

“MY NOVEL”
OR
VARIETIES IN ENGLISH LIFE

BY
PISISTRATUS CAXTON

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

PILÆDRUS

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“MY NOVEL.”

BOOK SIXTH.

INITIAL CHAPTER.

WHEREIN MR. CAXTON IS PROFOUNDLY METAPHYSICAL.

“LIFE,” said my father, in his most dogmatical tone, “is a certain quantity in time, which may be regarded in two ways—1st, as life *Integral*; 2d, as life *Fractional*. Life integral is that complete whole, expressive of a certain value, large or small, which each man possesses in himself. Life fractional is that same whole seized upon and invaded by other people, and subdivided amongst them. They who get a large slice of it say, ‘A very valuable life this!’—those who get but a small handful say, ‘So, so; nothing very great!’—those who get none of it in the scramble exclaim, ‘Good for nothing!’”

“I don’t understand a word you are saying,” growled Captain Roland.

My father surveyed his brother with compassion: “I will make it all clear, even to your understanding. When I sit down by myself in my study, having carefully locked the door on all of you, alone with my books and thoughts, I am in full possession of my integral life. I am *totus, teres, atque rotundus*—a whole human being—equivalent in value, we will say, for the sake of illustration, to a fixed round sum—100*l.* for example. But when I go forth into