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SOME ACCOUNT  
OF  
JOHN DUKE OF ARGYLL  
AND HIS FAMILY.

BY  
HIS GREAT-NIECE LADY LOUISA STUART.

[ *For Private Circulation.* ]

LONDON :  
PRINTED BY W. CLOWES & SONS, STAMFORD STREET.

1863.





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THE following Memoir was written by Lady Louisa Stuart, daughter of the Earl of Bute, Minister of George III., for the purpose of giving to Caroline Lucy, Lady Scott, an account of her great-grandfather John Duke of Argyll, and of his family.

Lady Scott was descended from the Duke, through her mother (Lady Louisa's very dear friend), Lady Frances Scott, second wife of Archibald Douglas of Douglas, created Baron Douglas.

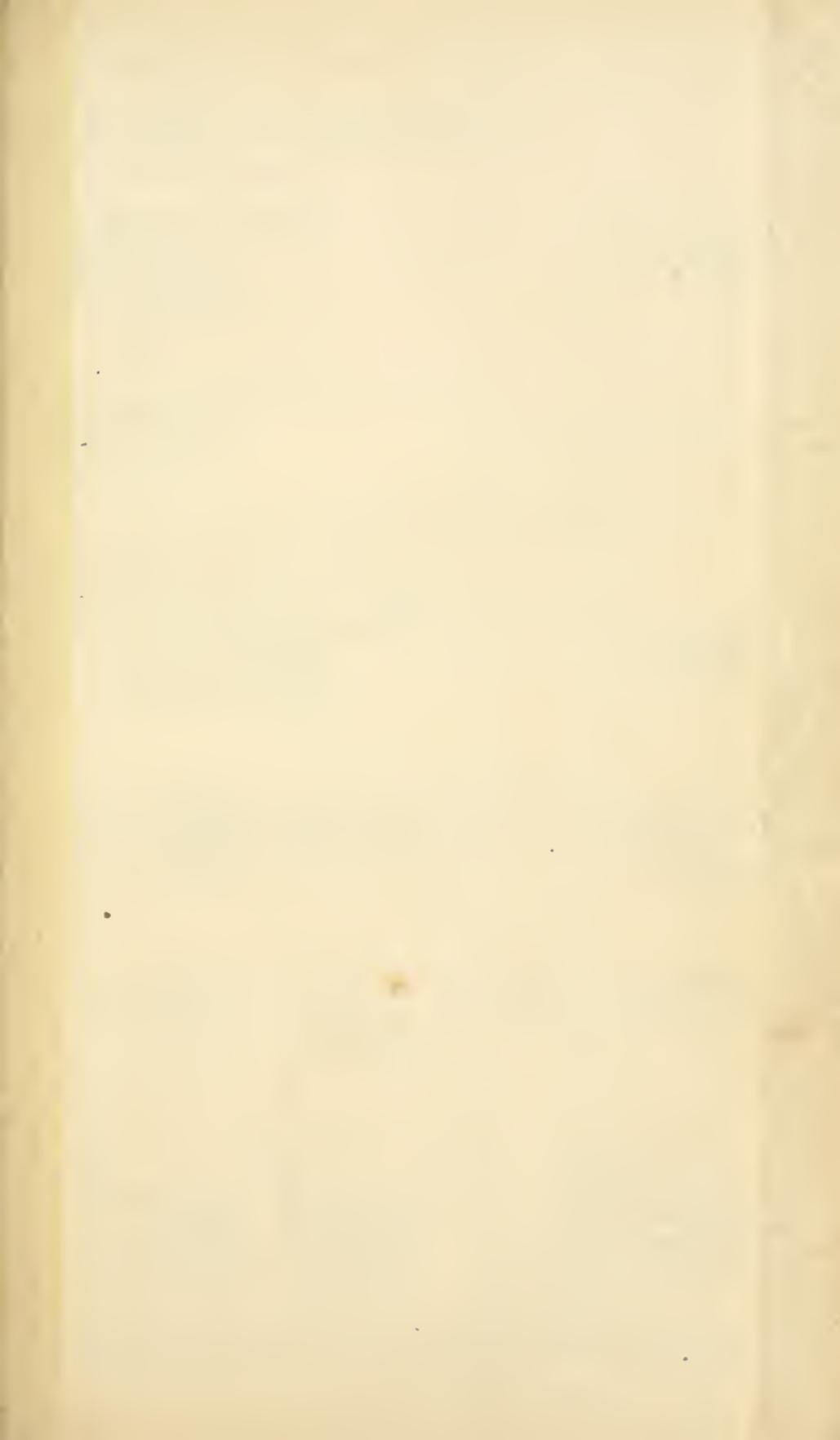
Lady Frances Scott was sister of Henry Duke of Buccleuch, and posthumous daughter of Francis Earl of Dalkeith, by his wife, Lady Caroline Campbell, eldest daughter of John Duke of Argyll and Greenwich. Lady Dalkeith married secondly the Right Honourable Charles Townshend, who died Chancellor of the Exchequer. She was created Baroness Greenwich, with remainder to the issue male of her second marriage; but, a daughter only by Mr. Townshend surviving her, the title became extinct at her death.

The accompanying genealogical tree shows Lady Scott's descent from the Duke of Argyll, and also Lady Louisa Stuart's connection with the family.

H.

*July, 1863.*





# PEDIGREE OF THE

JAMES STUART, 1st Earl of Bute.

He married AGNES, daughter of Sir G. Mackenzie.

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, 1st Duke of Argyll

Lady ELIZABETH TOLLER, daughter of Countess of Dysart and Tollemache; afterwards Lady Lauderdale.

JAMES, 2nd Earl . . . . .

○ ANNE.

JOHN, 2nd Duke of Argyll

1. MARY, daughter of James Stuart, 1702; she died in 1717.
2. JANE WARBURTON, 1717.

JOHN, 3rd Earl . . . . .

MARY, only daughter of Edward Wortley Montague.

— JAMES STUART MACKENZIE. ●

3. ○ ELIZABETH.

Children died.

FR  
of J

JOHN, 1st Marquis . . . . .

1. Hon. CHARLOTTE WINDSOR.
2. Miss COURTTS, by whom he had two children.

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○

Lady LOUISA.

*b.* Aug. 1757.

*d.* Aug. 4, 1851.

3rd.

HENRY, Duke of Buccleuch.

Lady ELIZABETH MONTAGU.

JOHN, Lord Mount Stuart . . .

Lady ELIZABETH CRICHTON.

● ● ● ● ○ ○

ELIZABETH. ○  
ALEXANDER,  
Earl of Home.

4th.

CHARLES, Duke of Buccleuch.

Hon. HARRIET TOWNSHEND.

JOHN, Lord B. . . . .

1. Lady MARIA NORTH.
2. Lady SOPHIA HASTINGS.

● ●

●  
COSPATRICK  
ALEXANDER,  
Earl of Home.  
LUCY ELIZ.  
MONTAGU.

●  
WALTER, Duke of Buccleuch.

●  
Lady CHARLOTTE THYNNE.





## SOME ACCOUNT, &c.

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JAMES EARL OF BUTE, my grandfather, married Lady Anne Campbell, the sister of his two chief friends, John Duke of Argyll, and Archibald Earl of Islay; and, dying early, appointed them guardians of his children. My father, who went to Eton school at seven years old, returned no more to Scotland till almost a man; but passed his holidays at the home of one of his uncles, most frequently at that of the Duke, with whose daughter he was therefore bred up as a brother.

The early history of the Duke and Duchess, a very singular one, was often told me by my mother, who, besides the fragments of it that general report and family tradition could furnish, had gathered its minutest details from two of their contemporary friends—Lady Suffolk (concerning whom see Lord Orford) and Mrs. Kingdon, a remarkable person, still living in my mother's days, and at past ninety years old retaining all her faculties, although thought "a little ancient,"\* according to Swift, when maid of honour to Queen Anne.

Mrs. Warburton—respectable young ladies were not yet styled *Misses*—Mrs. Jane Warburton, a country

\* "Colonel Disney said of Jenny Kingdon, the maid of honour, who is a little ancient, that the Queen should give her a brevet to act as a married woman."—*Swift's Journal to Stella*.

gentleman's daughter, of an old Cheshire family, was maid of honour at the same time. By what means or interest she became so, I never could understand; for, though well born, in a herald's sense of the words, her education had not fitted her for a stately, elegant court. Accustomed as we have now so long been to the quick general communication which throws the whole kingdom together, it is very difficult to carry our ideas back a century or more; to the period when there were no stage-coaches, no post-horses, no turnpike-roads, and when, in the distant counties, men made their wills before they undertook a journey to London. The habits of the town and country were then, of course, much more distinct from each other. Mrs. Warburton, raw from Cheshire, brought with her a coarseness of language and manners which we should hardly expect to find in the dairy-maid of her father's equal at present. Unluckily, she had few personal charms to make amends for the rusticity, ignorance, and want of breeding that soon rendered her the standing jest of her companions in office. The honourable sisterhood then subsisting were as fond of spitefully teasing each other as their predecessors, celebrated by Count Hamilton, or their successors in Queen Charlotte's train; so what a life poor Jenny Warburton led amongst them, ever blundering, getting into scrapes, and blurting out vulgar expressions, may easily be imagined. One of her bright sayings remains upon record. The removals of the court (while there was a court) from palace to palace were superintended by a state-officer called the Har-

binger. As the ladies consulted together about their packages, on a rumour of the Queen's going suddenly to Windsor, "Well! for my part," said Jenny, "I shan't trouble myself—must not the *Scavenger* take care of us maids of honour?"

This was her situation, when John Duke of Argyll arrived from the Continent with all his blushing honours thick upon him, and a military reputation inferior to Marlborough's alone. Trained under King William, who gave him a Dutch regiment before he was seventeen, he had passed his life either in the field or in transacting the public business of Scotland, and mingled with London society rarely, only in the intervals between his campaigns. By this means he was a sight, an object of curiosity, to many of the company at a crowded drawing-room on the Queen's birthday, where he made his appearance newly invested with the garter, the admired hero of the hour. Lady Mary Wortley says that women see men with their ears. He might have gained by being so seen; but he had likewise everything to attract and charm the eye—personal beauty, an expressive countenance, a commanding air, and the most easy, engaging gracefulness of manner. My mother, who was unborn at the time, and could not have known him till five-and-twenty years after it, described him as, even then, one of the finest-looking men she ever beheld, as well as the most pleasing; and Lady Betty Mackenzie used to affirm that my brother Charles (of whose beauty you have heard the fame) was his very picture.

Thus much premised, you will not wonder that he

should have been the chief subject of conversation at a dinner which the Duke of Shrewsbury, Lord Chamberlain of the Household, gave to the maids of honour, according to the usage of Queen Anne's days, upon her birthday. The cloth being removed, and the ladies' toasts called for, while all the rest named old bishops or generals, the men farthest from their thoughts, honest Mrs. Warburton went straight to the man uppermost in hers, and fairly toasted the Duke of Argyll. Her colleagues set up a shout of laughter.—“Oh, ho! He was her favourite, was he? Truly she had taken care not to choose too humbly: they wished he did but know his valuable conquest; no doubt he would be amazingly flattered—perhaps made rather too vain!” And thus the raillery, or, as we moderns term it, the *quizzing*, went on, till the victim fell a-crying, and the master of the house was forced to interpose and make peace. At night, when everybody met again at the ball, the Duke of Shrewsbury said to Argyll, who stood near him, “My Lord, you little think what mischief you have occasioned to-day. A poor young lady has been shedding bitter tears on your account.” “Upon my account! How so?” Shrewsbury told him what had passed. “Oh, poor thing!” exclaimed he; “it was very hard upon her, indeed. I have a great mind to go and talk to her, by way of avenging her cause. Which is she? Introduce me.”—And the *quizzers*, to their astonishment, and, as Mrs. Kingdon acknowledged, their no small mortification, saw him devote himself to Jenny Warburton for the remainder of the evening. Possibly what they threw

out in scorn came nearer the truth than they suspected. No man can help being a little flattered by the sincere, involuntary preference of almost any young woman; and he might secretly imagine that the impulse of such a preference had thrown the innocent girl off her guard. Be this as it might, one conversation gave birth to others; these led to visits. The visits grew frequent, grew daily; and in a short time his attachment to her became notorious, and was as passionate as extraordinary.

The wonder of it, however, lay principally in her want of beauty. Her other deficiencies were not calculated to disgust a man of very peculiar opinions, whose shining abilities and loftiness of mind did not prevent his harbouring the most illiberal contempt of women. At Athens of yore, it is said, all reputable matrons and virgins were nonentities, shut up within four walls to pursue their domestic labours unheard of and unseen; while knowledge, accomplishments, vivacity, everything that can render society agreeable, belonged exclusively to the courtezans. Now the Duke of Argyll thought this just as it should be, or rather as it necessarily must be, and actually was. He had been married very young to a rich citizen, whom he hated: they parted quickly, and the little acquaintance he could be said to have had with women since, was confined to the followers of a camp; or, if a few foreign ladies came in his way, you may be sure he passed upon them the same general sentence as Captain Winterbottom,\* in the 'Mirror';

\* "Roman ladies? Aye, they are papists; and they are all —." *Mirror*, No. 97.

for where inveterate prejudice reigns paramount, the highest mind will judge like the lowest. In a word, he believed scarcely any woman truly virtuous; but held it certain that none could be so, who had the slightest share of mental endowments, natural or acquired. And though Jenny Warburton was quite free from these impediments to chastity, yet, trusting to the inherent frailty of the sex and the liberty allowed a maid of honour, he at first concluded that she would fall his easy prey. But when on the contrary she proved absolutely immoveable, not to be tempted by promises, or presents, or magnificent offers, nor yet to be worked upon by all the arts and powers of captivation, which he could not but know he eminently possessed, his admiration exceeded even his surprise. He remained convinced that he had found the pearl of price, the most virtuous woman, if not the only one in the world. All the while never doubting that this heroic resistance cost her dear, and was the fruit of many a painful struggle with secret love.

Here his own ardent imagination, aided by his vanity, led him into a trifling mistake. Virtuous, the good simple soul really was, and from principle steadily observing those plain precepts which her limited capacity permitted her to comprehend; but in the present instance it cost her no struggle at all. Virtue had neither a warm constitution, nor a tender heart to contend with; and as for romantic love, its torments, raptures, conflicts, illusions, perplexities—nothing in Sir Isaac Newton's works could have been less intelligible to a mind like Jenny's. She positively would not, for

all his Grace was worth (and so she told him), be —— that thing, whose proper name it did not abhor her, as it did poor Desdemona, to speak very distinctly. But she had no delicacy to be wounded by the affronting proposal; nor did she see in it any reason for keeping him at a greater distance than before, since she felt herself in no danger; and it was not forbidden by the Ten Commandments, nor in any part of the Bible, to let a man, whether handsome or ugly, sit by one's fire-side an hour or two every morning. Their intercourse, therefore, continued undiminished; continued so for years. And what was remarkable, but a proof that the world can sometimes be just, it raised no scandalous reports to her prejudice: the town, the court, nay the sister maids of honour—watchful spies upon all that passed—bore witness to its perfect innocence, and pronounced her character unimpeachable.

On the death of Queen Anne, Jenny would in all probability have travelled back to her father's seat in Cheshire, with or without a small pension, if the Whig leaders whom that event brought into power had not whispered to each other, "We must provide for Mrs. Warburton, that we may secure the Duke of Argyll." Consequently her name stood foremost in the list of ladies appointed maids of honour to the new Princess of Wales (Queen Caroline), who no sooner arrived in England herself, and began to study the *carte du pays*—the relations of things and persons here—than she also took care to treat the object of his Grace's regard with particular attention.

But in less than two years after the Queen, died the Duchess of Argyll, his separated wife, who had long been a languishing invalid, hopeless of recovery. A fever of gossiping instantly ran through the court. "What would happen? Would the Duke verily and indeed marry Jenny Warburton? or would he now come to his senses, make her his best bow, and seek out a more advantageous match elsewhere?"—for he was held to be rather too fond of money, and Jenny had not twenty-pence portion. When Queen Caroline heard the news, the feeling of one woman for another made her say to Lady Suffolk (then Mrs. Howard), "How I pity that poor Warburton! Her agitation must be cruel; and she must so dread appearing in public, where everybody will be whispering, every eye watching her looks! Go and tell her I excuse her from attendance; she need not wait to-day,\* nor indeed till all this tattle has subsided." Mrs. Howard hastened with the good-natured message; but instead of relieving the person pitied, whom she found sitting, stitching with the greatest composure, it only made her stare. "Not wait to-day! Why must not I wait? What's the matter? Is the Princess angry with me? Have I done anything?" "Done! Bless us, no! My dear Mrs. Warburton, it is Her Royal Highness's kind consideration for you. She concludes you cannot like to wait; she is afraid of your being distressed." "Dear! I always like waiting exceedingly, and I a'n't in distress; who told her I

\* The maids of honour then lived in the palace, and there was a sort of drawing-room every day.

was?" "Oh! she is sure it must overpower you; you will never be able to stand it." "Not able to stand! Why, does she think me sick? Pray tell her I am as well as ever I was in my life, and perfectly able to stand: it's the oddest fancy to have come into her head!" And back went Mrs. Howard, laughing, to make the Princess quite easy about the agitations and sensibilities of poor Warburton.

Not so cool was the other party concerned. He flew to her with ardour, wanted to omit the form of mourning for a woman with whom he had long ceased to think himself connected, and urged her to let their hands be joined without delay. This she peremptorily refused, though, as it appeared, rather from a whimsical kind of superstition than any sentimental nicety: "No, indeed, she would never marry a man who had a wife above ground—not she." And all his arguments and entreaties being answered only with the same words, repeated over and over again, he was forced to relinquish his design. In six months' time,\* when the decent ceremonial had been observed, and the first wife might be presumed quite safe in her grave, their union took place.

Marriage, you know, is held an eminent breaker of spells, and Time another. Yet, palpably bewitched as the Duke of Argyll was, neither could accomplish his disenchantment. To say he proved an excellent husband would be speaking poorly: he remained throughout

\* The peerage books make the first duchess die in January, 1716, and the duke marry again in June, 1717. But both events happened in 1717. Before the New Style began, the year was held to commence in March.

life a faithful, doating, adoring lover. My mother told me she had often seen him stop on entering the room, stand a moment or two gazing at the Duchess as at the loveliest object on earth, then come forward and clasp her fondly to his bosom. Upon which she never failed to look round and cry, "Do you see, you young folks? On such a day we shall have been married so many years: will your husbands' love last as long, think ye?" Human affections are so wayward, that his love perhaps lasted the longer for the comfortable indifference with which it was repaid—an indifference, however, which she could not help. She loved him as much as she had the faculty of loving anything, and Dido or Eloisa could have done no more. His infatuation did literally equal what philtres and sorcery were believed to produce of old; since, over and above the charm of transcendent virtue, she certainly had that of beauty in his eyes, although in no other person's. My mother one day downright affronted him by happening to observe that a picture of her just brought home, was very like. "Like?" repeated he, hastily, "no, not like at all: how can anybody think it so? It does not do her justice in any respect. But step this way, my dear, and I will show you another sort of likeness"—taking out of his pocket a beautiful miniature without the least resemblance (that she could discern) to her Grace. Much embarrassed, she began to praise the painting. "Yes"—said he, as to himself, not minding her—"this is my Jane."

This uncommon passion stood the test of what in many cases has poisoned matrimonial comfort—of a dis-

appointment too apt to put men unreasonably out of humour with their wives. Without undervaluing women as much as he did, it was natural that the head of so great a family should long for a son; and he longed most inordinately: while, as if to tantalize him, daughter perversely followed daughter, to the number of five (one dying a child); and his hopes, often renewed, regularly ended in fresh mortification—not the less bitter because Lord Islay was his presumptive heir. The brothers frequently disagreed about politics, and usually about everything else; at some times were on a foot of intimacy, at others not upon speaking terms. I have heard my father say, that when he was a boy under their joint direction, he could remember occasions where (non-intercourse chancing to prevail) all arrangements respecting him were to be made by letter. At best, there was that direct fundamental difference in their natures, which will rarely allow the nearest and even the kindest relations to be partial sympathising friends. The one was, properly speaking, a hero; the other, altogether a man of this world. The Duke thought Lord Islay undignified and time-serving; Lord Islay thought the Duke wrong-headed and romantic. Yet both were assuredly superior men. John had genius, with all the lights and shades thereunto appertaining; Archibald strong clear sense, sound judgment, and thorough knowledge of mankind. John, a soldier from his cradle, was warm-hearted, frank, honourable, magnanimous, but fiery-tempered, rash, ambitious, haughty, impatient of contradiction; Archibald, bred a lawyer, was cool,

shrewd, penetrating, argumentative—an able man of business, and a wary, if not crafty politician. “I wanted to discuss such an affair with my brother,” he would say, “but all went wrong. I saw the Tollemache \* blood beginning to rise, so I e’en quitted the field.” \*

To resume the parallel. John took pleasure in wit, poetry, and the belles lettres; Archibald in philosophical experiments, mechanics, natural history, and what had no name and little existence in his days, but is now called Political Economy. He planted your neighbour Hunt’s garden for Sir Harry Bellenden, and made a place for himself (Whitton) out of a piece of Hounslow Heath, on purpose to try what shrubs and trees he could bring the barrenest soil to bear. The Duke of Argyll had a kind of court round him, consisting of a few sensible party-men, not a few Scotch dependants, a set of dull old officers who had served under his command, and a whole tribe of Campbell-cousins. Amongst these was the very handsome, very stupid, Colonel Jack Campbell, in future himself Duke of Argyll, and grandfather of the present family. Lord Islay’s humble companions were the ingenious men who assisted him in his scientific pursuits, or those whose inventions he patronised. Conversing as he did with all manner of people, yet still keeping his proper place in the best and highest society, the younger brother could not well be supposed to share the elder’s prejudice against intelligent women. He

\* Their mother, a lady of very high spirit, was a Tollemache, daughter of the Duchess of Lauderdale (Countess of Dysart in her own right) by her first husband, Sir Lionel Tollemache.

saw women (and men too) just as they were, had no toleration for fools of either sex, and felt a supreme contempt for his sister-in-law, who, in return, hated him cordially, and delighted in pecking at his friends or picking up nonsensical stories about his amours. Whenever she deplored her ill-fortune in bringing the Duke no male heir, the burthen of the lament was sure to be—“Aye! the estate will go to my Lord Islay, and he will give it all to his ——.” If I say his mistresses and his natural children, you will think me sufficiently plain-spoken: the terms *she* used belonged to much more primitive English; for having been so long the companion of a man whose polished language was almost proverbial, had not in the least improved her diction. It is true that he never dreamed of correcting it: his beloved Jane’s vulgarity passed for uprightness and simplicity with him, and who else might reprehend the Duchess of Argyll?

