

**VAGARIES OF LIFE,
IN TWO VOLUMES,
VOL. I**

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Vagaries of life, in two volumes, Vol. I by W. Wellington Cairnes

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W. WELLINGTON CAIRNES

**VAGARIES OF LIFE,
IN TWO VOLUMES,
VOL. I**

VAGARIES OF LIFE.

BY

W. WELLINGTON CAIRNES, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1852.

F. Shoberl, Jun., Printer, 31, Rupert Street.

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TO

THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT TORRINGTON,

&c., &c., &c.

My dear Lord,

It is with feelings of unusual pleasure that, at the moment of completing this my earliest literary effort, I receive the encouraging permission to dedicate its lucubrations to one whose friendship and esteem I am so proud to possess.

I could have wished, it is true, that the homage which such an opportunity enables me to offer had borne some proportion to my sense of your Lordship's invariable and oft-experienced kindness; but while, in the present instance, I dare not venture beyond the expression of a hope that the *will* may be taken for the *deed*, I shall not fail to derive new courage from this gratifying proof of your Lordship's partiality—the

presage, I would willingly believe, of greater success to my future exertions.

Many months have elapsed, my Lord, since the incidents of the following tale were first arranged; but I have not, meantime, been idle: "*Sape stylum vertas,*" said the old Roman, and I can vouch for the truth of his remark, even within the limits of my own narrow experience; indeed, what Waller declared of poets—that they lose half their fame, because the reader knows not what they have blotted—is equally true of the writer of fiction.

What *has* been retained, however, will abundantly suffice, I am afraid, to give umbrage to people of divers conditions. There will be some to express abhorrence of my outspoken plainness; some to discredit my heavy calendar of crime; and others—anchorites, impostors, *Mrs. Laurences*—will denounce me, no doubt, as an unnatural and sacrilegious monster. Nevertheless, I am quite determined to fight it out with humbug of every order—in every class—and do proclaim, now and henceforth, *guerre à outrance* against it!

Taking comfort, in fine, from Dr. Johnson's assurance, that "abuse is often of service; there is nothing so dangerous to an author as silence; his name, like a shuttlecock, must be beaten backward and forward, or it falls to the ground," I will don my casque, and await the critics' charge.

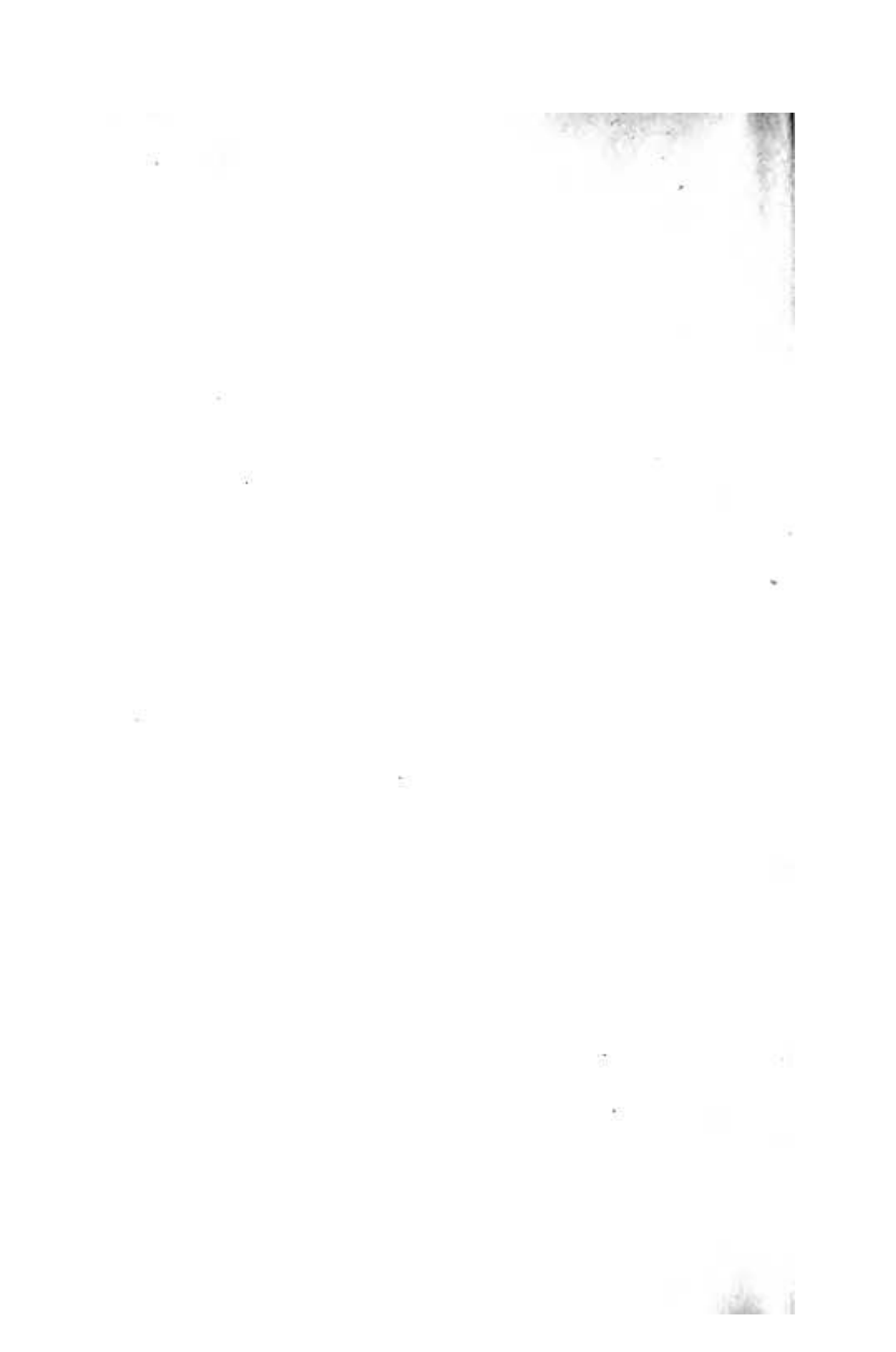
Believe me, my dear Lord,

Ever faithfully,

Your Lordship's obedient servant,

W. WELLINGTON CAIRNES.

Paris, January, 1852.



VAGARIES OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Mrs. Lawrence was one of those people who expect to have everything their own way. Happening, however, to be a woman of fortune, and having unrestricted authority over her large resources, being, moreover, a widow, it was surely natural that, in so far as related to her household, she should pocket the keys of life and death. Age was stealing a march on the good lady, as well as on the good lady's very blue-black garments, which, I dare warrant, had but indis-