

“MY NOVEL”

OR

VARIETIES IN ENGLISH LIFE

BY

PISISSTRATUS GAXTON

“ Neque enim notare singulos mens est mihi,
Verum ipsam vitam et mores hominum ostendere.”

PHÆDRUS

IN THREE VOLUMES

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“MY NOVEL.”

BOOK ELEVENTH.

INITIAL CHAPTER.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF HATE AS AN AGENT IN CIVILIZED LIFE.

IT is not an uncommon crotchet amongst benevolent men to maintain that wickedness is necessarily a sort of insanity, and that nobody would make a violent start out of the straight path unless stung to such disorder by a bee in his bonnet. Certainly when some very clever, well-educated person, like our friend Randal Leslie, acts upon the fallacious principle that “roguery is the best policy,” it is curious to see how many points he has in common with the insane: what over-cunning—what irritable restlessness—what suspicious belief that the rest of the world are in a conspiracy against him, which it requires all his wit to baffle and turn to his own proper aggrandisement and profit. Perhaps some of my readers may have thought that I have represented Randal as unnaturally far-fetched in his schemes, too wiredrawn and subtle in his speculations; yet that is commonly the case with very refining intellects, when they choose to play the knave; it helps to disguise from themselves the ugliness of their ambition, just as a philosopher delights in the ingenuity of some metaphysical process, which ends in what plain men call “atheism,”