Her female court, the wives of the cousins and retainers, were of course more obsequious to her than she had ever been to Queen Caroline or Queen Anne. And what homage was paid her by her own Cheshire relations we may conjecture from the reverential style of her very mother, in those letters found among Lady Greenwich’s papers.

I do not deny that the good lady seems to have been formed by nature for an old nurse; yet I question whether Eton would have fallen quite so prostrate before you if you had married a Duke of the blood royal. It is, or it was, an etiquette with Princes (possibly brought from

Germany), that in formally addressing the Sovereign, his collateral relations should alter the term of kindred, if it implied superiority. For example, when Princess Amelia wrote to our late King, her nephew, she subscribed herself "his Majesty's most dutiful niece." Old Mrs. Warburton ought to have adopted this form, and remained "her Grace's most dutiful daughter;" for so completely does the poor woman's mind quail beneath the awful idea of a *Duchess*, that she can scarcely find words to express her grateful sense of the honour conferred upon her when "*the dear young ladies*" (her own grandchildren) are sent to pay her a visit in the country.

With regard to the acquaintances her Grace made in the world at large, where everybody must make some, they could hardly help having manners more genteel than her own; but as there are always to be found goodies and gossips of very high quality, they were pretty much upon a par with her otherwise, and, like herself, guiltless of any affinity to that proscribed class, "your clever women," whom her Lord's maxims authorised her to esteem for the most part no better than they should be. Gladly did she bar her doors against *all such cattle*—one person excepted, who by his express mandate had constant admittance, free egress and regress, and even no small share of authority. This was Lady Suffolk, whose judgment he valued so highly as to insist upon her being consulted in all cases which he felt his Jane incompetent to decide.

I asked my mother how such a respect for Lady

Suffolk's understanding could be reconciled to his contemptuous opinion of the sex? "Oh! easily enough," replied she; "you may be confident he thought she had once been George the Second's mistress; therefore had purchased her superiority at the established price, and was an instance to confirm his system instead of defeating it."

It did nevertheless undergo something like a defeat in the latter part of his life, after he had finally broken with Sir Robert Walpole and joined the Tories against the court. Opposition, you may observe, is almost always a much more sociable body than the partisans of Government. The part of attacking raises people's spirits, gives them the spring of a vigorous courser on rising ground, makes them all hope and animation. Ministers have a load of care on their shoulders; they are to do the business as well as to talk about it; they are a little teased and perplexed by their enemies, and a vast deal more by their friends; they give formal dinners, as in duty bound, and rejoice when the task is performed.

Not to mention that, having the solid loaves and fishes to distribute, it is natural they should neglect using lesser means of attraction. In the meanwhile their adherents, all and each out of humour about something or other, as well as fully occupied with their own schemes and pretensions, are far better disposed to sit still and grumble than to make any lively exertions in support of the common cause. Opposition, on the contrary, who have only the easy task of finding fault,

and as yet no bones of contention among themselves, are gay and disentangled, ready to engage in rounds of dinners and suppers, festive meetings, pleasant parties, and all sorts of amusements. It is no slight object with them to render their side of the question the most fashionable. Making their houses agreeable operates as a measure of policy, keeps their troops together, and gains fresh recruits, especially amongst the rising young men of promising talents. The ladies whom this brings into play, pleased to be of use and consequence, fall to work with their whole souls in behalf of the party their husbands, or lovers, or friends belong to; and though subject to spoil matters by their violence, yet sometimes succeed in managing them by their address.

The Duke of Argyll, now forced to bear his part in such a bustling scene, saw more of the real world and lived more in mixed company than he had ever done before; and thus unavoidably became acquainted with several women of fashion—women of exemplary lives and unspotted reputation—whom, to his great surprise, he found remarkably conversable and well-informed. He acknowledged to the other men having hitherto disbelieved that any characters of the kind could exist; and he owned, with candour, that the discovery raised serious doubts whether his former notions of the sex had had a just foundation. Let me tell you, the frank avowal of these doubts was the proof of a great mind; since an ordinary one, equally under the dominion of prejudice, is ever precisely the horse in the proverb, whom one man may bring to the water, but

twenty cannot make him drink. Forcing open my eyes, and inducing me to examine the object placed before them, are quite different things ; nor need we go far to light on persons who, supposing them to have the same given prepossessions as the Duke, combated by the same facts, would solve the difficulty by resolving to believe that the ladies in question secretly favoured their footmen ; and, settling the matter thus, cling to their own opinion as tenaciously as before.

In the Duke's case, conviction or wisdom came too late, as she mostly does. All his daughters, except Lady Mary, were grown up ; his lot was cast, his career nearly closed ; his home-circle past all chance of improvement. My mother said it was absolutely grievous and provoking to behold the society (if society it could be called) of that house ; the spirit of dulness predominating ; the toad-eaters, the prozers, the chatter-boxes, the old housewives, and housekeepers surrounding a man not only so eminent, but so peculiarly agreeable, who, with a tone and manner that would have made nonsense pleasing, had such a variety of interesting conversation. But those that (like herself) were capable of tasting it, seldom got leave to enjoy it for five minutes in peace. Either his Jane came up and took the words out of his mouth without ceremony, or else the clack of her tea-table arose, and some tale of scandal, or history of a game at quadrille, or dissertation about buying dishelouts drowned his harmonious voice, and drove him to take refuge in a corner with one of his political or military followers. Amongst other gifts, he told a

story admirably, with particular energy and terseness, and, conscious of excelling, did not dislike to find a willing hearer. Alas! three times out of four, no sooner had he begun than the Duchess's shrill pipe struck in: "No, no; it was not so;" "No, now, my lord, you don't tell that right; let me." Upon which, moving quietly off, he fell into his usual way of walking up and down the room, with his head bent and his hands behind him (a habit which was also my father's), till she had hammered and stammered out as much of the matter as she could recollect; then, turning round with a placid smile, he would say, "There ——, Jane has told it you."

Notwithstanding many similar instances of complaisance, you must not think he was a man governed by his wife. No one could be more master at home, where his decrees, once issued, were the nod of Jupiter, allowing no resistance, nor, indeed, meeting with any; for a sense of duty disposed her to obey; and although she had the obstinacy of a fool in the petty concerns that she viewed as her own province, yet it is but fair to say that she was quite free from any taint of the cunning which often attends weak understandings. Therefore, she never sought to sway him by cajoling or artifice. Plain truth and downright honesty were the principal features of her character; she always trod a straight path, and always meant to take the right one. In a word, she was a good woman, to the utmost of her knowledge and power. On these valuable (or rather invaluable) qualities he used to declare

that his strong affection for her was grounded, and who can call such a basis insufficient?

He would, however, as soon have consulted her cat as herself upon any point of importance. When graver subjects demanded consideration, the wife, the woman, was to keep her due distance, and not presume to intermeddle. But then grave subjects and important points are so few,—light and unimportant so many,—and these latter start up so continually in the course of every common current working-day, that the party to whom they are carelessly (but constantly) yielded creeps on acquiring, crumb by crumb, a wonderful portion of something which, if not actual dominion, does just as well. Nor is this the least apt to happen where she has been held at the outset too utterly insignificant to alarm the pride of imperial man with a suspicion that it was in the nature of things she should ever prove the conqueror. Could a wren possibly possess some glimmering of human intellect, it would have a far better chance of influencing us than a *whole*-reasoning elephant, or one of Swift's Houynhims who, coming with the wisdom of Solomon, would find us all set in battle-array to oppose him. The Duchess was her husband's darling little bird, whom he loved to indulge, dreaded to hurt, and could not have the heart to handle roughly. In addition to this tender feeling, allowances were to be made for the weakness of the sex, and its whimsies and its waywardness; and it was idle to argue with women, and women must have their own foolish way. And thus it ended in her having hers

pretty generally in all ordinary daily proceedings, which were all she cared for.

On the head of money—that frequent cause of dissension between husband and wife—they did not differ very widely, both being of saving tempers. Not that I was by any means taught to suppose him the “*miser*” he is represented by Lord Orford—ever caustic, and especially bitter against him as the opponent of his father. My authorities pictured him as strictly just, habitually regular and careful—maybe, somewhat *too* careful—in his expenses, but never mean; very capable of generous actions, and, when he gave, giving nobly. His table, his equipage, his whole establishment, were as handsome as possible, and as well suited to his rank and fortune. In the lesser domestic details, which he knew nothing of, and she managed as she pleased, Jenny Warburton’s head would sometimes peep out over the Duchess’s robes. Yet she was charitable to the poor, and on the whole rather narrow than covetous, only retaining here and there fragments of those early habits of frugality which, in her maiden state, had been both necessary and laudable. After his death she remembered with reverence the grandeur of his notions; and though still occasionally disturbed about twopence-halfpenny, was desirous that in the main her arrangements should be such as became the Duke of Argyll’s widow.

You are sensible how often things, seemingly of no moment at all, come, in some unforeseen manner, or at some distance of time, to bear strongly on others of the greatest, and it is amusing to detect the concealed

chain of circumstances by which this is brought to pass. But we need not trace the course and effects of her Grace's influence through any intricate mazes: it went directly to one point—in most people's opinion, sufficiently material. The daughters, being daughters of the useless, mischievous sex—their birth a calamity, themselves an incumbrance—were unfortunately classed amongst the trifles left to her sole superintendance; their father interfering only with a negative, so curious and characteristic that it would be a pity to pass it over unnoticed. He forbade their learning French, because "*One language was enough for a woman to talk in;*" and the Duchess, who did not know a word of it, had not the least mind to dispute the position. As what they should be taught was a question wholly beneath his attention, and as she was convinced by her own experience and example, ready at hand to refer to, that most other branches of education were equally needless with foreign tongues, the young ladies learned writing and accompts from the steward, and needlework from a governess very little superior to the housekeeper. "For after all," reasoned their mother, "if you had a pack of girls—if you were so unlucky—what upon earth could you do with them but find husbands to take them off your hands?" Well, then, *she* knew nothing of this, and *she* never was taught that; and pray, had not she married? Aye, and married the Duke of Argyll? No wonder she thought the argument conclusive. Her grudge against them for not being boys (which was yet greater than his), together

with the natural indifference of her temper, prevented her concerning herself about them, while children, farther than to ascertain that they were safe and well ; and she could rest satisfied without constant ocular demonstration of that, seldom suffering them to come and disturb the dogs and cats who occupied her drawing-room, plagued the company at dinner,\* and engrossed all the fondness she had to bestow. Lady Caroline, the eldest daughter, dined below stairs on a Sunday ; and was just so far distinguished in a few other particulars as to let the humble friends of the family perceive that it would be prudent to begin celebrating her charms and perfections. Otherwise, she chiefly inhabited the nursery, which the rest hardly ever quitted. At Sudbrook this was the small house, built on purpose for them and called the Young Ladies' House. Here they did what they pleased, nobody caring, and romped as much as they pleased with my father and uncle when the Eton holidays added them to the party.

If Time would have but stood still, this order of things might have lasted for ever unchanged. But he has a trick of moving onward : the children grew up, as all children do, and the parents—although surprised at it, as most parents are—could no longer ex-

\* One poor mortal, a daily guest, had an antipathy to cats. "*To break him of it,*" as she said, she would place a huge he-cat on the back of his chair as he sat at table. The Duke, after making fruitless efforts to protect him, was forced to laugh it off as a joke not worth minding. Her dogs were always pugs ; and down to the end of her days every visitor on every visit was assured that Pug and Puss (pronounced alike) did not live together like dog and cat.

clude them from their society. The seven stages of human life have been the same ever since Adam and Eve commenced peopling the world; yet few persons can slide from the second to the third—from childhood into youth—without amazing their elder friends as much as if the thing had never happened before. This said in a parenthesis, we resume the House of Argyll. Lady Caroline, the eldest child, and in some sort the heiress (for the Duke meant to make her a son by giving her his English estates), was presented at Court, and her sisters were admitted into the parlour, where, for some time, fear of their father kept them all in silence and decorum—Lady Mary excepted, who was too young (being only fifteen or sixteen when he died) and had too much of the Tollemache blood to be afraid of anybody. Her fearless prattle entertained him; and she grew a favourite, to the great detriment of her future disposition. It is strange how very inconsiderate, men, sensible men—nay, men of great abilities—will often be in their treatment of children. Reversing the practice of the children themselves, who invariably talk to their dolls as rational creatures, they toy with their luckless plaything as if it were destined never to become one, and had no more to do with mind and soul than a dancing-dog, or a monkey. I have repeatedly heard my father impute the ungovernable violence of Lady Mary's temper in after life to his uncle's injudicious indulgence of her at the period when she was just old enough to know she ought to overcome her passions, and young enough to have resisted them with some

success. Not indulgence alone; for, exactly as you have seen a school-boy teach his pony to lash out, and his cur to snap at people's fingers, he took delight to put her in a fury, crying, "Look! look at Mary!" when she flew like a little tigress, screaming, scratching, and tearing; then, after laughing heartily, he would finish the improving lesson by coaxing her with sugar-plums to kiss and be friends.

The timid reserve of the elder ladies did not last long. Lord Strafford, a very young man of large fortune, happening to dine at their father's on his return from his travels, was so charmed with the beauty of the second, Lady Anne, that he immediately asked her in marriage. After she was disposed of, all restrictions seemed to cease—all bounds were broken down; the others freely exalted the discordant voices which they all inherited from their mother, and became the most noisy, hoydening girls in London. In my own day, when they were the most unmerciful censurers of young people's dress and behaviour, my mother—who had herself a mind far above laying an absurd stress upon trifles—used to laugh at certain of her recollections, and attribute their violent wrath against the gay world to spleen at growing old, and envy of the pleasures they could no longer partake.

I mention my own day. Ere that could well be said to dawn, I remember having seen the last Earl of Lichfield; a red-faced old gentleman, shaking all over with the palsy, who had almost drunk away his senses, and seemed hardly to know what he was saying or

doing. Marvellous are the metamorphoses produced by Time. You may suppose I found it very difficult to believe that this object, formerly Lord Quarendon, had been not only handsome, lively, and agreeable, but much more—the most promising in point of parts amongst all the young men of the Tory (then the Opposition and Patriot) party—a bud of genius fostered by its chiefs as likely to prove the future pride of their garland. The Duke of Argyll, in particular, caressed and extolled him, made him free of his house, and, one might say, taught his family to admire him. Blind, meanwhile, like many a man in the same case, to the glaring probability that a young lady would not admire long without admitting some warmer feeling, he never asked himself how he should relish so natural an occurrence. Lord Quarendon had a father alive, not inclined to part with his money; a mother and sisters to be provided for;—in short, he was not by any means a great match. Therefore, since it was certain nothing but a great match would do for Lady Caroline Campbell, it never came into his Grace's head that either party could possibly think of the other. But they found it both possible and pleasant to think, and think on; and he remained almost the only person not apprised of their mutual attachment, until Lord Dalkeith's making her serious proposals brought about a partial discovery.

The Buccleuch family had rested in comparative obscurity for two or three generations past. However inclined King William had once appeared to favour the

unfortunate Duke of Monmouth, yet a direct attempt to claim the Crown was a fact to be jealously remembered by its successive wearers; and, so far from reversing his attainder and restoring his honours, as was done in other cases (for instance, to the Argylls themselves), William hastened to bestow the title elsewhere, creating Lord Mordaunt Earl of Monmouth. The Duchess presently married a second husband, Lord Cornwallis, who had his own interests to mind. Lord Dalkeith, her eldest son, died in her lifetime, at thirty years old; and her grandson, now Duke of Buccleuch, a man of mean understanding and meaner habits, did no credit to his ancestry. In his youth a match was settled between him and your grandmother, Lady Jane Douglas, but broken off; and her brother, the Duke of Douglas, fought a duel with him in consequence. Supposing a story true which was current at the time, that she had owed to the Duke of Buccleuch her repugnance, and, throwing herself on his honour, desired to be screened from the anger of her relations, this duel would seem to denote something chivalrous on his part, auguring better things than ensued. He married another Lady Jane Douglas, the Duke of Queensberry's sister; but, after her death, which happened in a few years, plunged into such low amours, and lived so entirely with the lowest company, that, although he resided constantly in the neighbourhood of London, his person was scarcely known to his equals, and his character fell into utter contempt.\*

\* It was believed that not long before his death he married a

Yet, in spite of the thousand disadvantages of having such a father, the son proved a gentleman; far from handsome, it was true—not of brilliant parts, no Lord Quarendon, but essentially good, amiable, and worthy. These qualities, added to great rank and fortune, made the Duke of Argyll readily accept his offer, not at all doubting his daughter's cheerful concurrence. And if (as I grant it probable) he thought she had nothing to do with the business farther than to receive his commands and obey them, still you must beware of going headlong, and setting him down as an unfeeling tyrant. To judge fairly of those who lived long before us, or of foreigners, we should put quite apart both the usages and the notions of our own age or country, and strive to adopt for the moment such as prevailed in theirs. He followed hard upon the time, remember, when it was common for mere children to be united, or at least betrothed, by their parents; when Lady Russel, had she been asked, in the midst of her negotiation with Lord Devonshire, whether young Mistress Rachel was enamoured of his son, would infallibly have deemed the question an impertinent, insipid jest, or the inquirer a madman.

Nor were marriages thus arranged among the great

Windsor washerwoman. Your uncle, Henry Duke of Buccleuch, told me that when he was a boy at Eton, a middle-aged woman of decent appearance one day insisted upon seeing him. She gazed at him earnestly, kissed and blessed him, and, without saying anything more, went away. He had afterwards reason to think that this was his grandfather's widow, who received an annuity from his guardians on condition of not assuming the title.

alone; the very proverb, framed, as all proverbs are, by and for the vulgar, "Marry your daughter betimes, for fear she should marry herself," is a convincing proof of the contrary. Consult, indeed, an author of much later date, one certainly not too well versed in the manners of high life, one whose theme and object it was to treat of love—Richardson, I mean, the great father of modern novels—Richardson himself cannot help betraying an evident predilection for matches thus soberly settled. In No. 97 of the 'Rambler' (written by him) you find his *beau idéal* of a matrimonial transaction carried on exactly as it ought to be. The young man can see the young woman only at church, where her beauty and pious demeanour win his heart. He applies to her parents through a mutual friend; they acquaint her with his offer; she is all resignation to their will, for perhaps (mark the *perhaps*) she had seen him at church likewise. Then it proceeds: "Her relations applaud her for her duty; friends meet, points are adjusted, delightful perturbations, hopes, and a few lovers' fears fill up the vacant space, *till an interview is granted.*" In plain English, the two persons concerned have never exchanged a single syllable in their lives till they meet as an affianced couple. And this he calls marrying for love! Brush away all the fine words, and how far it differs from Dr. Johnson's scheme of people being paired by the Chancellor I leave you to determine. But I have been drawn into a terrible long digression.

As facts tell themselves, I need not say Lord Dal-

keith's addresses were successful ; but you will be impatient to hear what resistance they met with, and how it was overcome. When Miss Townshend eloped forty years afterwards, a vulgar, abusive newspaper, such as your present 'John Bull,' caught this old anecdote by the tail, and, giving a blundering version of it, bade her mother recollect "that she had nearly been in the oven herself." Upon which, Lady Greenwich thought fit to tell Lady Emily Kerr (Macleod) her own story in her own way. And a very fine one she made it as ever formed the foundation of tragedy or romance : a conflict between passionate love and sacred duty, adorned with tears, fits, despair, and (for aught I know) delirium. She kept her bed, she said, for many days ; the physicians gave but faint hopes of her recovery ;—yet still her dear father remained inflexible. Then she had such a love, such a profound veneration for him—and, to say the truth, Lord Dalkeith was so unexceptionable. In short, after sufferings not to be described, she was led to the altar more dead than alive, and there plighted her unwilling vows. But in time, becoming sensible of her husband's excellences, she perceived the great wisdom of her father's choice, which (Heaven knew!) had made her far happier than she could have been had she followed her own foolish inclinations.

Nothing could sound more reasonable ; only, something nearer the time of action, my mother heard a different tale from Lady Betty Mackenzie, who, though not wise, was ever a *straightforward* person of strict veracity. She freely acknowledged that a positive

engagement subsisted between her sister and Lord Lichfield, perfectly well known to her mother and every other person in the house, saving its master. Even little Lady Mary could give her verdict upon the cause; and she hit right, as children and young folks are sometimes led to do by their natural reason. "I know sister Caroline must not marry Lord Quarendon if papa disapproves of it; but, to be sure, she cannot marry anybody else." Sister Caroline did cry, as sentiment required, for near a week; and Lady Betty and Lady Strafford cried too, in concern for her distress, and dread of the scene likely to follow when papa should know all. Before this came to pass, however—to the best of Lady Betty's belief—one morning, on opening the unhappy lady's door, she was accosted with these words, "Well, sister, I have consented to marry my Lord Dalkeith," uttered in such an easy, indifferent tone, that she protested she stood staring as if a sudden blow had taken away her breath. Thenceforth she saw no more symptoms of grief or discontent: the old lover ceased to be named, the new one was graciously smiled upon, and everybody fell to discussing wedding-clothes and equipages with the usual alacrity.

