselves the application of those rules which they philosophically prescribe for others. Thus, while I grant that a change of name for *that* dog is a question belonging to the policy of Ifs and Buts, commonly called the policy of Expediency, about which one may differ with others and one's own self every quarter of an hour — a change of name for me belongs to the