Very soon after their marriage the Duke did his son-in-law a most material service by obtaining for his father and family the restoration of one of the Duke of Monmouth's forfeited English peerages—the earldom of Doncaster, by which title their descendants now sit in Parliament. I mention this here to avoid future interruption; for we have not yet done with Lord Quarendon,

who bore his disappointment so unlike a patient, good Christian as to prove that he put little faith (whoever might put much) in the reluctance of the bride, or her agonising struggles, or her pious submission to parental authority. He was furious: far too angry for any magnanimous feeling. He went about calling her a mercenary jilt to whoever would listen, with all the other epithets which men, whether of high or low degree, are apt to be lavish of upon such occasions. Not content with this, he took measures to lay the whole affair before the Duke of Argyll: it is even said, sent him her letters,—a severe revenge upon the person least to blame, since, in fact, the Duke had never imagined that anything more than a mere girlish fancy stood in the way of her accepting Lord Dalkeith. And, however great his displeasure might have been on finding her otherwise engaged without his consent, he was the last man in the world to have sanctioned, much less exacted, a direct breach of promise. He thought, like Walpole's Florian—

“ A soldier's honour is his virtue. Gownmen  
Wear it for show, and barter it for gold,  
And have it still : a soldier and his honour  
Exist together, and together perish.”

The blow, then, struck at his heart. Not solely on account of Lady Caroline's conduct (although that gave him mortification enough), but because it forcibly overthrew his good opinion of the Duchess. She had been privy to all. She had concealed all from him. She had helped her daughter to deceive him. There was

an end of his firm reliance on her affection, her truth, her integrity. The cherished illusion of his life was at length dispelled and done away. About the same time his health began to break; a paralytic disorder afflicted his nerves; but my mother said the tokens of a deeply-wounded spirit were very distinguishable from the effects of the disease, as was also the change of manner towards his Jane. He did not become harsh to her; but his coldness, silence, and melancholy abstraction were striking,—tacit reproaches, altogether unfelt and even unperceived. The good woman, who in reality had erred only from sheer weakness and folly, being the dupe of a daughter cleverer than herself, saw nothing that ailed him but bodily illness; and, to show due concern for that, fulfilled the duty of a faithful wife by fidgeting and fussing about him with a tormenting assiduity which must have been the one thing wanting to complete Job's trials. Teaze—teaze—teaze, from morning till night. ‘Now, my lord, do eat this.’ “Now, my lord, don't eat that.” “Now, pray put on your great coat.” “Now, be sure you take your draught.” “Now, you must not sit by the fire; its too hot.” “Now, you should not stand at the window; its too cold.” “Oh, how well I remember the way of it,” said my mother; “and how I used to pity the poor man!” He never spoke one word in answer; seldom raised his head to look at her; but, for the sake of peace, usually did as she would have him, seeming quite unable to contend. In this condition he lingered, with transient gleams of amendment, but in the main

drooping more and more, until repeated paralytic attacks carried him off, a twelvemonth after the marriage of Lady Dalkeith.

It has been abundantly shown that the Duchess's nature was not susceptible of very violent emotions. She could grieve (as she loved) only as much as she could. Yet on this event she uttered an expression that was touching, because it implied a meek sense of her own inferiority of character. "Well" (said she, fetching a deep sigh), "I have been the favourite of a great man!" She continued to inhabit Sudbrook and the town-house in Bruton-street, both of which he bequeathed her for her life; and this outlasted his such a number of years that I myself have a faint recollection of being put into mourning on her decease.

I once heard Lady Betty relate a circumstance that greatly contributed to depress her father's spirits in the last sad year of his life. Lord —— (I have totally forgotten the name), a very old acquaintance, whom he had not seen since they were both young men, came unexpectedly to Adderbury. The Duke gave him the most cordial reception, showed him his grounds, insisted he should stay dinner, and seemed so cheered by his company that the day passed over uncommonly well. But at parting, when he attended his guest to his carriage, "*that creature,*" quoth Lady Betty, suddenly turned round on the step to whisper, "I had orders to give you this," slipped a paper into his hand, leaped in, and drove away. It was a letter from the Pretender, full of high-flown compliments on his Grace's public

spirit in opposing the Court: a conduct which, it might be hoped, was a sure sign of his having at last (though late) espoused the rightful cause, and resolved to reinstate his lawful sovereign. Support like his must insure success; and, were that once obtained, what reward could be denied him? He instantly sent the letter to the King, together with another, professing unalterable loyalty and protesting his utter abhorrence of the treason suggested: protestations which were perfectly sincere; for the Hanover succession had no steadier friend. Yet that its enemies should have dared thus to tamper with him, and have interpreted his political conduct as forwarding their designs, wounded him to the very soul. He writhed under the insult, could not forget it; and Lady Betty affirmed that to his last hour it rankled in his mind.

His English dukedom of Greenwich became extinct; his brother Archibald succeeded to the Argyll titles and estates; and his eldest daughter inherited considerable property, including Adderbury in Oxfordshire, and Caroline Park near Edinburgh. So she was rich, prosperous, and, above all, fortunate in a husband. By all I could gather concerning Lord Dalkeith, he belonged to the species of those quiet, silent, dull men, who are overlooked in gay society and seldom mentioned by the world. But I imagine he very much resembled his uncle Charles (the *good*) Duke of Queensberry, in mildness, benevolence, kindness of heart, and extreme sweetness of temper. Like him, too, he fondly loved his wife, and was content to let the govern-

ment be on her shoulder. Her Grace of Queensberry—a spoiled, wilful beauty, most bewitching, most perverse and provoking, with superior natural parts, but what the Scotch term an enormous *bee in her bonnet*—wanted the control of a far stronger hand than the poor Duke's to curb her innumerable whims and caprices, which ran riot, and would have tired out the patience of any other man breathing. Lady Dalkeith, a woman of a more common sort, could rest pretty well satisfied with having her own way in every particular, and be goodhumoured (at least while young) as long as she was pleased. Accordingly, her lord and she were reckoned the happiest of happy couples during the brief period of their married life. Placed at the head of the world, and of an age to enjoy its gifts, they spent their time gaily in entertaining their friends at home, or in seeking livelier pleasures abroad.

You may have heard of their acting plays: this was set on foot by the Duchess of Queensberry,\* who had always some *rage*, some reigning fancy, which she carried to excess. For one year she could think of nothing but the stage, and fitted up a small theatre in Queensberry House, where Otway's 'Orphan,' a good deal clipped and pared, and Young's 'Revenge,' were each acted three times. The performers were a family-party of brothers and sisters, or cousins bred up to-

\* She invited Quin, of whom she was very fond, down to Amesbury. "And now, Mr. Quin," said she, "I have been considering how to amuse you in the country. Suppose we act a play?" "Madam," replied Quin, "if you asked a grocer to dinner, would you treat him with figs?"

gether from childhood: Lord and Lady Dalkeith, Lady Betty (then unmarried), my father, Mr. Mackenzie, and a beautiful youth, Colonel Campbell's second son, long afterwards known to you as that beautiful old man Lord Frederic Campbell; Mrs. Campbell's brother, Sir Harry Bellenden, and two or three elderly dependants of the Argylls and Queensberrys were pressed into the service to fill minor parts; the Duchess not acting herself, but indefatigably managing, prompting, and overlooking the whole. The 'Orphan,' in particular, succeeded so well through Lady Dalkeith's Monimia and my father's Castalio, that Frederick Prince of Wales had his wish to see it intimated to the Duke of Queensberry; and it was therefore performed a fourth time for the Prince and Princess,\* and the audience they chose to nominate. For then, and down to a much later day, whenever any of the royal family accepted an entertainment from a subject, they pointed out the company they would have invited to meet them. The pictures you have seen of your grandfather and grandmother, and those of Lady Betty and Mr. Mackenzie, were taken in their dresses for the characters of the 'Orphan.' Perhaps I dwell too long on these trifles; in my own youth they pleased my imagination, and I had such delight in getting at all the details of former days that I believe I made my mother tell me

\* Behold the whole and sole foundations of my father's "*having been used to act plays for the amusement of the Prince and his Court.*" Had Lord Henry Fitzgerald become a Minister, some memoir-writer would tell the world he had performed Varanes and Lord Trinket at Richmond House, to pay his court to the present King.

every old story a thousand times, and teased her with a thousand questions about every little circumstance.

As I intimated above, the holiday-season of Lord and Lady Dalkeith's festivities was destined to have a very short duration. They had been married but about seven years, when the former, going for a few days to Adderbury with Sir James Peachy,\* his intimate friend, and by alliance his near relation, was seized with a sudden illness. Danger came rapidly on, and the fourth day he died in Sir James's arms, having just had power to dictate and sign a will which his friend took down on the first scrap of paper at hand. This left to Lady Dalkeith ten thousand pounds—all he could dispose of—and constituted her the guardian of his children. Their eldest son had died an infant. There remained living, a daughter, Caroline, who survived her father but three or four years, and three boys—Henry, shortly after Duke of Buccleuch, James, and Campbell. ANOTHER CHILD † had not yet seen the light.

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The circles produced by throwing stones into water, dear Car, are no bad emblem of the influence which generations, as they pass, have on those that succeed them. That of the immediate parents upon the children is strong and visible; the grandchildren show its traces

\* Created Lord Selsey in 1794. He married Lady Caroline Scott, daughter of Lord Deloraine, and granddaughter of the Duke of Monmouth—of course Lord Dalkeith's cousin.

† Lady Frances Scott.—ED.

but faintly; when it widens to the great-grandchildren it vanishes wholly away. John Duke of Argyll is no more to you than his ancestor the Marquis; Lady Greenwich herself very little; yet she, and even her sisters, had so much to do with a subject in which you take the deepest interest, that their characters must be developed in order to render this well understood. Setting her aside for certain reasons, let me give you an idea of the other three.

Lady Strafford was held strikingly like her father, must have been beautiful when young, and when old retained uncommon sweetness of countenance. To quote Horace Walpole's early description of her in his 'Advice to a Painter:—

“ The crescent on her brow displayed  
 In curls of loveliest brown inlaid,  
 With every charm to rule the night,  
 Like Dian, Strafford woos the sight.  
 The easy shape, the piercing eye,  
 The snowy bosom's purity;  
 The unaffected gentle phrase  
 Of native wit in all she says:  
 Eckhardt, for these thy art's too faint,  
 You may admire, but cannot paint.”

Whether the “ native wit ” was truth or compliment, may be doubted. Physical causes prematurely weakened her understanding; but I should suppose it could never have ranked above the *mediocre*, or what the men mean when they say (rather saucily) “ Such a one has “ sense enough for a pretty woman.” Although habitually led by her sisters to inveigh, as they did, against all present fashions, she had neither spleen nor

bitterness in her own nature; nor was there much resemblance between her and them except in a loud, shrill voice common to the four, which gained them a variety of nicknames, such as the Screaming Sisterhood, the Bawling Campbells, and so forth, and made Lord Strafford, who was not without humour, say, slyly, "I can always tell whether any of *my* ladies are in a house by the time I set my foot in the porter's hall."

Notwithstanding this voice, she had a mild, gentle temper; and having been married out of the nursery, and never in her life accustomed to act or think for herself, she was very like an amiable child, looking up to its governor with great respect but some portion of fear, while the said governor, *alias* husband, though extremely fond of her, held the reins of authority tight, and would be obeyed. When I knew her, she loved company and diversions as well as any girl of eighteen, and brooked as ill the restraints imposed by his lordship, who (long since tired of them himself) often forbade her going into crowds, always insisted upon her coming home at an early hour, and (worst of all) usually carried her off to Yorkshire a month sooner than anybody else left town. He was of a selfish temper, yet in this (to give him his due) he chiefly consulted her welfare; for she had that terrible infirmity, the falling sickness, with such an unconsciousness of it, that she would say carelessly, "The little faintings I am subject to now and then." Never did I behold my mother so shocked and unhinged as at her return from a card-party, wherẽ she had witnessed one of these

little faintings: in reality, a succession of the most frightful convulsions, which came on suddenly, and lasted above an hour. The moment assistance was summoned, Lady Strafford's footmen ran in to hold her, a task far beyond women's strength; and they told the company that they had their lord's strict orders never to quit any place where she was, but always to wait below stairs unknown to her, in case their help should be wanted. The next morning we had scarcely breakfasted when Lord Strafford arrived. I left the room, and he opened his heart fully to my mother, for whom he had ever a particular respect.

“ I am aware (said he) how churlish and tyrannical  
 “ Lady Strafford's sisters think me for thwarting her  
 “ inclinations as much as I am forced to do. You know  
 “ those ladies: they are not convinceable people; if  
 “ they once take a notion in their heads, no human  
 “ power can beat it out again; so I cut the matter short,  
 “ am peremptory, and let them rail at me as loudly as  
 “ they please. But now, when you have seen with  
 “ your own eyes what her malady is, can you wonder I  
 “ wish to hinder its being perpetually exposed to the  
 “ world? She never goes to a public place, but I pass  
 “ the evening in misery, dreading what may have hap-  
 “ pened. Hot rooms, noise, bustle, and even the hurry  
 “ of spirits produced by pleasure, have an evident  
 “ tendency to bring on these attacks, which are fast  
 “ undermining her constitution. While she leads a  
 “ quiet life in the country, keeping good hours, and  
 “ breathing pure air, they occur comparatively seldom.

“ Am I, then, to blame for shortening her stay here as much as I possibly can ? ”

Thus far he defended himself well ; but he should also have considered the necessity of rendering retirement pleasant to a woman of an uncultivated, vacant mind, unused to reading, and soon tired of working cross-stitch in spectacles. At this time their intimates were mostly dead or dispersed ; they had few neighbours, fewer visitors ; he was too stiff to make new acquaintances ; he hated humble companions ; and, in short, Wentworth Castle became a magnificent hermitage, where the Mackenzies and other relations, who sometimes called in their way to or from the farther North, rarely staid above four-and-twenty hours. Lady Mary Coke, indeed, had been in the habit of paying it longer visits ; but latterly her domineering spirit, and his love of his own way, increased in such happy proportion that, after one stormy encounter, he made a private vow she should never invade him again. And poor Lady Strafford, who lived in constant apprehension of their quarrelling outright, and whom Lady Mary had once or twice scolded into fits, honestly owned she did not regret his determination. *That* sister was beyond control ; the others stood in too much awe of him to take liberties, being warded off by a formal civility, an array of bows and ladyships, which nothing less than prowess like hers could attempt to break through.

Lady Strafford delighted in animals of every sort and species ; had favourite horses, dogs, cats, squirrels,

parroquets, and singing-birds. Nay, I remember to this hour the pleasure it gave me, when a child, to see a couple of tame green lizards, which she kept in a box, let loose to sport and catch flies in the sunshine. She was also passionately fond of children, courting all young mothers to bring her their babies, and even their schoolboys and girls. Indeed, she would have lived surrounded by young people, if her lord had indulged her taste as freely in this respect as in the other. But he protected the brute creation himself, and shrank from the two-legged ungovernables likely to throw his house out of the windows. The truth was this: both of them bitterly deplored their ill-fate in being childless; both (she more especially) felt the want of objects deeply interesting the heart. But, as lesser motives of regret will often mingle with greater, the feeling operated differently upon the man who had longed for heirs and the woman who pined for playthings. Besides, the most complying, most tractable young folks on earth must have put him, more or less, out of his way—that same *way* which is ever the first of all considerations with the selfish.

Poor man! he suffered severely for having clung to it; and, through his dislike to admit any third person as a permanent inmate, forgot how dangerous it was for Lady Strafford ever to be left a single instant quite alone. The servants, on opening her dressing-room door, one winter's day, discovered her lying senseless against the grate, too much burned for recovery, although she lingered near a week in existence. This manner of

dying was shocking ; the event itself not to be regretted as her intellects were already impaired by the epileptic disease, and she would probably have become utterly imbecile had she lived a very little longer.

To poor Lord Strafford, however, it was check-mate—the loss of his all. It left him alone in the wide world ; nor do I believe he ever enjoyed another moment of comfort during the few years he survived her. But not even his real, deep, and hopeless sorrow could awe the indefatigable spirit of gossiping, or prevent it from finding him a second wife in six months' time ; and of all the birds in the air, and all the fishes in the water, whom should it think fit to bestow upon him but—Myself!!! Our approaching nuptials were announced in every newspaper. Having always looked on him as an old uncle, I should as soon have expected that the world would marry me to Mr. Mackenzie, if Lady Betty had been the person deceased. Therefore, it was impossible to forbear laughing, in spite of my concern for his misfortune ; and when the return of winter brought him to London, I am afraid he made me laugh still more ; for no man of five and twenty could have seemed more fearful of confirming the report by being seen to speak to me or look at me. I tell you this nonsensical story chiefly for the sake of an admirable *bon mot* (*tant soit peut libertin*), which it drew from Lady Dye Beauclerk, who knew nothing of either, except our ages. “Soh!” said she to Mrs. Herbert, “your friend Lady L. S. is going to marry her great-grandfather, is she? If she can hold her nose, and

“swallow the dose at once, it may do very well. *But*  
“*most people would be apt to take a little sweetmeat in*  
“*their mouths afterwards.*”

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Lady Betty Mackenzie's figure, though always too thin, passed for fine in her youth; her face was even then plain, but not yet seamed and disfigured as we saw it by the confluent small-pox. The older she grew, the stronger those who had known her mother thought the resemblance between them in features, manner, and mind. Like the Duchess, she was honest, upright, well-meaning, good-natured; like her, ill-bred, positive, and anything but wise. She did not, however, inherit her Grace's insensibility: there they were very dissimilar; for Lady Betty had a warm heart, and most assuredly the power of loving. I defy a more devoted attachment to exist than she had to my uncle; and being love of the genuine, sterling kind (marked by a sincere preference of another to self), which always ennobles the character, it raised her above the folly of hers wherever he was concerned. Her constant attention to his wishes, and visible delight in his presence, were not debased by any silly fondnesses unbecoming their age. If, through youthful flippancy, one sometimes simpered at the looks of affection exchanged between the ugly, wayward old woman and the good man in a bob-wig, one's heart presently smote one; since, in sober earnest, one could not but allow that their steady, cordial,

perfect union was a sight beautiful to behold. Originally, as I have heard, the love began on her side. He could have rested in cousinly—or brotherly—regard and esteem for ever, had not her fervent passion at length attracted his notice, and won a grateful return. When people marry on these terms, the wife is sure to be very humble, very submissive; and so was Lady Betty for several years, knowing no will but his: an order of things that had changed before my time. His easiness leaving most matters to her guidance, she ended by having all that influence which, in the long run, foolish women seldom fail to acquire (the Lord knows how) over sensible husbands.

With respect to Mr. Mackenzie, I came in at the fifth act of the play, as he must have been near fifty when I first remember him. But, by all accounts, I should have seen him much the same man five-and-twenty years earlier. The principal change was what time often effects: a temper once impetuous had subsided into calmness, and left him the best-humoured mortal alive—always in good spirits, always happy, fond of society, and from his lively, amusing conversation formed to delight it; yet with pursuits in mathematics, astronomy, and all the exact sciences (to say nothing of a close attention to business), which occupied his mind pleasantly when he was alone. Such as I describe him, you may suppose he could make himself very agreeable to the young: only with us, his relations, he had a trick teasing to all except absolute simpletons. You never grew up for him: at eighteen,

you were five years old; at thirty—nay, forty—not above twelve; assailed with jokes and nursery-stories, “enough,” as Miss Hoyden says in the play, “to make one ashamed before one’s love.” Girl or woman, you found this annoying; but for men——! I have seen my elder brothers ready to knock him down.

At the same time, he felt little indulgence for youthful follies—apparently because his own nature was too placid and steady ever to have known the force of strong temptation, his blood too temperate to have ever boiled. He had been a man of gallantry, we were told; and we could easily believe it. He had liked what is called *flirting* rather more than Lady Betty approved. This, too, was very credible; but in my life I never saw a person I should have pronounced so passionless. A sort of instinct would have made you refrain from giving way to the least enthusiasm in his presence; you would have forbore to speak before him of those emotions that convulse and tear the heart; you would scarcely have risked naming an unfortunate attachment;—not through your dread of his frowns and remonstrances, but for fear of being most goodhumouredly chucked under the chin. The conclusion I draw is, that in this uncle of mine there had existed two separate, different men; that one soul had at a certain moment quitted his frame, and another of quite distinct properties entered it, and taken peaceable possession. For surely there are extraordinary mental commotions which (once thoroughly experienced) do in general leave as indelible marks

behind them as those violent bodily diseases which change the whole mass of our blood ; and it would not have been more astonishing to learn that a woman with the loveliest smoothness of complexion had had the same virulent small-pox as Lady Betty, than to hear—what was the fact—that Mr. Mackenzie's reason and his life were once upon the point of falling a sacrifice to the wildest and most romantic passion that ever agitated a human bosom.

The object of it was the Barberini, a celebrated opera-dancer, known and admired throughout Europe, of decent manners and uncommon attractions, but in no part of the wicked world held more inflexibly cruel than other ladies of her profession. I cannot tell whether Mr. Mackenzie first saw her abroad, or in England, where she danced for one season. Wherever it was, he became her slave almost immediately, loving her, not as opera-dancers are usually loved, but

“ With that respect, that fearful homage paid her,”

which might have gratified an archduchess of Austria, and with a diffidence which made him tremble to propose the only terms he believed it possible that purity like hers could listen to. For what was he?—what had he to offer in rank, wealth, and situation worthy her acceptance? How might he dare to indulge the presumptuous hope of gaining that interest in her heart which alone could tempt so exalted a being to bless him with her hand? When, after a proper interval of difficulty and delay, the prospect of such

happiness did open upon him, his raptures were immoderate. He announced his good fortune to my grandmother, Lady Mary Wortley, in a letter which she preserved, informing her that he had reason to think himself the most lucky of men: he was about to marry a woman whose preference did him the highest honour—one infinitely his superior in every particular excepting birth. What his family might say to it, he could not tell, and did not care; he only knew they ought to be proud of the connection. But he really thought a man of his age was fully competent to judge for himself, and provide for his own happiness. To the last sentence, Lady Mary affixed this pithy marginal note, “ *The poor boy is about nineteen.*”

On these occasions relations and guardians are sad troublesome people. My uncle’s uncle, Archibald Duke of Argyll, such another cool, considerate person as his future self, instead of feeling due pride in the connection, or leaving “a man of his age” to secure his own happiness, officiously took measures to disturb it. Though the lovers were to be united far off, at Venice, where they hoped they might defy his authority, yet, having long hands, and putting many irons in the fire, he discovered that before the lady formed her present plans of aggrandisement, she had signed articles binding herself to dance that winter at the Berlin theatre. This being ascertained, his friend Lord Hyndford, then our ambassador in Prussia, easily induced that Court to demand of the Venetian Government that she should be compelled to fulfil her engagement. Accordingly

she was arrested by order of the Senate, and, on the very day fixed for her marriage, sent off under a guard to Germany.

Mr. Mackenzie had made a friendship in Italy with a very worthy Catholic abbé, an Italianised Scotchman, named Grant, eight or ten years elder than himself. This Abbé Grant, when an old man, came over to England to visit him and my father, and stayed near a month at Luton Park, where some of us found great amusement in putting him on the chapter of events long past, and getting at the particulars of the Barberini story. He was at Venice when the thing happened, and was sent for by Mr. Mackenzie's servants, who did not know what to do with their master. He sat up with him all night, expecting every moment to see him breathe his last; for he was quite delirious, and fell from one convulsion fit into another. The abbé declared he never beheld a scene so distressing: the poor young man's throes of anguish, his state of distraction and despair, excited in him such a degree of compassion that he owned he could not have withheld from him the object of his wishes if he had had the power of restoring her, notwithstanding the disgrace and ruin which he, as well as Mr. Mackenzie's other friends, thought inseparable from the marriage.

As soon as the lover regained his self-possession, he followed his captive mistress to Berlin; but Lord Hyndford, aware that this might be the case, had prepared matters for his reception. On alighting from his carriage, he was saluted with a peremptory order to

quit the King of Prussia's dominions in four-and-twenty hours; and a file of un pitying grenadiers forthwith escorted him beyond the frontier. Thence he sent a challenge to the ambassador; who laughed, and put it in the fire. He vowed eternal enmity to the Duke of Argyll, he renounced all friendship and kindred with my father—in a word, he committed every extravagance which love and rage could dictate, till the conflicts of his mind overpowering his bodily strength, threw him into a dangerous fever. When, by the aid of youth and a good constitution, he had struggled through it, the news that awaited him on his recovery probably caused that kind of revulsion which paralytic patients feel when a torpid limb (or frame) is restored to action by the galvanic battery. The Barberini was married to another! An artful adventurer, conceiving her to be rich, had passed himself upon her for a foreign nobleman of high rank, as desperately enamoured as the young Englishman, who now seemed "a bird escaped from the snare of the fowler," considerably richer, and with no relations entitled to control him. Duped into eagerness, she made haste to secure the prize.

Thus ended an adventure which yet was not the most remarkable part of her history. She certainly must have had extraordinary abilities; since she drew within the attraction of her sphere something as opposite to an inexperienced youth as it is possible to imagine—no less a person than Frederick the Great himself, of all men the least likely to be fascinated by female charms.

Nor did he admire or pursue her as a woman. Jealous of being suspected of such a weakness, he took care always to have eye-witnesses of their interviews. But he was avowedly very fond of her conversation: a far prouder distinction, and one that, perhaps, no other of the sex ever could boast. She availed herself of his favour to some purpose, when she found she had been entrapped into becoming the wife of a needy impostor. On her representing to him what were the circumstances of her marriage, his Majesty stretched forth his iron sceptre, supreme over law and gospel, to annul it as fraudulent, banished the sharper, and soon after made (or at least sanctioned) a match for her with a subject of his own, a gentleman by birth. As a Prussian lady she passed the rest of her life in good repute and comfort.

It happened one day at our King's levée that a young man just arrived from abroad accosted Mr. Mackenzie rather pertly in my brother James's hearing, and told him he had lately seen an old friend of his, Madame la Baronne——, naming this very Prussian lady. My uncle for a minute looked confounded; but, recovering himself, drew the traveller into a corner, and held with him a long and earnest conversation, seeming to ask him many questions. But for this incident I should have supposed he remembered no more of the affair than of any pain or pleasure he had felt in his nurse's arms. I am sure no recollection of it ever appeared to flash across his mind while he was wondering at the indiscretions of his neighbours.

At the time I knew them, perhaps neither he nor Lady Betty could be deemed void of selfishness. It is the vice (alas!) of age, and also that of prosperity; and their prosperity had been uninterrupted, for they possessed all the good things of this world, and one might say, in the words of the Psalmist, that, excepting the loss of two infant children (long since forgotten), “no evil had come nigh their dwelling.” As her sway over him was unbounded, and he, again, had great influence on my father, she sometimes made a good deal of mischief in our family—not by design, but need I tell you in how many ways want of sense can answer that purpose equally with injurious intentions? Capricious as the wind, or the weathercock it turns, and subject to those whimsical fits of fondness or aversion called in French *engouemens* (for which I know no precise English word), she had, even in the passing crowd unknown to her, her charming favourite and her odious anti-favourite of the season, like her summer and winter gowns; while among ourselves there was always some one who could do nothing wrong, and some one other who could do nothing right. The same individual often acted both parts in the course of half a year—suddenly metamorphosed from white to black: if a woman, for wearing a feather or a riband she disliked; if a man, for something of corresponding importance. I myself usually stood high in her favour, but I had a long interval of grievous disgrace on the score of a new-fashioned trimming, y’clept by the milliners *frivolité*. Still, bitter as she would be against the present

offender, we were more inclined to laugh at these fluctuations than to resent them. Those less used to her could not so well tolerate the peremptory tone she was apt to assume in all places and companies, from meeting with no contradiction at home, and having elsewhere that species of consideration which is acquired by giving excellent dinners. Mrs. Anne Pitt, Lord Chatham's sister and counterpart, who continually met her at our house, being my mother's intimate friend, said, in her pointed, peculiar manner: "Lady Betty takes the *liberty* in society of telling one that—one lies, and that—one is a fool; and I cannot say I think it at all agreeable."

We now come to that extraordinary person Lady Mary Coke, a study for the observers of human character as a rare plant or animal would be for the naturalist. Her beauty had not been undisputed, like Lady Strafford's. Some allowed, some denied it; the dissenters declaring her neither more nor less than a white cat—a creature to which her dead whiteness of skin, unshaded by eyebrows, and the fierceness of her eyes, did give her a great resemblance. To make amends, there were fine teeth, an agreeable smile, a handsome neck, well-shapen hands and arms, and a majestic figure. She had the reputation of cleverness when young, and, in spite of all her absurdity, could not be called a silly woman; but she was so invincibly

wrong-headed—her understanding lay smothered under so much pride, self-conceit, prejudice, obstinacy, and violence of temper, that you knew not where to look for it, and seldom indeed did you catch such a distinct view of it as certified its existence. So also her good qualities were seen only like the stars that glimmer through shifting clouds on a tempestuous night; yet she really had several. Her principles were religious. She was sincere, honourable, good-natured where passion did not interfere, charitable, and (before old age had sharpened economy into avarice) sometimes generous. For her friendships, they were only too warm and too zealous for the peace of the mortals upon whom they were bestowed—I am afraid I might say inflicted.

In information she greatly surpassed her sisters, having a turn for reading, and reading of a solid kind—history and State-papers, in which she was well versed, as far, at least, as related to England. But she had not a grain of taste for any work of genius. She esteemed Milton and Pope very fine poets, because such was the creed of her youth; but if their verses had been printed pell-mell with Blackmore's, she would not have found out which was which. Nor did she discriminate better in prose: a writer's style, his reasoning, and reflections she scarcely attended to; the language of Swift and Rapin, Burnet and Burke, went down alike; and the Parliamentary Journals pleased her above them all, as most authentic. Thus conversant with the driest matter of fact alone, she contrived to apply it to the increase of her own self-importance, and heated

her brains with history as others have done with romances. Don Quixote became a knight-errant by poring over 'Amadis de Gaul;' Lady Mary, an historical personage by studying 'Rushworth's Collections' and Lord Strafford's trial. I verily believe that if she could have been committed a close prisoner to the Tower on a charge of High Treason, examined before the Privy Council, tried, and of course gloriously acquitted, by the House of Lords, it would have given her more delight than any other thing physically possible. But living in an age when all this was little less than morally impossible, she had no way of getting upon a level with the Queen Marys and the Lady Jane Greys who were always running in her head, except by striving to magnify every common matter that concerned herself, like the Don when he turned windmills into giants, and carriers' inns into castles. Nothing ever happened to her after the fashion of ordinary life. Not to mention the unprecedented behaviour of most men, women, and children whom she had anything to do with, she could not be caught in a shower but it was such rain as never before fell from the skies. The dry-rot that broke out in her house was totally different in its nature from the dry-rot at her next neighbour's; and in case of a cold or a sore-throat, woe to the apothecary who ventured to quicken her pulse and excite her ire by tendering that established consolation, "It is going about, madam, I assure you; I suppose I have now twenty patients with just the same symptoms as your ladyship's;"—for all her disorders were

something nobody else could judge of, or had ever experienced. I once heard her literally talk of the *exquisite pain* she suffered from pricking her finger.

Cervantes, we know, designed to give his hero a taint of real madness, which he represents as at one time on the point of being subdued by judicious medical treatment. Here the parallel will fail us. However a stranger might have construed some of Lady Mary's visions, she had no insane tendency—not so much as what is familiarly termed *a twist*. Her delusions were altogether wilful, springing from a noble disdain of being nothing more than simply and barely the person she was. Therefore, all the bleeding and blistering imaginable would not have put one of them to flight, nor lowered the distressed princess, the persecuted heroine, into a reasonable woman, of high quality, rich and surrounded with advantages, but debarred from the cognisance of State affairs—in the first place, by her sex; in the second by want of power to influence a cobbler's vote at a Westminster election. So much for the portrait. It is time to put the original in action.

Lady Mary's marriage was an affair conducted in the old-fashioned manner; overtures being made by Lord Coke's relations to hers, terms proposed and rejected, others acceded to, and the bargain finally struck for two thousand five hundred pounds per annum jointure and five hundred pin-money, as the fair equivalent for her twenty thousand pounds, which at that time was a larger portion than could often be met with out of the City. Still the Duchess of Argyll demurred in per-

plexity, averse from the connection on account of Lord Leicester's notoriously dissolute and violent character. Yet the son, though faithfully following his father's footsteps, won her good graces. But this is a matter that a young man may always manage with an old woman, even of a wiser class. Then officious friends brought her favourable reports of him—another thing sure to happen; he had sense, he had good-nature, he had this, and that, which, when his wild-oats were sown, a prudent woman—according to custom again—might work upon and do wonders. To conclude, Lady Mary, who at nineteen had a very positive will of her own, intimated that she liked and chose to accept him. Yet no sooner were the conveyancers set to work, and the suitor's visits freely admitted, than she gave all outward and visible signs of a coyness approaching to aversion. He dutifully attended her mother's tea-table, stroked her Grace's cats, listened to her long stories, talked goodness and morality, and kept his countenance admirably throughout; every now and then lowering his voice to its softest tone, and tenderly addressing the lady of his love: while she, bridling with ineffable disdain, turned away her head, and hardly vouchsafed him an answer. Those who knew the Celadon could read in his face a humorous enjoyment of the scene, but yet foresee that her airs of scorn would not go unpunished—for he was inwardly as haughty as herself, thoroughly unprincipled and profligate, had abundance of wit and humour, and not the smallest personal liking for her to counterbalance the

secret resentment which such contemptuous usage inspired.

As the lawyers' labours advanced and the day of execution drew near, her dislike to him seemed to increase; she wept all the morning above stairs, and in the evening sat below stairs, the silent picture of despair. "Then, for the love of Heaven," said honest Lady Betty, "my dear sister, why don't you break off the match?—where is the difficulty?" It was a jest, as Lady Betty well knew, to suppose Lady Mary afraid of her mother; but, granting she were so, she (Lady Betty) offered again and again to save her every discussion—to acquaint the Duchess, dismiss Lord Coke, take all the embarrassing part of the business upon herself. "No," replied Lady Mary, as often as this was urged, "no—it will be time enough at the altar." To the altar then she went (in April, 1747), and there, instead of an effectual "No," Catherine uttered the irrevocable "Yes," gave Petruccio her hand, and submitted to be sacrificed. *But—but*—a circumstance awkward to hint at is, as you will find, the main hinge of the story. But rumour whispered that the sacrifice remained incomplete. To speak out, the bridegroom, who conceived he had a long score of insolence to pay off, and was predetermined to mortify the fair bride by every means in his power, did not scruple entertaining his bottle-companions with a ludicrous detail of particulars. He found her ladyship, he said, in the mood of King Solomon's Egyptian captive,—

"darting scorn and sorrow from her eyes;"

prepared to become the wretched victim of abhorred compulsion. Therefore, coolly assuring her she was quite mistaken in apprehending any violence from him, he begged she would make herself easy, and wished her a very good night.

The happy pair went on thenceforward in a way suited to this promising outset. He almost immediately resumed his former habits of gaming and drinking, and when they were alone together gave her pretty coarse language, although before company it was, "My love! My life! My angel!"—acting the fondest of husbands. More in mockery than hypocrisy, however; since he lost no opportunity of attacking her father's memory, ridiculing her mother, disparaging the name of Campbell, and slyly throwing out whatever else could irritate her most. You will inquire how she bore such treatment. Why, her lawyers answer the question, for they set forth "that she ever comported herself in a courteous and obliging manner; she, the said Lady Mary, being of a sober, modest, chaste, and virtuous conversation, and of a meek, mild, and affable temper and disposition;" which perforce reminds one of the meek spirit ascribed to Humphrey Hoen's wife (Sarah Duchess of Marlborough) in Arbuthnot's 'History of John Bull.' But we must remember that the said Lady Mary's teeth and claws were not yet fully grown; besides, people who, like her, fairly love a grievance, always support real evils better than those fabricated by their own imagination. As heroic sufferers they are in their proper element; it is exactly the character

they aspire to exhibit, and it inspires them with a sort of self-satisfaction calculated to produce apparent equanimity.

Three months after their marriage, the young couple accompanied Lord and Lady Leicester to Holkham for the summer; and, as all the family travelled together, it brought about a discovery. When the Leicester coach-and-six stopped at Lord Coke's door early in the morning, Lady Mary was dressed and ready, his lordship not yet returned from the tavern. Finding, upon inquiry, that such were his customary hours and practices, his father expressed the most indignant displeasure that so fine a young woman should be so shamefully neglected, and took her part in the warmest manner. This, by the bye, never does a wife much service. No third person can step in between a married couple without the risques attending those who handle gunpowder; but perhaps it would be safer for the lady to have any other advocate than one of whom her husband stands in awe, whether it be father, master, or prince; above all, the first, whose pre-eminence is most indisputable, and who cannot be asked that stout question, available against everybody else, namely, "What have you to do in my house, and with my subject?" It puts the son in a humiliating predicament, sending him back to the days of his boyhood; and though he may submit to paramount authority, he bears her a grudge for having appealed to it, of which she is sure to rue the effects long after her momentary triumph has ceased. Thus it happened here. The Duchess of

Argyll writes to Lady Dalkeith, that her sister Mary's letters from Norfolk speak highly of Lord and Lady Leicester's kindness to her, but say nothing of Lord Coke's. In fact, they were upon worse terms than ever. After their return to town, he scarcely kept any measures with her; and in consequence of their declared quarrel she received a most flattering letter from his father at the commencement of the new year, extolling her as an angel, and calling her husband "*brute*" and "*beast*" in express terms. The depraved wretch, who had proved himself unworthy of such a blessing as Heaven had granted him in her, should henceforth be renounced by him (Lord Leicester), and she regarded as his own beloved daughter married into another family.

Upon the face of this epistle—which is long and elaborate, and was afterwards produced in proof of her ill-usage—I think you would have said, "the gentleman doth protest too much;" or have quoted the French proverb, *Qui prouve trop ne prouve rien*, for its exaggerated language is very unlike that of a sincere person. In a short time she herself learned to mistrust it; his behaviour at their next interview being cold and constrained, and his manner of listening to her complaints discouraging. A second letter soon followed, intimating that he found Lord Coke so truly penitent, so convinced of her merit, and desirous of regaining her affections, that, if she would but agree to a reconciliation, he was persuaded they might still live happily together. Her papers do not show how she replied; it only appears

that one day Lord Leicester unexpectedly arrived in a furious passion, turned some relations of his own who were sitting with her out of the house, railed at her pride and stubbornness, told her Lord Coke had done her the greatest honour in marrying her; in short, raved like a madman. She sent for her mother and Lady Strafford, to whom he was not much more civil; and the former, she owns, made matters something worse by scolding him in return.

What caused such a sudden change in Lord Leicester's sentiments and conduct, she professes herself unable to guess; but I have heard it sufficiently explained. He was, in one sense, impartial, as he cared not a straw who was right or who was wrong: nor had he any very tender paternal feelings to blind him, knowing his son's faults full well; but his heart was set upon having heirs to his title and estate. With a fair prospect of gaining this point, he would have protected his daughter-in-law, whether angel or devil, and supported her against her husband to the utmost of his power; and the indignation he expressed at Lord Coke's neglect of her and abandoned life was but what he really felt as long as these seemed the sole or chief obstacles in the way. But now the case was altered.

“As women wish to be who love their lords,”

the woman did not wish to be who hated her lord. It is possible that, knowing how important the object was to the family, she might take a perverse pleasure in disappointing them; and far from improbable that she

might be partly actuated by pique at the affront originally offered to her personal charms, upon which no poor little, frivolous, weak woman of us all could secretly set a higher value. Her motives, however, were best known to herself: the magnanimous vow she made and proclaimed was, never to cohabit as a wife with Lord Coke; and she adhered to it with all her characteristic obstinacy. The moment his father understood this, it converted him into her determined enemy. Making light of directly contradicting his former professions (as indeed he had little reputation for honour or consistency to forfeit), he gave a loose to the brutality of his nature without reserve.

Nevertheless, through Archibald Duke of Argyll's mediation, a kind of truce was made. Lady Mary, being much indisposed, had permission to live two or three months at her mother's house in Bruton Street; while Lord Coke, who was also ill, resided with his parents. But he often called to inquire after the health of his beloved spouse, and never once gained admittance, although she received other visitors; in excuse for which she pleaded that her nerves were too weak to bear the agitation that an interview with him would have caused. Meantime, her uncle pressed Lord Leicester to let the ill-matched pair be formally separated; but his arguments and persuasions had no effect: neither father nor son would hear of it; and all he could obtain was, that both should give him (the Duke) their words of honour to treat her more kindly in future.

The husband and wife, once more re-united, then went to drink a mineral water at Sunninghill, and with them her unmarried sister Lady Betty, whose presence proved no check to their quarrels nor restraint upon Lord Coke's violence. Throwing the mask and the scabbard aside together, he told Lady Mary it was his resolution to make her as miserable as he could, and he should take her to Holkham for that express purpose. She answered that she would not go, unless carried by force. Yet go she did ; and from that moment the feud was regularly established, and the war of tongues kindled ; the families, as well as the individuals, abusing each other to the right and left : that is to say, widening the breach every hour,—in this instance without doing much harm, for the animosity of the principals could not be increased. But how often does it occur that some small grain of kindness, some remnant of affection, still lies lurking in the bosoms of a couple, whose passions, flaming above their reason, have set them at variance ! And then how fatal a step it is to call in even the best-meaning friends as auxiliaries !

Hitherto we have hardly named Lady Leicester,—a peaceable, inoffensive woman, long inured to obedience ; who, as the father was yet more ill-tempered than the son, and addicted to the same vices, had borne submissively for thirty years the trials that exhausted Lady Mary's scantier stock of patience in three months. Her Lord did not fail to point out the contrast to others, and ask, exultingly, whether a daughter of the House of Thanet, inheriting in her own right one of our

oldest English \* baronies, would not have been quite as well entitled to rebel and give herself airs as the Infanta he now had to deal with? Quiet as she was, her daughter-in-law, treating her as a foe, in some measure made her one. It could not be expected that she should side with her against a son, her only child. Nor was she wholly inexcusable if she thought (even taking his character at the worst) that a wife of gentler mood might have had a fairer chance of reforming him. However, continuing passive as she had always been, she neither prompted nor opposed the decision of the higher powers.

On Lady Mary's arrival in Norfolk, where she was doomed to remain upwards of a twelvemonth, the affair might be considered at issue: the parties fell to work in earnest. Lord Leicester and Lord Coke firmly determined to master her refractory spirit; her ladyship equally resolute not to be overcome. First, they skirmished with her, saying and doing whatever was most slighting and contemptuous, and letting all their dependants perceive that the fewer marks of respect they showed her the better they would pay their court. This produced bitter resentment, but no humility; she was not to be mortified into surrendering at discretion. She retreated to the citadel of her own apartment, and declared herself too ill to leave it; which the Leicesters, discrediting, regarded as a pretext adopted to cast odium upon them and excite compassion in the

\* The barony of De Clifford.

neighbourhood. I own I have heard old Lady Cecilia Johnstone say, that when she and her sister Lady Diana Clavering (then young ladies) were at Holkham, with their father Lord Delawar, Lady Mary used to invite them up to her room, and be very merry, and, to all appearance, very well, though muffled in a night cap and sick dress, and refusing to associate with the family. For some months she persisted in thus secluding herself; nor could the medical men she consulted ever prevail upon her to stir out of doors or breathe the fresh air,—a way of life which, together with fretting and vexation, brought on real nervous disorders. But her antagonists believing, or choosing to believe, all her complaints affected, proceeded to turn this voluntary confinement into downright compulsory durance. They demanded her keys, seized her papers, and opened the letters she wrote and received; previously taking the opinion of counsel how far they might legally go, and putting this query in particular, *viz.*, “Whether a wife’s obstinately denying her husband his conjugal rights did not justify his placing her under unusual restraint?” Lord Leicester, in a letter written about this time to her sister Lady Betty, lays a great stress upon the same point, as “contrary to the laws of God and man.” And it was so publicly known and canvassed, that it became a standing jest amongst his very servants to nickname her (prophanely enough) “*our Virgin Mary.*”

Now began to peep forth and to be seen her propensity to give things a high *historical* colouring. Her

actual situation, with all the terrific power that a husband may exert by strictness of English law, about to thunder on her devoted head, was sufficiently grievous; and no very common case either. Yet still it wanted a certain grandeur of peril, which her imagination sought to supply by stretching beyond the locking up and other severities threatened, and directing her apprehensions to assassination and poison. When I first commenced observing my fellow-creatures, Lady Mary's humour had long been so well understood that the dangers which perpetually menaced her life from one deadly enemy or another, were things of course that startled nobody. We were almost too much used to the fancy to laugh at it. But in these early days, before even her nearest friends had *found her out* (pardon the expression), they naturally imagined she could not admit such horrible suspicions upon any other than good grounds: therefore, the dreadful fate she had reason to fear was hinted, and whispered, and told in confidence; till the rumour, growing loud, reached the ears of the parties accused, whom it only served to exasperate and impel to acts more decidedly hostile. In March, 1749, Lord Coke absented himself, empowering his father, by a letter of attorney to take certain strong measures, beforehand agreed upon between them: to dismiss Lady Mary's maid without warning, place about her another of their own choice, remove her from the new house at Holkham into the adjoining old one, and strictly forbid the domestics to admit any of her relations who might attempt to visit

her. That she was now in bad health and pitiable distress, is credibly testified; yet she continued fighting upon her stumps with all the bravery of Witherington. She would not let the new maid approach her person. "Mighty well," said Lord Leicester, "then she may wait upon herself!" She refused paying the apothecary's bill. It was well, his lordship said again; as he knew her illness to be "all d——d affectation." If she did not choose to defray the expence of it out of her pin-money, she might do without doctors and physic; and he prohibited the man's farther attendance.

In this state of persecution and imprisonment she lived five or six months; finding means, however, to correspond with her family all the while; whether by the assistance of servants, or by that of the apothecary and the chaplain—whom compassion partly won over to her side—I am ignorant. By this time Lady Betty was married, and Lady Mary had acquired a zealous, active protector in Mr. Mackenzie, who consulted the best lawyers, transmitted her their advice, sent her queries to answer and papers to sign: in a word, took unremitting pains to effect her release. Not without difficulties to combat at home. It was his task to spur the Duchess of Argyll into action, and to hinder her acting foolishly: neither an easy matter. Nay, once—if not oftener—he encountered a sudden squall from that point of the compass whence it seemed least that any adverse wind should blow. Plainly speaking, the captive lady herself wrote him a furious letter, full of

bitter reproaches, inclosing another to Lady Betty equally violent, and pretty nearly desiring him to meddle no more with her affairs. With great consistency, she next wondered he had not meddled much further; asking why he omitted doing this, or that, which *she* thought expedient? A proof that then, as well as ever after, she knew better what was to be done than all her friends and all the lawyers in Westminster Hall, Chancellor and Judges included. In my uncle's first amazement, he begins his answer with "Madam;" but soon seems to soften towards her; and afterwards, on her making him some little apology, assures her, with manly good nature, that his displeasure had not lasted half-an-hour; as he attributed all she had said to the irritating effects of misery upon her spirits.

At length a decisive step was taken. The Duchess, attended by Mr. Mackenzie and a solicitor, went down to Holkham, demanded, before witnesses, to have access to her daughter, was refused it, made affidavit of the fact on her return to town, and obtained from the Judges of the King's Bench a writ of Habeas Corpus, injoining Lord Coke to produce his wife before them on the first day of Term in November. Lady Mary, when thus brought up, swore the peace against him, and instituted a suit for divorce on the score of cruel usage; the Chief Justice declaring her to be under the protection of the Court in the interim, and ordering that her near relations should have free admittance to her, together with her lawyers and physicians.

I have often and often heard my mother describe the ceremony of Lady-Mary's public appearance. The Court was crowded to excess, the Bench filled with ladies, for the Duchess and her daughters not only assembled those related to them, but engaged all the most respectable of their acquaintance to countenance her by attending. Her male kindred and friends assisted likewise. On the other hand, Lord Leicester and his son, having no great interest with respectable women, gathered together a numerous posse of lively, clever, wild young men; all the rakes and all the genius's of the age came to back Lord Coke, or rather to enjoy an exhibition in their eyes very diverting. Lady Mary's faction found it far otherwise; the poor old Duchess was crying bitterly, Lady Strafford repeatedly fainting away, and my mother said she never saw a more moving scene in any tragedy. If one durst form such a surmise, perhaps it distressed her and the rest of the troop more than it really did the chief actress; for I cannot but suspect that there was something in the dignity and solemnity of the transaction wonderfully consonant to Lady Mary's inclinations. However, she came forth feeble, squalid, and in a wretched plight, dressed almost in tatters, which (by the way) the Leicesters maintained that it was her good pleasure to wear, since her pin-money had never been with-held, and she had spent it as she thought proper. I should wrong you greatly by omitting one incident. The mob, which was prodigious, pressing to gain a sight of her, broke the glass of her sedan-chair. "Take care!" said the tender husband

as he handed her out of it. “*My dearest love! Take care, and do not hurt yourself.*”

While the suit was pending she resided in the garret of Lord Leicester’s town-house, about which garret again above were two stories. She affirmed that they would allot her no better apartment; they, that she perversely preferred it to any other, in order to appear cruelly used. Her friends daily clambered up to it, notwithstanding its inconvenient height, and my mother was present more than once when Mr. Mackenzie and the lawyers laboured to extort from her the information necessary to form the base of their proceedings—

“ —labour dire it was, and weary woe.”

Reclining on a couch, Lady Mary returned this comprehensive answer to all their interrogations:—“Never was any human creature treated as I have been.” “That we do not doubt, Madam; but the law requires of us proof. We must go upon specific grounds. Will you please to enter into particulars?” “It is enough to say that in every respect my usage was most barbarous.” “But how and in what precise respect? Cannot your Ladyship state some one act on some one day?” “Oh! a thousand acts every day.” And in this mode of answering she would persist, maugre argument and entreaty, till the learned gentlemen visibly gave some of Lady Townley’s gulps to swallow wrong words; and one may safely presume they said to each other, as they went down-stairs, “Well! If her husband did thresh her, he was not without excuse.”

But all she could bring forward in the article of battery was this, that once, in a violent passion, Lord Coke struck her on the arm, and tore her lace-ruffle. It was once too often, to be sure; yet even among gentlemen and ladies, who certainly ought not to war with their fists, one blow can no more constitute inhuman usage than the one swallow of the proverb make a summer. In short, law, like arithmetic, passes assertion through so fine a sieve that a considerable portion of it is apt to stick by the way. And when you read poor Lady Mary's memorial, or, technically, *libel*, addressed to the Spiritual Court, you need be no deep civilian to perceive how little beside assertion it contains. As may be expected, it tells only her own story, and makes the most of that, leaving you quite convinced that she had the ill-luck (which betides many a woman) of what is vulgarly called catching a Tartar, or lighting upon a very bad husband. But neither bad husbands nor bad wives can be easily got rid of in our stiff strait-laced country, whose austere old statutes invest the former with an authority which Lord Coke had taken care not to overstep, save in a single instance, *i.e.* when he denied her mother the permission of seeing her. Had the doors been freely opened to the Duchess, they might have continued fast closed upon Lady Mary for ever.

To prove her life endangered, the *Libel* states that Lord Leicester had *talked* of sending her to the Hundreds of Essex, or some place equally unwholesome. The law, fortunately for most of us, does not mind what nonsense people *talk*. Yet this formal legal document

records other sayings which one is still more surprised to see there. For example, what, I suppose, Lady Mary herself held too heinous an offence to be omitted—that once upon a time, Lord Coke, finding her employed in reading Locke upon the Human Understanding, told her she could not understand a word of the book, and was an affected b——h for her pains. Doubtless a most rude, affronting speech, and sorely grating to the ears of a wife (a wise woman, too!); but if the Judges preserved their gravity on hearing it repeated, they did all that decency could demand of mortal men. Another time, it seems, Lord Leicester said she was a piece of useless lumber, fit only to be locked up in a garret, out of the way. Useless, you will observe, had a comical meaning, a sense in which it was true. And again the bench must have been tempted to smile.

I am uncertain whether the cause ever came to a hearing, or was given up without one; but it fell to the ground so completely as to leave Lady Mary at the mercy of her enemies; and she would have had no choice but to fly her country or return to her prison, if they themselves, satisfied with their victory, had not grown a little tired, perhaps a little ashamed, of persecuting her farther. Lord Hartington (in after days Duke of Devonshire), the friend of Lord and Lady Strafford, offered himself as mediator, and the Leicesters, by his persuasion, consented to let her live at Sudbrook unmolested; upon condition that she should withdraw her suit, pay its expences herself, never set her foot in town, and have no separate maintenance but

her pin-money. Hard terms, yet softened down from those stipulated at first ; which were, that she should on no pretence come within twenty miles of London, and should publicly give herself the lie,—that is to say, acknowledge, through her lawyers, in open court, that her complaints had been totally void of foundation.

No Turkish Prince, yesterday living immured in the Seraglio, and to-day placed upon the Ottoman throne, ever experienced a more agreeable change of situation and prospects than Lady Mary, when Lord Coke's excesses producing an early decay, brought him to the grave only three years after their separation. At six and twenty she emerged from a very dull retirement, a state of constant humiliation and fear, into the perfect freedom of an independant widow, with a jointure of twenty-five hundred pounds a-year, fully equivalent to what five thousand would be at present. Re-entering the world, too, with the advantage of its good opinion ; for she had been generally pitied, and everybody but a few friends of the Leicester family rejoiced at her deliverance. She conciliated farther good-will by her decent behaviour on the occasion ; not affecting a concern she could not feel, but wearing mourning, and abstaining from amusements for the usual space of time.

When she left off her weeds the Duke of Argyll and Colonel Campbell, as I have heard, wished to bring about a match between her and *Young Jack*, the latter's eldest son, who was passive, if not assenting. But she said she could not possibly marry a man whom she had always viewed as a brother. Indeed, her uncle's robust

constitution set the dukedom and marquissate at such a distance from this young heir of the family that he had then nothing to tempt ambition, though perhaps everything to inspire love. Now *Love* was affirmed by Lady Temple—a very sensible woman, who knew Lady Mary well—to be “the only passion that had no place in her composition.” The same Lady Temple wrote a complimentary portrait of her as follows:—

“ She sometimes laughs, but never loud ;  
 She’s handsome, too, but somewhat proud :  
 At court she bears away the bell,  
 She dresses fine and figures well :  
 With decency she’s gay and airy ;  
 Who can this be but Lady Mary.”

So dignified a person, though extremely willing to receive homage from admirers, held out no encouragement to the younger brothers, the inferior fortune-hunters, who pursue rich widows in serious earnest. They must have perceived that such an aim was hopeless; and I never heard that any adorers of a higher class laid titles and estates at her feet. If they had, it is not an utter impossibility that their offers might have been taken into consideration. At least, I know a story which seems to imply thus much; and as it is entertaining, and I can quote the best authority for it, chapter and verse, you shall have it at full length. By certain dates, I conjecture that at the time she must have stood upon the verge of thirty.

The Duke and Duchess of Queensberry had two sons, both of whom lived to be men. The eldest, when travelling through Yorkshire with them and his new-

married wife, rode onward, and either shot himself or was killed by his pistol going off, almost within view of their carriage. The second died of a consumption the following year. And thus the Duke's nearest collateral relation—Lord March (the *Old Q.*, whom you remember,)—became his next heir. He was then the most brilliant, most fashionable, most dissipated young man in London, the leading character at Newmarket, the support of the gaming-table, the supreme dictator of the Opera-house, the pattern whose dress and equipage were to be copied by all who aimed at distinction, and (need we add?) the person most universally admired by the ladies. Naturally a male coquet, he made love to every pretty woman of his own class, and bought it ready-made (in Quin's\* phrase) from every one of a lower who set it to sale. He would have been held a great matrimonial prize notwithstanding—as a duke's heir, with an earldom and a good estate in present—could any young lady have had reasonable hopes of winning him; but prudent mammas, frightened, sought to keep their daughters aloof, and it was pretty plain that whoever dared the adventure must pursue it at her own peril.

The Queensberrys, overwhelmed by the load of calamity which thus fell suddenly upon them, had retired to Amesbury, and there lived a year or two secluded from the world, keeping up hardly any correspondance

\* Alluding to Quin's famous repartee when the Duchess of Queensberry asked him, "Pray, Mr. Quin, do you ever make love?" She meant upon the stage, where he commonly acted tyrants, villains, &c.; but, giving her question a different turn, he answered, "No, Madam, I always buy it ready-made."

with their friends. My mother was much surprised, therefore, when she received a letter from the duchess, to say that particular business calling them to town, they earnestly wished she would drink tea with them on the evening of their arrival. Of course she obeyed the summons, and the meeting passed as it usually does between people so circumstanced, when pain has been deadened by time, and both parties strive to converse as if they had forgotten what the sight of each other never fails to recall. Presently Lady Mary Coke appeared, who was welcomed with extraordinary kindness, and seemed to have been expected. She was all graciousness in return, but august beyond her usual dignity, like a person wound up to act a solemn part on some important occasion. Next entered the Earl of March,\* looking excessively out of humour. He paid his respects sullenly to their graces, made her Ladyship a very grave bow, then, spying my mother, cleared up his countenance, as if thinking "Ah! here will be a resource;" and sitting down by her, he began to rattle away upon whatever news occupied the town at that moment. The duke and duchess joined in the conversation whenever they had an opportunity, and were visibly anxious to make Lady Mary bear a part in it also; but they toiled at that pump in vain: dry monosyllables and stately bows of assent being all their utmost efforts could draw forth. I need not describe the pantomime, for you have seen it a hundred times, and I a thousand. At last, the Duchess, perceiving my

\* Afterwards Duke of Queensberry.—Ed.

mother about to rise, caught her by the sleeve, and whispered, "No, no; don't go; pray out-stay them. "I want to speak to you." In the second that whisper lasted, Lord March contrived to turn on his heel and escape, without looking behind him. Lady Mary staid a little longer, still magnificently silent; then departed, high and mighty as she came.

When the door was fairly shut upon her, "Now," said the Duchess, "do, I beseech you, tell us the meaning of all this?" "The meaning of what?" asked my mother. "Why, of these two people's behaviour to each other." "Nay, how can I tell you anything about it?" "Why, are not you in the secret? Don't you know they are going to be married?" "Not I, indeed; it is the last thing I should have thought of." "Why, truly," rejoined the duchess, "it would not have occurred readily to *me*; yet so it is: behold it under Lady Mary's own hand!" And she produced a letter in which Lady Mary announced that Lord March had been pleased to make his addresses to her: his preference assuredly did her great honour, and so forth; but her high respect for their graces induced her to defer giving him a favourable answer till certain of their entire concurrence: should either of them have the slightest objection, she would instantly put an end to the treaty. "You may be sure we did not hesitate," continued the duchess; "the object nearest the poor dear duke's heart is that March should give over his pranks and make a creditable marriage; and none can exceed this for birth, fortune, and character. "She has her foibles, undoubtedly; but, perhaps, a

“ spirit like hers may do best to cope with his wildness. At any rate, that is *his* affair. I wrote by return of post to say how very happy the news had made us, and to assure her of our heartiest approbation. The duke wrote the same thing to March; and without loss of time here are we come trundling up to London. We thought that you, as her relation and our friend, would be just the right person to meet them and prevent any awkward embarrassment. But they seemed determined not to exchange a word. What can possess them? Have they been quarrelling already?”

My mother, who thought within herself that Lord March's marrying at all was half a miracle, and his pitching upon Lady Mary a whole one, could give no clue to the mystery; which grew more incomprehensible day after day, and week after week. The duke and duchess were at their wit's end. The lover ingeniously eluded most of their invitations; but whenever they did force him into the company of his 'mistress, the same scene presented itself over again: he was as distant, she as imperial as at first. Another thing was much stranger yet: he had for some time *protected*, as your precious modern delicacy styles it, a certain Madame Arena, the *Prima donna* of the opera. This protection, instead of being withdrawn, or modestly concealed, was now redoubled and paraded. You never drove into the Park, or through St. James's Street, without meeting him with the Arena in his chariot. The Arena sat at the head of his table; the Arena hung upon his arm at Ranelagh: his attentions to the Arena on the opera-

stage were conspicuous in the face of the audience, and under Lady Mary's own nose if she chanced to be present. Tired out, the Duchess of Queensberry resolved to attempt fathoming his intentions; but set about it very gently; for even she was afraid of him.

—“She hoped nothing unpleasant had occurred between him and Lady Mary?” “No: nothing that he knew.” “And yet he must be sensible that there were circumstances which wore an odd appearance. If one might put so home a question, Did he in earnest design to marry her?” “Oh! certainly: he should be quite ready at any time; that is, if her Ladyship chose it.” “Nay, my dear March; this is no answer.” “Why, what more would your grace have? I can't marry her unless she chooses it; can I?” “Now, do be serious one moment. You know very well what I allude to. Plainly, what must she think of the Arena's remaining in your house?” “The Arena, ma'am? The Arena? Pray, what has Lady Mary Coke to do with the Arena's living in my house, or out of it?” “Bless me! how can you talk thus? Do not common decency and propriety require ——” “My dear madam, leave propriety and Lady Mary to protect themselves. She is no girl: she will act as she pleases, I dare say, and so shall I.”

The springs of this impertinence could not be divined; but its drift was manifest; and the duchess, having a real regard for Lady Mary, next undertook the nice task of representing to her how poor a chance of happiness she would have with such a volatile husband; and

delicately hinting that it might be her wisest way to give the matter up, and draw off while she could still retreat with the honours of war: all which good counsel fell upon the ear of a statue. The lady, impenetrable and stately as ever, "could not by any means permit herself to doubt of my Lord March's honour; nor had he given her any cause of offence." Thus baffled on both sides, the poor duchess had nothing for it but to sit still and wait the event.

As far as her nephew\* was concerned, however, the whole club at White's could have expounded the riddle. To them he was abundantly communicative, vowing vengeance against Lady Mary, and swearing she had played him the most abominable trick that ever woman played man. He saw, he said, that she had no dislike to admiration: she was a widow, independant; of an age to take care of herself; so, thinking her tolerably handsome, to be sure, he supposed he might try his fortune in making a little love. If it pleased her, why, well; if not, she knew how to repulse him. But the big, wicked word MARRIAGE had never once entered his head, nor issued from his mouth; nor yet anything ever so distantly tending to it; and would any woman in England past fifteen pretend she took him for a marrying man? To go, then, and bring him into the hazard of disgrace with the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, by catching up his first civil speech as a proposal, was an exploit she should pay dear for. With all his impudence, he durst not give *them* this explana-

\* *Welch* nephew. Lord March was son of the Duke's first cousin.

tion ; therefore let her help him out of the scrape as she had thrust him into it : the whole burthen should rest upon her own shoulders.

He understood his antagonist ill. No chilling demeanour, no neglect, no affront, even with the Arena-flag openly hoisted, could provoke the enemy to leave her entrenchments. Finding her steadiness invincible, he had recourse to an opposite mode of warfare. He paid her a morning-visit : what passed never fully transpired ; but he got what he wanted, an outrageous box o' the ear, and a command never to approach her doors again. Overjoyed, he drove straight to Queensberry-house with a cheek still tingling ; put on a doleful face, and was mortified beyond expression at having unwittingly incurred Lady Mary's displeasure. Who could account for the capricious humours of ladies ? Though quite unconscious of any offence, he had tendered the humblest apologies ; but she would listen to none : and since everybody knew the noble firmness of her determinations, he feared (alas !) he must look upon his rejection as final. Blind as you may think this story, he met with no cross-examination or perplexing inquiry into whys and wherefores ; for the good duke and duchess had been so teized by the conduct of both parties, and by that time were grown so sick of the whole affair that they rejoiced almost as much as himself to see it at an end.

Possibly his Lordship's version of its origin should be received with grains of allowance ; for, though one may well believe he neither mentioned nor thought of

matrimony, yet it is likely that his professions of love had been more direct than he chose to allow. But granting them such as she might fairly take for a proposal, it was easy to ask him whether he had consulted his friends; and I suppose no woman but herself would have proceeded to inform them of it without his participation.

And now let us quit love and marriage for things more congenial to Lady Mary's disposition. She no sooner began to chalk out her own path after regaining her freedom, than it became her chief object to connect herself with the court, and acquire at once the favour of Princess Amelia (or Emily), George the second's daughter, and that of the person Her Royal Highness most disliked, his declared mistress, Lady Yarmouth. His mistress!—You are startled. It is not among the smallest praises of our late King that, "*By his long reign of virtue*"—to use Walter Scott's words—he rendered such a sound strange in our ears; that we, who were to *his* manner born, naturally recoil at the thought of reverencing a woman so designated. But for near a century, before he ascended the throne, scarcely any sovereign in Europe had ever been without a female favourite thus publicly acknowledged. All did not lead the profligate lives of Charles the second and Louis the fifteenth. Some few, if married men, forbore giving the lady an obnoxious title, and left the question of what was her real place about as dubious as it is with us whether we should view the Head of the Treasury as Prime minister. Otherwise, a Master of

the Horse or Captain of the guard could not be a more regular part of the State establishment. Even the ungallant William, as if for form sake, appointed Lady Orkney to the post after Queen Mary's death; and, after Queen Caroline's, George the second's bestowing it on Lady Yarmouth neither surprised nor scandalised the gravest of his subjects. Nor, indeed, bating the name (which they were so well used to) did there appear any thing very scandalous in the connection; for if he had been a private person, nobody would have entertained an evil thought of the stiff old gentleman and his respectable housekeeper, who led together a life "dull and dignified" as that of your ancestors in Tantallon Hold. Lady Yarmouth was a quiet, orderly, well-behaved, well-bred, honest German; long past her youth, and without the least pretension to wit or beauty. She treated the King with profound respect, and everyone else with great civility; entered into no cabals, did no mischief, made no enemies; and though she had a daily intercourse with the ministers, like Queen Caroline, never, like her, meddled with their business, but listened silently to what they said, and faithfully reported it to their master—without giving, or perhaps forming, any opinion of her own. The only sin the nation could lay to her charge was, that she sold a few places, titles, and ribands; and in this she acted by His Majesty's express consent and advice—having refused the first offer made her, and, when she told it him, being asked in his German-English, "And why was you such a great fool?"

Yet pray do not misconstrue my meaning when I say Lady Yarmouth held the place of Queen and received the homage due to it, I am far from seeking to justify your aunt on the poor pretence of her having swum with the stream, and done but what she saw others do—the last error she could ever be accused of falling into. Nor yet must you take her to have been at this period less outrageously virtuous, or more lenient towards frail women, than when you knew her fifty years later. No such thing. But, by some revelation or inspiration granted to her alone among all the mortals subject to King George either in Britain or Hanover, she had acquired a positive certainty that he and her spotless friend were privately married. And from this faith, to do her justice, she never swerved to the end of her days. It could not but gratify the person chiefly concerned; add to which, that the favourite lady, although bowed down to with equal respect by the whole croud of great and small approaching St. James's, must have discerned Lady Mary to be perhaps the only person there who literally courted her for her own sake; wanting none of the good things she could dispense, excepting her gracious smiles in public, and a gruff word or two extraordinary from Old Squaretoes (as he was most irreverently called) at the Drawing-room. Such a disinterested attachment claimed, at least, the return of good-will; notes and letters passed between them, and presently Lady Yarmouth's hair, or her picture, I forget which, shone on Lady Mary's arm in a magnificent bracelet

set with diamonds. It is but fair to add, that the King's decease no way diminished the devotion vowed by the wearer of the bracelet to the giver, though the latter left England directly, and therefore it could only be testified at a distance.

Princess Emily, a woman of quick parts and warm feelings, but without Lady Yarmouth's *bonhommie*, saw farther into Lady Mary's character; for her Royal Highness knew more of the world than princes usually do; partly from native sagacity, partly from keeping better company and having a mind above that jealous fear of the superior in understanding which so often leads them to prefer associating either with people of mean capacity, gratuitously dubbed *good creatures*, or else with those who can cunningly veil their sense and act the part of butts and buffoons for interested purposes. As Bishop Watson once told me that he had wisdom enough of his own, and would rather meet with something a little more amusing in his acquaintance, so might she have said of *dignity*. She had quite enough of her own; therefore the solemn grandeur of the mock princess often tired the real one, and always struck her as very ridiculous. Unluckily, too, her favourite friend Caroline Marchioness of Lothian\*—as yet Lady Ancram—had a wicked wit, prone to disconcert all ultra-gravity; and was the person in the world whose jokes Lady Mary most dreaded encountering. Many a trick, I fear, did these able confederates play

\* Lady Caroline D'Arcy, sister of the last Earl of Holderness. Their mother was the daughter of Meinhardt Duke of Schomberg.

her ; but she obliged them by playing herself one that surpassed all the rest.

You have seen at Newbattle the whole-length portrait of Lady Ancram, holding a large lute. Lady Mary Coke chose to be painted with a large lute also. Now, the individual lute, that sate for its picture bodily in both instances, belonged to the former lady, who played upon it very agreeably. The latter borrowed it from her, took a lute-master, laboured and strummed, and made nothing of it, because she had no ear, and, like Hortensio's pupil in Shakespear, was subject to mistake her frets and fingering.\* After a reasonable time, Lady Ancram wished to have her lute back again ; but Lady Mary, equally loth to buy an instrument for herself, or to give over strumming as a lost cause, found twenty excuses for still keeping possession, in spite of repeated billets, serious and comic, that came to dun her in English, French, and Italian. As a last resource, Lady Ancram resolved to try dunning her in German, — a language she knew her to be intently studying (with much the same success as the lute) for the sake of their royal friend and that of Queen Yarmouth. This required Princess Emily's assistance. She wrote a proper note for Lady Ancram to copy, and remained in good hope of seeing some curious Anglo-German jargon in answer. But the event was better still, and far exceeded their expecta-

\* " I did but tell her she mistook her frets,  
And bowed her hand to teach her fingering."

*Taming of the Shrew.*

tions. Lady Mary arrived with an air of inward satisfaction, and soon fell to moralize on most people's aptness to overrate their own talents. Then proceeding to *apply*—as it behoves a pious preacher—“Why, now, madam, between ourselves, there's my Lady Ancram. She *is* very clever—no dispute of that; but, really, she can't do *every* thing, as she will fancy she can. In strict confidence, I'll show your Royal Highness a note I have had from her in what she takes to be German. Do but look at it. German, indeed! Your R.H., who knows what German is, will be amused with the bungling, blundering attempt she has made to write a language she knows nothing of.” The Princess, not daring to move a muscle for fear of betraying herself, shook her head pityingly over her own note; and confessing what was strictly true—but *how* true the other little suspected—“that, to be sure, poor Lady Ancram could not write a word of German,” allowed Lady Mary to go off in triumph.

All this while a youth was growing up in the same high quarter, whose name Lady Mary would not willingly have had left out of her history. You are aware I mean Edward Duke of York: and curious, I do not doubt, to inquire his character. As people will take liberties with their own relations, it was given very concisely by his aunt Princess Emily, when, in after-days, talking to a friend of mine, she described his late Majesty's brothers, all in a lump, as “the best-humoured asses that ever were born.” With regard to one of them—Henry Duke of Cumberland—the expression,

however strong, was happy, almost picturesque; no alteration could mend it. Not so for the duke of Gloucester; who, though a weak man, with many failings, had good qualities and princely manners, and could not justly be pronounced a fool. Nor did the duke of York's folly, I believe, approach the towering height of his brother Cumberland's; but I have always heard that he was silly, frivolous, heartless; void alike of steadiness and principle; a libertine in his practice, and in society one of those incessant chatterers who must by necessity utter a vast deal of nonsense. Horace Walpole's letters record the laugh that arose on Prince Edward's asking a lady how she liked Young Clackit in the farce. You see the cause. Young Clackit struck the company as so precisely his Highness's very self, that it got the better of a respect which daily familiarity with royalty, here and there and everywhere, had not then worn away. He was the first of his race who began the good work of demolishing it, by running about giddily to all sorts of places with all sorts of people—of course, principally the worst sort—until his frolics won the public attention, and the Duke of York's *crew* grew a phrase used, as the lawyers say, in common parlance.

The friendship—or call it league—he formed with the Delavals, a family renowned for their wild profligacy, spread his fame through the northern counties, where he more than once visited Sir Francis Delaval and his sister Lady Mezborough at their country-seats; and Yorkshire rang long and loudly of the orgies therein

celebrated. The most innocent of their pastimes consisted of practical jokes played on each other, and, if possible, on some luckless stranger of an age or character to render such pleasantry an affront. This man saw his bed sink through the floor just as he was stepping into it; that was awakened before day by a sluice of cold water from the ceiling. The gentlemen started out of closets to catch the ladies at their toilets; the ladies stole and hid necessary parts of the gentlemen's dress in revenge. Mr. Wedderburne, afterwards Chancellor, passing near one of these enchanted castles when going the circuit, thought it proper to pay his duty to the King's brother, and was received with much civility; in secret with exultation, for he and his wife were fresh game, of the right breed. But a fearful figure in a white sheet appearing in the middle of their bedchamber, which, upon examining it, he found full of trap-doors, he took Mrs. Wedderburne away betimes next morning, without the ceremony of bidding his Royal Highness farewell.

Among the motley tribe of gamblers, jockies, boon companions, fiddlers, singers, and writers of *good* (*i. e.* infamous) songs, who enlivened this illustrious association, Foote, the famous mimic actor, held an eminent place, and paid no less than one of his limbs for the honour. He rode very ill; therefore it was an excellent joke to mount him upon a vicious horse, declared gentle enough to carry any lady. The animal threw him, as might be expected, and the surgeons could save his life only by instantly cutting off a leg which he had frac-

tured in a horrible manner. However, the accident made his fortune: since the Duke, feeling some compunction on the occasion, engaged the King to give him the patent of the little theatre in the Haymarket; the source of all his future affluence.

Considering the inglorious nature of the Duke of York's brief career, you will wonder to hear that high expectations of him were entertained in his childhood—at least by his parents: I know not whether by any one beside. But he was decidedly their favourite son, and their preference of him to his eldest brother a feeling openly avowed. Some distinguished foreigner praising the latter—"Oh, aye," replied the Prince of Wales, coldly—"Yes; George is a good boy; but Edward has something in him, I assure you. Edward will be somebody. You will hear of him one of these days." And even when both were advancing to the age of men, the Princess Dowager took little pains—not enough—to conceal the same partiality. The reasons of it I have a mind to make Dr. Johnson assign instead of myself; his words being so much better than mine, and the passage I shall quote so apposite; although beginning with a position cruelly discourteous.

"Women, by whatever fate, always judge absurdly of the intellects of boys."

I am afraid this comes nearer the truth than one would wish to admit. But then I maintain that the mind has a sex, notwithstanding a common saying to the contrary; and minds may occasionally be misplaced—lodged on wrong habitations. A voice I once

dearly loved to listen to used to assert that there were in the world almost as many he-women as she-women, instancing particularly a whole flourishing family of brothers and sisters, who had not any thing like a MAN among them. With this Caveat let Dr. Johnson go on:—

“ The vivacity and confidence which attract female admiration are seldom produced in early life, but by ignorance at least, if not by stupidity ; for they proceed not from confidence of right, but fearlessness of wrong. Whoever has a clear apprehension must have quick sensibility, and where he has no sufficient reason to trust his own judgement, will proceed with doubt and caution, because he perpetually dreads the disgrace of error. The pain of miscarriage is proportionate to the desire of excellence ; therefore till men are hardened . . . . . diffidence is found the inseparable associate of understanding.”

Here Johnson, without knowing it, was drawing an exact picture of the royal house, and pointing out accurately how the Heir of the Crown, silent, modest, and easily abashed, differed from his next brother, whom brisk animal spirits and volubility of speech, added to that first of gifts a good assurance—hourly strengthened by encouragement—enabled to join in, or interrupt every conversation, and always say a something which the obsequious hearers were ready to applaud. If the other ever faltered out an opinion, it was passed by un-noticed ; sometimes knocked down at once with—“ Do hold your tongue, George : don’t talk

“like a fool.” And every body knows that young persons—or any persons—under the curse of bashfulness, will talk below themselves when afraid to hear the sound of their own voices, and fearful that whatever they utter will be treated with scorn. Let alone conversing, it requires considerable self-possession, if not some share of impudence, to carve a leg of mutton ; if you see all around you ready primed to laugh at your failure. Yet, when thus abruptly silenced, George the third did not brood over it with the dark sullenness pretty sure to follow where early shyness conceals, as it often does, a haughty temper, and a high, though smothered, self esteem. “Pride and sharpness were not in him.” It only tended to augment, perhaps create, the awkward hesitation we remember in that most excellent Prince ; whose real good sense, innate rectitude, unspeakably kind heart, and genuine manliness of spirit, were overlooked in his youth, and indeed not fully appreciated till a much later time.

You will think I have diverged most widely from the main point : but never fear, Lady Mary will appear again by-and-bye ; and, as this may not be the last time I shall fly off at a tangent, you must use yourself to digressions and *prosing*. On Prince Edward’s first setting out, hardly yet freed from a governor’s controul, the underlings of his mother’s court praised and puffed him as far as they durst for shame ; and the highest company were ready to give him welcome, because, by the then received notions of society he did them an honour in seeking their acquaintance. So thought even

Mr. Walpole, whom (with the good leave of a swarm of magazine-critics that never saw his face) no one who knew him in his life-time would ever have accused of servility. Kings and Princes were no rarities to him: nor was he really elated by their notice; he took it at its current value, neither more nor less, as we accept the sovereign proffered us for twenty shillings without troubling ourselves to weigh it. When he knelt in form to kiss the Duke of York's hand at his own door, he probably had a politic view quite unsuspected by the aforesaid critics; that of warding off too close an intimacy and preventing the illustrious young gentleman from skipping in and out of his house at pleasure. To keep at a profoundly respectful distance from our superiors is the true way, as he perfectly knew, of keeping them at a convenient distance from ourselves. Let each man stand in his proper place, and none can press heavily upon another.

All this is now so changed that I seem to be speaking of the world before the Flood. But who has changed it? *They* have, the Great themselves. "*Tu l'as voulu George Dandin.*" It is their own act and deed. Whatever you hear about the diffusion of light, and the downfall of prejudice, and the march of intellect, and many more fine things, set forth in fine writing, and retailed in speech by innumerable parrots without feathers; did Princes associate chiefly with persons of superior rank and consequence, such persons would still jealously value the privilege of approaching them. Were eminent merit and shining talents the principal

exceptions, it would become a mark for merit and talents to aim at. And this because it is, and ever was, and ever will be, the nature of man to prize highly what he cannot easily obtain; independently of the thing's intrinsic worth, or its want of it. For mere eating, how little does a black-cock excel a chicken? Yet nobody wonders that a sportsman should waste the live-long day in pursuing the one "o'er moor and mountain:" where as, if he rose early to go into his own farmyard and shoot the other, his heirs, in case they were aggrieved by his will, would perhaps bring it forward as a legal proof that he had lost his senses.

To proceed. In days when royalty was yet a gem for few to cheapen, you may conclude it could not fail to shine brightly in the eyes of one who had such a natural bent to admire it as Lady Mary Coke. She addressed the Prince still more respectfully than Lord Orford; but tempered her respect with all the attractive smiles and graces which could make the handsome young man feel himself flattered by the handsome woman's curtsying so particularly low to him. Honestly speaking—observe—the young man was *not* handsome. As described to me, he had a little, mean figure, and a pale face, with white eyelashes and eyebrows, and a certain tremulous motion of the eye \* that was far from

\* Frederick Prince of Wales was questioning a gentleman newly come from Germany, about the family of a Sovereign at whose Court he had been Minister. "Have they turned out well-looking?" said he. "Oh Lord, Sir, hideous; they have all white, shaking eyes." "Ah!" replied the Prince, very composedly, "to be sure that must disfigure them; it is the case with some of my children, as you will see presently."

adding to its beauty. Their ages at this time stood as follows:—his barely twenty, hers thirty-two; a disparity which would spoil a romance, but in real life spoils nothing; on the contrary, gives a zest and spirit to flirtation, by gratifying the vanity of both parties. The lady who at two and twenty would have despised a boy of nineteen, finds something mighty soothing in his attentions when conscious of being rather past her bloom: while the boy, looking down upon insipid misses—*Anglicé*, pretty girls of his own age—is exalted above measure in self-estimation by the preference of the fine woman whom he sees others admire, and believes to stand on the pinnacle of fashion.

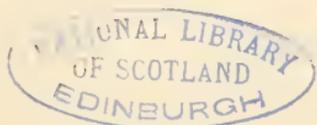
In this way probably commenced the friendship, or whatever it was, we speak of. Lady Mary, however, having a reverend care of her reputation, kept upon high ground, admitted his Royal Highness's visits but sparingly, and wholly avoided any suspicious familiarity. In consequence his letters (which are boyish enough) abound with complaints of the prudish strictness that holds him so far aloof, and inspires him with such awe that he hardly dares hazard the most innocent expressions, for fear of being mis-understood, and giving her nicety a causeless alarm. "Strong symptoms of love-making," you cry. I do not deny it; yet one of these letters betrays, I think, some nearly as strong of *Quizzing*. How the world went on so long without that useful verb I cannot imagine: it had early acquaintance with the mischievous thing. He tells her he has been studying the History of Scotland, and is wonderfully

struck with the resemblance of character between herself and Queen Elizabeth. Nobody can question that this was the most deliciously palatable compliment he could have concocted, considering the peculiar taste of her he sought to please. But the woman whom it did please to be likened to Queen Bess by a lover must have known little of love and its whimsical ways, and, indeed, just as Lady Temple affirmed, have had no such passion in her nature.

But the presumptions of quizzing do not rest here. Lady Susan \* Stewart, the Lady Augusta's lady of the bedchamber and favourite, used to tell my elder sisters, Lonsdale and Macartney, who were her intimate companions in their youth, how the Duke of York daily diverted her mistress and her with accounts of Lady Mary's pomposity, of the awful reserve maintained and the distant encouragement held out by turns, and, more than all, of her evident intention to become the wife of his bosom. Nay, Lady Augusta † herself seldom spoke to them (my sisters) at the drawing-room without mak-

\* Daughter of Lord Galloway. She married Granville Earl Gower, created Marquis of Stafford, in 1786, and was mother by him of Lord Granville, Lady Georgina Eliot, the Duchess of Beaufort, and Lady Harrowby.

† The late Duchess of Brunswick. Frederick, Prince of Wales, who studiously affected English manners (perhaps in a spirit of contradiction to his thoroughly German father), revived the old English custom of styling his daughters the Lady Augusta, the Lady Elizabeth, &c.; justly deeming this, our national title (like the Madame of France or Infanta of Spain), more dignified than that of Princess, so common on the Continent, and there so far from being confined to Royal persons. But Queen Charlotte saw the matter in another light: the *Lady* wounded her ears, and she re-established the (German) *Princess*.



ing ludicrous inquiries after *her sister* Mary. “What is sister Mary about just now? Is she disturbed at this, or graciously pleased with that? Come! you must tell me something of my dearly-beloved sister.” And, with all possible respect be it spoken, the simper I was wont to see stealing over King George’s countenance long after, whenever he heard Lady Mary’s name mentioned, seemed to betoken that in early life he too had had his full share of the diversion. In short, I can have no doubt that her lofty aims were a standing jest with all the Royal family.

Not that this precludes the possibility of the Duke’s having felt a great degree of liking for her, and believed in the reality of hers for him. Men—men of the idle world, at least—are so made that their turning a woman into the most cruel ridicule is nothing to the purpose. They may still be extremely vain of her partiality, and inclined rather to overrate it than suppose it feigned. Of course, they will think of her with a good deal of kindness; perhaps with more than they care to own; but that a very dissipated man—in plain English, a rake—should continue long harbouring in the depth of his heart a romantic passion, a faithful, fervent attachment, to a pattern of rigid virtue, one dozen of years older than himself——! Do but consider the likelihood of such a thing!—

“ — for aught that ever you could hear,  
Could ever read in tale or history.”

We all may have known instances of such extra-

ordinary affection subsisting where there was a considerable difference of age on the wrong side ; but then, either the women have been otherwise than virtuous or else the men have not been rakes. Take the former supposition ; it implies the existence of consummate skill and powers of allurement, which, aided by the force of habit, have rivetted the chains that chance or caprice originally forged. In the latter case (a far rarer) habit may operate too : but the best feelings of an honest, affectionate heart are usually engaged ; and esteem must have helped to ripen the man's sentiments into something more like the strongest degree of brotherly or filial tenderness than love properly so called.

Lady Greenwich once told Lord Haddington that she really believed the Duke of York and Lady Mary were secretly married. Why she thought so, or chose to say so, I shall not pretend to conjecture. I should never have guessed this to be her opinion. I am certain it was not that of her other sisters, or their husbands ; for they were sufficiently explicit upon the subject : sometimes laughing like the rest of the world ; sometimes wishing they could deter Lady Mary from exposing herself. It is past my power of belief that she would ever have destroyed one scrap of paper tending to prove, I will not say a marriage, but a promise, an engagement, an undefined connection, an obscure and nameless tie between them ; since she preserved his veriest notes of three lines, written in a great schoolboy's scrawl, to hope her cold was better, or to recommend a tuner for the lute of famous memory. The longest and

latest epistle of all, dated from Rome in 1764, and subscribed "Your affectionate friend, Edward," instead of containing a single phrase trenching on the tender or the mysterious, is rather what sentimental folks would spurn at, as a mere matter-of-fact letter. Any gentleman might have addressed it to any lady, young or old, or even to one of his own sex. It simply tells where he has been, whom he has seen, and how he has been received by the Pope and other princes; concluding with a grumbling comparison between his own situation and income, and those of his "*brother Sosia*," meaning the Cardinal of York.

Upon his death, which happened at Modena\* in 1767, Lady Mary's affliction was excessive; and it was *affiché*—for I must borrow a French word—displayed and proclaimed to all hearers and beholders. His body being brought home for interment, she went down into the vault as soon as the funeral was over, attended by Colonel Morrison, his groom of the bedchamber, to kneel and weep beside the coffin. This Morrison, whom I remember an old general, was a tall, lank man, with a visage uncommonly rueful and ugly. "Umph!" said George Selwyn, in his grave, slow manner; "if her ladyship wished to enact the Ephesian matron, I wonder she did not choose a better looking soldier." For some years she constantly repeated these visits to the Duke's remains whenever the opening of the royal vault on the demise of a prince or princess gave her an opportunity: but all her acquaintances were expected to know that the hallowed building containing them

\* By mistake for *Monaco*.

must never be named or alluded to in her presence. Lady Emily Macleod, while still a girl in a white frock, got into a sad scrape on this account. Her father and mother had a very pretty villa near Blackheath, which Princess Emily one morning drove down to see, carrying Lady Mary Coke with her. As Lord Lothian was absent and Lady Lothian not quite well, Her Royal Highness took the young lady to show her the walks and prospects. Now they stopped to look at a fine view of Greenwich Hospital, now at a noble reach of the river crowded with shipping. "And here, Madam, this way, your Royal Highness may catch a glimpse of Westminster Abbey." "My dear!" exclaimed Lady Mary, rather sharply, "if you please, do not talk of Westminster Abbey before me." The Princess laughed; and they walked on and on till they came to an eminence, where poor Lady Emily, forgetting the injunction, pointed out the Abbey, as it seemed to rise in awful solemnity from a grove of elms within the place. "Child!" cried Lady Mary in her shrillest key, "What do you mean? Have you a mind to make me faint away? Did I not forbid you to say anything about the Abbey?" People of warm tempers are subject to mistake in the mode of expressing their feelings, and confound one kind of emotion with another: so the girl went home and asked her mother why that lady always flew in such a passion at the sight (or sound) of Westminster Abbey?

Nothing could be more characteristic of both parties than the first interview between Princess Emily and Lady Mary after the Duke of York's decease. The

one, neither feeling concern nor seeking to feign it, talked on common topics as usual, resolved not to notice the other's mournful silence, bows, and monosyllables. A violent burst of tears ensued. "Dear Lady Mary!" quoth Her Royal Highness, "do not make yourself so miserable about my sister (this was the Landgravine of Hesse-Cassel, who had had a fit of illness); I assure you my accounts of her are quite satisfactory." Here the paroxysm redoubled. "Nay, but surely you may trust me; I am not in the least uneasy now; by yesterday's post I received a letter from herself to say how fast she was recovering." At last Lady Mary, taking none of these hints—for broad hints they were meant to be—sobbed forth the name of York; and at last also Princess Emily, losing patience, broke out with all the rough bluntness of her father, "My good Lady Mary, if you did but know what a joke he always used to make of you, I promise you you would soon have done crying for him." I presume this abrupt dialogue induced Lady Mary to send the incredulous aunt all his notes and letters, in order to show her what his sentiments had been: but the packet came back with only one brief dry sentence in answer as follows:—"I thank you for the letters, which I return, and wish I could prevail on you to burn them all.—" AMELIA."

In three or four years, ere the wound was well healed, two surprising public events took place; ostensibly not at all concerning Lady Mary, yet felt by her as personal injuries and mortifications to herself. These

were the Duke of Cumberland's marriage, and, what it probably hastened, the public avowal of the Duke of Gloucester's. I was then beginning to open my eyes and ears, and to attend to the conversation of my mother's visitors; and I can bear witness that Lady Mary lost her rest and appetite, and ran some risk of losing her wits upon these royal mis-alliances. She foamed at the mouth as she declaimed against them. Knowing the whole affair, certainly one can conceive nothing more irritating to a great lady, duchess dowager of York by her own creation, yet, with all the Campbell blood in her veins, unable to prove herself so, than to behold two such persons authentically Duchesses of Gloucester and Cumberland. Lady Waldegrave was a most lovely woman; not of much sense, but blameless in character and conduct. She had the manners of the high society in which she had always moved; she was the widow of a distinguished man of quality; but—there was no disguising it—the illegitimate daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, by a mistress whom, if report spoke truth, the keeper of some infamous house, describing her uncommon beauty, had fairly beckoned in from the top of a cinder-cart. The widow Horton had no such stain of birth, but in every other respect was far less fit for a princess. Her father, Simon Luttrell,\* might be pronounced the greatest reprobate in England. He once challenged his eldest son, the late Lord Carhampton, who in return sent him word that if he (the father) could prevail on any gentleman to be his second, he

\* Created Lord Graham, and afterwards Earl of Carhampton.

would fight him with all his heart. Such was the style of the family. The daughters had habits suited to it; vulgar, noisy, indelicate, and intrepid: utter strangers to good company, they never were to be seen in any woman of fashion's house, though often leaders of riotous parties at Vauxhall or Ranelagh. Yet Mrs. Horton was not accused of gallantry. She belonged to that disgusting class of women who possibly spread wider corruption than many of the more really, or—let me say—more *nominally* vicious: women who have never blushed in their lives; who set modesty and decency at defiance in cold blood; and because they have *done* nothing, take the liberty of saying everything; as if desirous to proclaim that it is not principle, but want of sufficient temptation alone, that hinders their walking the Strand. Lady Margaret Fordice said, very aptly, that after hearing the Duchess of Cumberland talk for half an hour, one ought to go home and wash one's ears.

The King, highly offended with his brothers on this occasion, forbade them his sight, and notified that no one who frequented their courts should be received at St. James's. So had William and Mary done to Queen Anne, and George the first and second to their refractory sons. But their successor was much too good-natured to enforce his edict; especially against the Duke of Gloucester, whom he loved. Were you ever at a trial by the Peers in Westminster Hall? When first proclamation is made that "our sovereign Lord doth strictly charge all manner of persons to keep silence " on pain of imprisonment," every body is struck totally

dumb for about five seconds: then our fair sex (if not the other) recover their fright, and go on whispering and clattering just as before. His Majesty's prohibition had like effects. It overawed people for the first month; in the second they stole a visit to Gloucester or Cumberland House, went to Court early in the third, and, being spoken to as usual, troubled their heads no more about the matter. It soon grew a dead letter, which nobody pretended to mind but the household, the ministers, and their wives. Meanwhile, as it pointed out to the Opposition a cheap and safe way of showing disrespect to the Crown, their zeal instantly flamed high for the Princes in disgrace; and never were Princesses so revered and Royal Highnessed by patriots, as the ladies whose consequence Aunt Emily overturned with one careless word. "Well! to talk no more of my " nephews and their women ——"

Neither of the proscribed houses then was at all deserted; but they differed materially from each other in point of society, for the Duchess of Gloucester maintained a degree of state, approved of by the Duke, that gave some stiffness to her parties, which were commonly rather select. Unbounded freedom reigned at Cumberland House, as its mistress, laughing forms and etiquettes to scorn, was better pleased that tag, rag, and bobtail (pardon the vulgar phrase) should flock in, than that numbers should ever be wanting. This did not spring from humility.—Query, does it in any case?—She was not honestly indifferent to the honours she affected to undervalue; but she had sense enough to know that

nothing could ever place her upon the same level with the persons born in purple: therefore she bore them an inveterate hatred, and made whatever appertained to rank, birth, or dignity the object of her contemptuous sarcasms. Her sister, Miss Betsy (or Lady Elizabeth) Luttrell, who had a great deal of real 'though coarse wit, and was more precisely what the Regent Orleans entitled a *Roué* than one would have thought it practicable that anything clad in petticoats could be, governed the family with a high hand, marshalled the gaming-table, gathered round her the men, and led the way in ridiculing the King and Queen. Buckingham House served as a by-word—a signal for the onset of Ho! Ho! Ho!—and a mighty scope for satire was afforded by the Queen's wide mouth and occasionally imperfect English, as well as by the King's trick of saying What? What? his ill-made coats, and general antipathy to the fashion. But the marks preferably aimed at were his *virtues*; his freedom from vice as a man; his discouragement of it as a sovereign; the exclusion of divorced women from his court; beyond all, his religious *prejudices*—that is to say, his sincere piety and humble reliance upon God. Nothing of this scoffing kind passed at Gloucester House: the Duke respected his brother and himself too much to permit it, and the Duchess, however sore on her own account, saw nothing ridiculous in conjugal fidelity, nor yet in going to church and saying one's prayers—superstitious practices to which the unenlightened woman was greatly addicted herself.

Now, upon my statement, would not you conclude

that, of these two obnoxious couples, the Cumberlands must have been most the objects of Lady Mary's abhorrence? Yet was it quite the reverse. She regarded them with supreme disdain; but at the name of the Gloucesters her eyes struck fire, and her teeth absolutely gnashed together. I hope, for the honour of history and for hers, that no paltry female feeling lay lurking at the root of this bitter animosity—no original grudge against the beautiful Lady Waldegrave for having, on her first appearance, eclipsed other people who were far less young, and never had been half so handsome. Perhaps the mere circumstance of a slight common acquaintance between them operated disagreeably. It might be more galling to have a person put over one's head, who a moment ago stood in the ranks by one's side, than to see a stranger promoted from another brigade. In short, I only warrant the fact—I cannot tell the reason. The unconscious Duchess of Gloucester seemed to run pins and needles, goads and stings into her, drawing blood every day by some fresh piece of arrogance or sauciness; though all the while, notwithstanding the airs she—that woman—chose to give herself (“*that woman*”—not pronounced in the cool tone of Princess Emily, but with a killing emphasis), the woman was *not* MARRIED: the Duchess of Cumberland *was*.

To explain this to your comprehension. The widow Horton, when she had secured her idiot-prince—by means, it was said, of some stern hints from a resolute brother, “*un certain Alcidas qui se meloit de porter*

“ *l'épée* ” (see Molières ‘ Marriage Forcé ’)—took especial care to be wedded in the face of day, and have register, certificate, and witnesses all forthcoming. The Duke of Gloucester, who at first intended to keep his marriage a profound secret, found himself hampered by the precautions he had used for that purpose, and in consequence could not produce his proofs so readily. But the King, though angry, ever upright and honourable, as he had no manner of doubt on the subject in his own mind, would not suffer any to be started in Council, and I believe none was entertained by the world at large: so Lady Mary stood out alone—as she had the glory of doing against the foolish notions of her ignorant fellow-creatures in many another instance.

A year or two after these marriages, Lady Mary resolved to leave the land where such monstrous acts could be committed, and breathe awhile the pure air of countries more strictly governed. It was not her first sally abroad. She had made two or three excursions into Germany since his late Majesty's accession, and formed intimacies with sundry German Princesses—Mary of England in particular, Landgravine of Hesse-Cassel—her professions of attachment to whom had authorised that wicked wilful mistake of Princess Emily's recorded above. The Royal and Serene Highnesses in question (most of them her correspondants) were now to be revisited at their respective courts for the refreshing of friendship: then she purposed paying her respects to the hero Frederick of Prussia, and then pushing on to Vienna. The hero proved not only inaccessible but

invisible. At Berlin his brothers and sisters and his poor cypher queen were as civil to her as could be wished, and she saw many of the generals who had gathered laurels in the Seven years war ; but vainly did she spend a whole week at Potsdam, go to the opera, and attend the parade. Frederick, rather than meet her eyes, forbore enjoying his music and exercising his troops, and continued obstinately shut up in his private apartments till assured of her final retreat. Seriously, she persuaded herself that there was something in his seclusion during her stay that did regard her, and was too marked not to be intentional ; therefore, as distinction is all in all, she remained nearly as well satisfied as she would have been with a favourable reception. The King of Prussia, she thought, did not take pains to avoid an insignificant person, one of no political importance.

Ample amends awaited her at Vienna, where the British envoy, Sir Robert Murray Keith, was then all-powerful ; being universally popular, and cherished as a familiar friend by the Emperor Joseph. Our ambassadors at foreign courts had not yet learned to dread invasions from their countrywomen ; travelling boys and tutors frequently gave them a great deal of trouble, but English ladies did not at that time go swarming all over Europe. The arrival then of a woman of high quality and unstained character, like Lady Mary Coke, was an incident rather acceptable to Sir Robert, who, by paying her particular respect himself, insured her obtaining attention from the crowned heads ; to whom

he made her birth and rank fully known, and introduced her in the most advantageous manner. A duck—or why have not I the grace to say a Swan?—takes the water by instinct, swims proudly along, and is happy. Thus in a court Lady Mary found her natural element. Here, making a graceful curtesy, playing her fan with a good air, and dressing magnificently, were all things of some moment; and her knowledge of history and pedigree, foreign and domestic, turned to still better account. The Empress-queen received and treated her with all her habitual graciousness; Joseph, ever a most agreeable man in society, was well-bred and courteous to Sir Robert Keith's friend; Prince Kaunitz, the prime minister, followed his example; Count Seilern, who had been ambassador in England, welcomed her as an old acquaintance; the Thuns, the Lichtensteins, the Esterhazis, invited her to superb entertainments; and, on the whole, I suppose the months she passed amongst them were decidedly the happiest of her long life. When about to go away, she had a private audience of the Empress, who, with many flattering expressions of regret for her departure, desired she would accept a fine medallion set with jewels, and wear it for her sake.

All this was so much sunshine beaming on Lady Mary's mind. In extraordinary good humour, breathing nothing but admiration for the perfect beings she had left, she came home to recount her *prosperities*, as Madame de Sevigné would have said, to a set of cold, incredulous hearers. No doubt her descriptions were

pompous, and people laughed at her, as they had the confirmed habit of doing, let her talk of what she would; but I shall confess that, for once, I had no inclination to join them: her conversation interested me more than it ever did before or since. First, it was fluent—an epithet that seldom belonged to it, unless when anger prompted her to pour out invectives. In the next place, she had something worth talking of—the mountain did not now bring forth a mouse: heroic language suited an heroic subject, and when she expatiated on the talents and virtues of the great princess by whom she boasted herself favoured—on her spirit, her dispatch, her penetration, her magnanimity, her justice, her clemency—to listen “I did seriously incline:” for I was very young, and very enthusiastic—to speak the truth—and had in my heart a greater *hankering* after heroes and heroines than I durst openly acknowledge, for fear of becoming as good a joke as Lady Mary.

I still retain a lively remembrance of her painting the scene she said she had witnessed during an illness, in which the Empress lay for some days seemingly at the point of death, the physicians giving scarcely a hope of her recovery. Every church was crowded, day and night, with persons of every class from the highest to the lowest; all kneeling promiscuously, and praying with such fervency, as if each individual had been petitioning the Almighty to spare the object dearest to his own bosom. The multitude who thronged round the palace-gates stood watching for the moment of

their opening in breathless, silent anxiety; not a sound to be heard but now and then a sob that could not be suppressed—the soldiers stationed to prevent the populace from rushing in weeping the most bitterly of all. For the courtiers and nobility—if asked after her, they began their answers in due form, with “Her Imperial Majesty,” but melted as they went on, ’till her high titles sank into “*Notre chère Marie Therese,*” uttered in that tone of true affection, that voice of the heart, which can neither be feigned nor mistaken. It was at length judged necessary to administer the last sacraments; and as the Emperor, her son, advanced to receive the priests bearing the Host and holy oil for extreme unction, the tears were seen streaming down his cheeks. But men are men, and power is power: on another day the symptoms of universal despondency drew from him a remark which betrayed that he did not view it without an inward sensation of jealousy—“This excessive despair,” he said, “looks not only as if they loved her, but as if they were afraid of her successor.” Very probably no unjust inference.

Besides such anecdotes of Maria Theresa, I had pleasure in learning particulars concerning Prince Kaunitz, considered as the wisest statesman in Europe; Laudohn, esteemed by the King of Prussia one of its greatest generals; Marshal Lacy, long the leader of the Imperial armies; and many other remarkable characters. Then the grandeur of the Hungarian nobles, their ancient descent, their magnificent palaces, even their plate and diamonds, and feasts, and balls,

and shows went for something with an imagination hardly yet weaned from the enchantment of the Arabian tales. So, I repeat it, I was for the first and last time an attentive, gratified auditor. Others, less captivated by the theme, grew sooner tired of its constant recurrence, and, besides, felt a strong impulse to rebel when poor old England was unmercifully run down, and declared to have nothing in it worthy to be seen or spoken of. It was true, nobody could say much in behalf of the tarnished tapestry at St. James's, or of that wainscotted ball-room which would have made a decent figure if seated over the market-house of a country town, and lit with tallow candles. We had always a woeful deficiency of regal splendour. But what were the Duchess of Bedford's suppers, and the Duchess of Norfolk's concerts to those of the Princess Something with half-a-dozen hard names? And you might see more massive gold-plate at Prince Estherhazy's table than the whole peerage of the three kingdoms could furnish pitiful silver!

This, however is a traveller's trick, not peculiar to Lady Mary. "Disable all the benefits of your own country, or I will scarce think you have swum in a gondola." But as such assertions are sure to be stoutly combated, contradiction, often carried beyond the truth, whetted her zeal to the sharpest edge, and trebled her passionate fondness for Vienna. Unfortunately the natural consequence of this was a longing to return thither, which it would have been more prudent to resist than to gratify. Our second visit to a place

that has extremely charmed us on a first very rarely answers. I suppose, because a certain lapse of time enables that busy artist, imagination, so imperceptibly to colour and improve the sketches drawn by memory, that, no longer distinguishing the handiwork of each, we ascribe the whole picture to the latter. Then, upon again viewing the real objects, and finding the likeness unfaithful, we call them to account for our disappointment, and insist that they are themselves altered and disfigured.

How far this occurred in the present instance I cannot pretend to say, nor do I know the exact details of what passed. I only understood generally that Lady Mary, being now quite at home at Vienna, acted as she was prone to act at home, and very shortly either took a warm part in some feud she found raging, or else declared a war of her own against a court-lady, near the Empress's person, and long established in her favour. The Empress was so unreasonable and unjust as to side with her Grande Maitresse; perhaps, too, to think that an officious foreigner had no business to come and meddle with the intrigues of her court, much less to lead parties to stir up dissensions. No more audiences or medallions were to be obtained; the sovereign's frown had its accustomed effect upon the courtiers; and there was no doing what might so readily be done in England, if the King had spit in your face, or, for that matter, you in his; no leaguings with the friends of freedom, and holding your head higher than ever. Lady Mary left the territories of her enemy in

complete, thorough, perfect *dudgeon*: with only one consolation, *videlicet*, as perfect a conviction that Maria Theresa, the last of the illustrious line of Austria, the Empress of Germany, the Queen of Hungary, the leading power of Europe, *was* her enemy—HERS!

I remember hearing it suggested that some rumours respecting the deceased Duke of York might have reached the Empress's ear, and, as she was much surprised at Lady Mary's unlooked-for appearance a second time, led her to suspect the wandering heroine of evil designs on the heart and hand of Joseph. This I utterly disbelieve. I dare say her Imperial Majesty knew mankind better than to apprehend any danger for her son (a man of full age, already twice married,) from the wiles of a fair traveller, considerably on the wrinkled side of forty. But the surmise was not a little agreeable to Lady Mary, as I myself ascertained ten or twelve years afterwards. I must defer telling you how, for it would be too long a parenthesis at present.

From Vienna she pursued her way through the Tyrol into Italy, at every step meeting with those difficulties and disasters which seem to beset us, by some fatality, whenever we ourselves are prodigiously out of humour; just as every species of food is nauseous to the taste when our stomachs are loaded with bile. Italy would not do at all; so, bending her course homewards, she next visited Paris, but only to undergo additional evils. The young king and queen of France had but lately assumed the crown destined to be torn from their

heads in so cruel a manner, and were now in the zenith of apparent prosperity, enjoying that brilliant deceitful calm so finely pictured by Gray—

“ Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,  
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,  
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,  
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm.”

In those days one of the unfortunate queen's chief sins appears to have been a want of attention to that resentful part of the Creation, *Old Women*, and consequent disregard of all the forms, etiquettes, decorums, and nice observances which old women value and recommend—not always unwisely, as her melancholy history may prove. Now, imagine a tall, elderly, English, noblewoman, full fraught with all these offensive things, wearing a large flat hoop, long ruffles, and a sweeping train, holding herself very upright, speaking very bad French, and, to crown all, abusing the Queen's mother without mercy. I say imagine such a wight arriving amidst the revelry then reigning at Versailles, and judge whether the giddy crew and their leader were likely to receive her with open arms? Probably poor Marie Antoinette rejoiced to have so fair a pretext as this grave personage's recent disgrace at Vienna for declining to be annoyed with the *vieille cour* of England, in addition to that of France, which it was not in her power to shake off. But Lady Mary along with the smart had at least the balm of thinking that the daughter acted by the special injunctions of the implacable mother, whose couriers went and came to and

fro for no other purposes than what concerned her. So all was well—or ill—as you choose to term it.

One of the most memorable consequences resulting from this last luckless expedition was a breach between Lady Mary and Horace Walpole, once her intimate acquaintance, her correspondant, the poet of her praise. He had always been more or less guilty of laughing at her, it is true; but that was what most of her friends took the liberty of doing, and his printed letters show you it might be done with impunity, for she was so cased in self-satisfaction that the keenest raillery, if couched in civil language, would pass upon her for a compliment. So their intimacy remained unaltered. But he had gradually cooled towards her ever since she took the field so fiercely against his niece, the duchess of Gloucester; and now, when life's flowery season was closed for both, when she was of the middle age and he a humoursome old bachelor, her imprudence put his remaining regard to a test it could not stand. When you approach the confines of fifty, dear Car, avoid, as far as you may, having any kind of difference with a young beauty. If it cannot be helped, manage it by yourself, meekly and silently, and never—oh! never!—expect a MAN, an old acquaintance, an old friend, even an old lover—no, not if parson of the parish, not if your confessor (supposing you a Catholic)—to espouse your cause with zeal or readiness. Lady Mary's malignant stars, or her genius for quarrelling, led her to fall out with Lady Barrymore, a daughter of the famous Lady Harrington—“*daughter every way*”—but as yet

only just entering on her career ; very pretty, very lively, bold as a lion, and highly admired at Paris,—the fashion there, which is saying everything. This did not particularly concern Mr. Walpole, who was by no means one of those old fops or fools who vie with younger fops for the favour of ladies ; yet when summoned to act as champion on the opposite side to wage war with the fashion, he quailed, or, what was worse, presumed to investigate the merits of the cause—point blank against all the laws of chivalry and friendship ; at least, so it appeared to Lady Mary.

We had not the details of the business from herself. She returned to England in no communicative mood, touching either that or her greater wrongs ; commonly sitting rapt and absorbed in awful, portentous silence, or, at most, throwing out hints, very significant, but not explanatory of particulars. “ Well, Lady Mary (my mother began), “ I suppose you saw Mr. Walpole “ at Paris ? ” “ Yes—I SAW him—as FALSE as ever “ he could be.” “ Why,” returned my mother, who had known him from a boy, and did not herself think sincerity his constant characteristic, “ You might now “ and then have seen cause to suspect that before “ Lady Mary.” “ I know it pretty certainly NOW ! ” and, as if too indignant to say more, she folded her arms, threw herself back in her chair, and looked the rest. We got no farther information till he arrived from abroad, when he very soon came to tell us his own story ; how fairly, I do not know ; how entertainingly, you shall judge.

“ My dear Madam ! ” said he, “ do but conceive that  
 “ I was fast asleep in my warm bed, at peace with the  
 “ whole world ; when my Swiss valet-de-chambre comes,  
 “ in his night-cap, sputtering and fussing, to wake me at  
 “ five o’clock in the morning. I must get up imme-  
 “ diately. ‘ Oh, Lord ! ’ cried I ; ‘ is the house on fire ? ’  
 “ No ; but there was a lady in distress. *Miledi Coke*—  
 “ *il lui est arrivé quelque malheur ; elle est tout explorée*—  
 “ and she must positively see Monsieur that instant.  
 “ So Monsieur was forced to comply, sorely against  
 “ his will. I huddled on some decent clothing, and  
 “ hobbled into my salon, where I found her ladyship,  
 “ *tout explorée*, indeed, pacing up and down the room in  
 “ such a *taking*, that I trembled to ask whether she had  
 “ been robbed or ravished. She had bid me adieu, you  
 “ will observe, and was on the point of setting out for  
 “ England ; so this scene amazed me the more. I  
 “ could make neither head nor tail of anything she  
 “ said for some minutes. At last, when it transpired  
 “ that Lady Barrymore had enticed away her confi-  
 “ dential courier and factotum, I fetched my breath  
 “ once more ; and, I am afraid, made a sad slip of the  
 “ tongue. ‘ Is that all ? ’ said I. I own I deserved to  
 “ have my ears boxed ; and truly I was near getting  
 “ my deserts, for I wish you had heard the tone in  
 “ which ALL ! was thundered back again. I drew in  
 “ my horns as fast as possible, humbly admitting the  
 “ loss of an useful servant to be a very serious evil,  
 “ and his leaving her at the eve of a journey a most  
 “ vexatious circumstance. I did not say, how could I

“ help or hinder it? I only proffered my best services  
 “ in looking for another fit person to fill his place ; and  
 “ then, like a blockhead, I begged her to compose  
 “ herself, take a few drops, go home, and lie down ;  
 “ and at noon-day I would wait upon her to concert  
 “ farther measures. I might have guessed that this  
 “ would throw oil on the fire. Mercy ! what a blaze  
 “ followed ! She fell into the most absolute *Tantrum*  
 “ you ever beheld ; wrung her hands and tore her hair.  
 “ She was betrayed, abandoned, devoted to destruction,  
 “ had not a real friend on the face of the earth. If I  
 “ were the tenth part of one, I should go and scold  
 “ Lady Barrymore, and bring back the courier *vi et*  
 “ *armis*. She expected no less from my former  
 “ professions, but now she saw nobody was to be  
 “ relied upon ; there was neither faith, truth, nor  
 “ humanity existing. She next proceeded to unveil  
 “ mysteries, and told me the true state of the case ;  
 “ which, if it *had* been true, would, to be sure, have  
 “ rendered *my* interference vastly easier and more  
 “ efficacious ! Lady Barrymore, it should seem, was  
 “ but an instrument, a tool, in the hands of the Queen  
 “ of France ; and she again only executed the com-  
 “ mands of her mother the Empress of Germany, who  
 “ had projected the whole affair long beforehand. Lady  
 “ Mary was to be assassinated on the road between  
 “ Paris and Calais ; and to that end this faithful courier  
 “ —the sole obstacle to their murderous designs—by  
 “ whom her life had already been defended two or  
 “ three times from the Empress’s myrmidons, was to be

“ wiled away at any price. I thought to myself, it  
“ would have been their shortest way to poison him,  
“ as the thieves sometimes serve one’s house-dog at  
“ Twickenham; but I durst not utter such a word.  
“ Now, dearest madam, what could I possibly say? If  
“ I had attempted to convince her that the Empress  
“ did not know, and the Queen did not care, whether  
“ she and her courier were at Paris or at Pekin, and that  
“ their Majesties were as likely to plan the murder of  
“ my favourite pussy-cat, you know I should have acted  
“ as simply as the good clergyman who comforted the  
“ penitent author by assuring him that no mortal had  
“ ever heard of his writings. And, besides, my person  
“ might have been endangered. I am not built for a  
“ hero, and she is for an Amazon. I confess to you  
“ those two fists of hers struck no small terror into my  
“ cowardly soul; and, as she flounced out of the house, I  
“ could hardly believe I had escaped without a scratched  
“ face or a black eye. I caught a little cold from my  
“ air-bath in the morning, and it brought on a little  
“ gout; but that did not much signify.”

As I said above, I will not answer for the strict accuracy of the narrative; but one part of it—that respecting the Imperial plots conjured up by Lady Mary’s imagination—Lord Orford neither invented nor exaggerated. She left us in no doubt on this head, as you shall see when I have finished the chapter of Coke and Walpole.

The flames of discord subsided more quickly than you would have expected after such an explosion.

Not that peace was ever formally made, much less familiarity renewed; but Mr. Walpole only withdrew to a civil distance; and Lady Mary, though she hated him from that day forward, felt an awe of him that bridled her temper. To break with him totally, would have been to quarrel (in the child's phrase) with her bread and butter. For he was intimate with almost all her friends; she could not exclude him from Princess Emily's card-table, nor lessen his influence over Lord and Lady Strafford. Therefore, they soon began again to play at Loo together, like well-bred Christians; and I really think he viewed her with more indifference than enmity. She presented herself to his mind merely as a ridiculous, wrong-headed woman; the less one had to do with whom the better. But that his love of laughing at her increased, I cannot deny. Many years after the time I speak of, he one day said to me—I forget on what occasion, it was something relating to her—"Lady Louisa, I will teach you to make verses —good, regular verses—and we will address them to " Lady Mary Coke, who, you know, is famous for always scolding the Living and crying over the Dead. " I will make the first line of the couplet, and you shall " make the second. You shall not be able to help it. " Now, mark mine—

" The more you scold the less you'll kiss "

. . . . .

You may believe I was as little able to help bursting into a most improper fit of laughter.

While Lady Mary was still abroad, somewhere in

Italy, Lady Betty Mackenzie came to us, one morning, in serious alarm at a letter she had just received from her, giving most deplorable accounts of her health and situation. Lady Betty read us the greater part of it aloud. It said she was miserably ill, and without a human creature near her whom she could trust. Her maid—who, she saw plainly, was in other interests than hers—treated her with the greatest insolence; well aware she should be supported and rewarded—no need of saying by whom. Not to enter into her various causes of complaint against this wretch—perhaps, indeed, it might be hardly safe in a common post-letter—let it only be mentioned that there was every reason to believe she had robbed her of her fine pearls. Lady Betty knew not what to think or to do; but the particular purport of the letter being to desire she would fetch certain keys from Coutts's, and search a certain trunk for such and such papers, she did so immediately; and lo! the very first thing apparent in the trunk was a case containing the identical pearls the maid had been purloining in Italy under the auspices of Maria Theresa,—the nameless personage thus mysteriously glanced at, and the saucy Abigail's secret protectress. In this predicament it availed Lady Mary nothing to dismiss that individual waiting-woman; for, as fast as she could turn away men and maids, the Empress was sure to supply her with others; every new one ten degrees worse than any of the old: besides heaping upon her all the injuries that could be inflicted through the medium of postmasters, innkeepers, black-

smiths, custom-house-officers, centinels at the gates of fortified towns, and venders of the necessaries of life. Kings have long hands, says the proverb; of course, the greatest sovereign in Europe might well have the longest, beyond the reach of which it was impossible to travel. Imagine what it was to be the object of such a persecution! That is, imagine the pride and pleasure of it. For hate, like love, has an equalizing power; and our inveterate foes, however loth, cannot avoid raising us, by their very hostility, to a level little beneath their own. To have, then, not a lion, but an empress, always in the path, and, nevertheless, so far to defeat her malice as to bring off life and limb as safe as if one had never offended the House of Austria—what a triumph! So Lady Mary felt it. Through all the multiplicity of her grievances and the gloom they caused, we could descry a wonderful increase of self-importance. To use a familiar expression, she came home a foot taller, and looked down upon common things and common mortals more scornfully than ever.

One circumstance puzzled me a good while. She often complained of rheumatic pains in her arm and shoulder, and, when a pang seized her, would grasp the part with her other hand and cry, "Aye, there it is—going on as usual, for fear I should forget. Aye! I suppose I am to be reminded by this token as long as "I live—Aye, Aye!!" All this uttered with a bitter laugh, "*un cotal riso amaro*," and the air of a high-minded sufferer resolved to contemn somebody's malig-

nity. I did not know what to make of it. The pains, it seemed, were not to be brought in "by the visitation of God:" yet Lady Mary was no believer in sorcery, nor had she ever, as far as I could learn, been cast into any damp dungeon. And how one's worst enemy, whether Empress-queen, or Grand Signor, or Great Mogul, could give one the rheumatism otherwise, I was at a loss to comprehend; but by putting hints together and listening heedfully to all she said of her travels, I caught the right clue at last. As she traversed the Milaneze, her post-boys, dutiful subjects of the Empress, purposely mistook the road, and drove her full into the middle of a river, or a mill-stream, where it was their mistress's design she should be drowned. That they themselves must have been drowned the foremost, their loyalty or their villainy set them above minding; for Maria Theresa had her creatures in as good order as the Prince of Lebanon his assassins of old. Lady Mary's sole protector, the faithful courier, afterwards seduced by Lady Barrymore, rode forward, produced his pistols, and compelled them to stop; but could not induce them to relinquish their purpose until chance sent to his aid some foreign travellers, who by main force turned about the horses' heads, and escorted Lady Mary to the next post-house. While the dispute lasted she sate up to her knees in water, the least ill effects of which was the rheumatism aforesaid.

Let me relate one other instance of this relentless pursuit of her, and then have done. She had always been a good œconomist, and now, growing more and more

attentive to pounds, shillings, and pence, did not scruple taking some small trouble to save a few even of the two latter. The furniture of an ordinary house in her neighbourhood was to be sold by auction; she went to reconnoitre it, and amongst the useful articles spied and fixed upon a walnut-tree chest of drawers likely to go for about twenty shillings; but instead of sending her butler or her carpenter to bid for her, she went in person and in full majesty—a sure signal inviting all the brokers to bid against her. This was done with such perseverance by one swarthy shabby-looking fellow, that he raised the sum to a ridiculous height. “I now perceived the meaning of it,” said she: “the matter being so trifling, I protest it had not occurred to me before; but nothing escapes the vigilance of THAT PERSON—nothing is below *her* attention. Oh! I could tell you such stories—ha, ha, ha!” (and again came the scornful laugh.) “I gave the man a *Look* which I fancy he could perfectly understand, and then said to him significantly, ‘Well, sir, I see you are determined you will have it, and you must; I contend no longer.’” THAT PERSON we all knew to be the omnipresent Empress of Germany, whose restless spite, grudging Lady Mary’s housekeeper a cheap second-hand, or tenth-hand, chest of drawers, had commissioned forth Moses or Nathan, from the Seven Dials, to bid the old walnut-tree-affair up to the price of new mahogany. The look darted at the Jew-broker must have been worth seeing; and oh! that Maria Theresa, while actively governing her extensive dominions, and (one grieves to add) busy

in partitioning Poland, could but have known the minor feats she was supposed to perform in England! Perhaps she lived the longer for her happy ignorance. I heard much of her from the Marquise di Circello, long the Neapolitan ambassadress at Vienna, who said she was not always grave, but, like most persons of real ability, could laugh most heartily on a fair occasion; therefore on this she might have risked breaking a blood-vessel, and expiring in the literal sense of the word.

Every body knows how quickly after her death the various changes devised by the philosophic genius of that very arbitrary monarch, her son, embroiled all his affairs, and drove part of his subjects into open rebellion. Yet at first it was the fashion here to applaud everything he did or attempted to do; and while that humour prevailed, the late Lord Stafford laid a comical trap to disconcert Lady Mary. "So, madam,"—he began over the whist-table—"I am quite charmed with your Emperor Joseph; he fullfils all you used to promise for him—so liberal, so enlightened! And then what he has done for Prince Kaunitz is admirable." "Prince Kaunitz!" repeated she, much pleased, "what of him?" "Why, have not you heard?" "No, nothing of Prince Kaunitz." "Oh, then, I am so glad to tell it you. You know that nasty, cross, bigotted old woman never would let the poor Prince have a mistress. Well, the Emperor has declared him at full liberty, and now he keeps *three*." The other men present set up a roar, and poor Lady Mary looked as people look when civilly patting a great dog they are

afraid of, and dare not kick out of the room. A joke was a thing that always puzzled, even if it failed to offend her; but she took a magnanimous tone with regard to the deceased Empress, giving you to understand she had buried her just resentments in her great adversary's grave, and was willing once more to recall her merits, only premising "this it is but fair to say—thus much I must acknowledge—justice compels me to bear testimony"—and such other candour-breathing sentences by way of preface or apology.

Now for the incident: I would not introduce sooner. Once upon a time, as the fairy-tales say, I took a fancy to divert myself with going, well disguised, to the house of an acquaintance who saw masks on the night of a great public masquerade. I was then past my girl-hood, but not past my *shy-hood*, if I may coin such a word; the eyes of my fellow-creatures still had power to cast a spell over my tongue, which a mask seemed to set free by giving me something like the sensation of the little woman in the nursery-ballad—"Sure enough it's none of I"—for this very reason, those most used to me were the last to discover me. "Three great oaths would scarce have made them believe" I could be the mask who found so much to say; Lady Mary Coke in particular—'though she came to us five days in the week, and staid, and staid, and staid, Heaven knows many a wearisome hour—knew my face far better than my voice, and minded my presence no more than that of the round-cheeked marble boys that supported the old-fashioned chimney piece. If they, or if I, had begun battling a

point with her, her surprise would have been but equal. Safe, then, upon the sheltered ground of insignificance (which, by the by, is a much more convenient comfortable post than most people are disposed to think it, and infinitely the best for observation), I challenged her boldly to compare notes about *our mutual friends at Vienna*. I had all their names and histories by heart; could remind her of everything that passed at Prince Such a one's fête, given in honour of such an Archduchess's marriage; lament the untimely death of the beautiful Countess ——, to whom he was supposed to be secretly attached—"wonder whether her daughters " had grown up pretty? were there two of them, or " three? Did Lady Mary know their aunt, the Chanoinesse, who so hated returning to her chapitre at " Prague? Did she recollect the hunting-party at " Baron ——'s country seat? And the fright some of " us were in when the wild boar made towards the " grove of firs?" She was quite enchanted; so was I when I heard her peremptorily silence the company's guesses at the mask with—"Pshaw! you are all wrong. " It is somebody who has lived a long time at Vienna; " she knows the whole society there—that *I* can answer " for. She has mentioned things about which it would " be rather difficult to deceive *me*." Ah! thought I, I may try fortune-telling next, since I see how easy it is to make people believe you have told them what they have told you. Thus encouraged, I fell to discuss the national character of the Hungarians; thence diverged to the conduct of Joseph; and lastly, ventured to say

outright that I understood from good authority he had been so captivated by a certain English lady, not far off, that nobody knew what might have happened but for his mother's tyrannical interference. Lady Sackville, who was sitting by, opened her eyes very wide and stole a fearful look at Lady Mary, concluding, I believe, that she would rise in a fury and tear off my mask. No such matter, indeed. She bridled, simpered, fanned herself, almost blushed, and, I assure you, looked as prettily confused but as well pleased as ever was boarding-school girl on hearing her charms had smitten the Captain in quarters.

With this last extensive tour Lady Mary's voyages and travels closed; for if she ever went abroad again (which I doubt) it was only for a few weeks, to Spa or some place of the same kind. She had therefore no more opportunities of being at deadly feud with any foreign potentate. But as Sir Arthur Wardour, who could remember having once been guarded to the Tower by a troop of dragoons, lived to see himself in his old age carried to gaol for vulgar debt by a couple of bailiffs, so was it her lot to stoop from braving the enmity of empresses and queens, and live to dread the revenge of John and Betty, leagued with an atrocious cheesemonger. Plots against her still abounded, if you would believe her own report; but now she ascribed them to the servants she was perpetually changing, and the tradespeople she accused of roguery. I dare say you recollect the set of ragamuffians composing her household people, who, for want of a character, could get no other place.

The only one among them that stuck long and gained a fast hold of her favour was a certain *Claire* from the French West Indian Islands, a mulatto in hue, but well shaped, and it may be presumed no fool. A fancy sometimes seized the watchmen of Berkeley Square to cavil at *Claire's* proceedings, merely, Lady Mary said, because rather late in the evening she had just stepped out to see a sick friend, or had been suddenly sent for by a San Domingo cousin. Since all she did could be so well accounted for, I wonder they ever parted; but every thing must come to some end. *Claire* left her mistress, and dived under the earth for aught any of us knew. She was no more heard of till, fifteen years afterwards, at the very least, up she started, the favourite sultana of Sir Harry Englefield, whose friends were never tired of complimenting him on his taste for the black princess—the queen of Sheba—“the glowing dames of Zana’s “royal race”—and so forth. He bore their raillery as a great philosopher should do, gravely maintaining that beauty consisted wholly in form, and was quite independent of colour.

*Claire*, then, during Lady Mary’s reign over her, or hers over Lady Mary, stood acquitted of robbery and murder, and every thing else; but the rest of the crew kept their lady in constant alarm for her throat, or her casket of jewels. However, any mortal foes were better than none: these suspicions filled up chinks in her mind, or relaxed it from its greater cares concerning the nation, about the government of which she took more trouble than the whole cabinet-council. In politics she

always adhered to the loyal side of the question, yet at the same time generally disapproved of the ministerial measures: the opposition were sure to be wrong, but the others never right; by which ingenious mode of viewing things she kept herself richly supplied with subjects of disturbance and objects of censure all the year round.

Matters went yet worse in that more frivolous world which was equally honoured by her superintendance. Say what she would, protest, argue, and harangue, sacks were left off, ostrich-feathers worn, and a thousand fantastic dresses invented. Nay, in process of time, the hoop vanished after the sack, and, like *Tilburina's* confidante, every body ran mad in white linen. Of all these abominations, there was no sin so crying as the feathers, which *Lady Mary*, and I must own many calmer old ladies, deemed a positive badge of depravity—a test of virtue or vice. Perhaps she might abhor them the more as in some sort the test of youth or age; for, in spite of the wisdom added by increase of years, she had no relish for growing old. Twelvemonth stealing after twelvemonth, however, this inevitable evil would come; and as she grew sourer in consequence of it, more overbearing, more contradictory, less regardful of common civility, temper at length got such an intire mastery of every other feeling, that she put the finishing stroke to her absurdities by contriving to hatch a quarrel with *Princess Amelia*.

It is an ugly lineament in human nature, but certainly friendships—or what the world calls so—are sub-

ject to the wear and tear of time, as well as things less precious. Old companions (sometimes including old husbands and wives) do insensibly grow tired of bearing each other's faults and infirmities, and suppressing their own; as if on both sides ill-humour, waxing larger, wanted more elbow-room, and rejoiced to get rid of what confined it within decent bounds. The Princess and Lady Mary were almost arrived at this dangerous point. Nobody could be easier to live with than the former, but she would have the respect due to her observed: if Lady Mary was great, she was much greater; if old, much older; therefore she had every claim to a deference which the other's turbulent spirit would no longer yield; and, as dispute and contradiction now and then went the length of downright impertinence, Her Royal Highness's patience began to be on the ebbing tide.

In such cases you may observe that the actual cause of rupture is usually next to nothing—a drop that makes the full cup run over—a spark that lights upon a pile of combustibles, you scarcely perceive how or when. Lady Mary sate down to cards one evening in a mood of superlative perverseness; sought occasions to squabble, found fault with the Princess's play, laughed her assertions to scorn, and finally got a very sharp reply for her pains. In lieu of recollecting herself, she took fire, and retorted more sharply still. The Princess declined farther altercation, with an air that said, "I remember who I am," and the company gazed at each other in silence. When the party broke up, Lady

Mary departed unspoken to, and all concluded she would be admitted into that house no more. But Princess Emily gave her fairer play than they expected: she desired to see her alone, and calmly entered upon a good-humoured expostulation. "We are such old friends," said she, "that it really is too foolish to fall out and part about a trifle; but you must be conscious you were very provoking the other night. As I lost my temper too, I am the readier to forgive; only say you are sorry, and I will never think of it again."

Here was a noble opportunity to display unyielding firmness of character. Lady Mary drew herself up to her utmost height, and answered, with all the dignity of Charles the first at his trial, or Algernon Sydney confronting Judge Jefferies, or Cornelius de Witt quoting Horace upon the rack, or any other pattern of inflexible virtue you can name: "Madam, I respect your Royal Highness, as I ought; my loyalty to your illustrious house has been sufficiently proved, my attachment to your person is beyond dispute; but I cannot give up my integrity and honour—I cannot retract the opinions I have once delivered while I continue persuaded they are just. Your Royal Highness yourself would be intitled to despise me, did I act so meanly; I am no sycophant—no flatterer; adulation will never flow from me——" "Pooh! Pshaw! Nonsense!" cried the Princess, interrupting her—"where's the use of all these heroics about nothing? Who wants you to retract, and flatter, and

“ I know not what? Can't you say, as I say myself, “ that you are concerned for this very silly business, “ and so let us be friends?” “ No, Madam ; my honour “ —honour, which is dearer to me than life——” and then followed another *tirade*. After one or two more vain endeavours to bring her down from her stilts, the other rose to *her* full height likewise, and, assuming all the King's Daughter: “ Well, Madam,” she said, “ your “ Ladyship knows your own pleasure best. I wish you “ health and happiness for the future, and at present a “ good morning. Here!” to the page in waiting, “ Order Lady Mary Coke's carriage;” then, gravely bowing in token of dismissal, turned away. From that moment they never met again. The loss was altogether Lady Mary's, and also the mortification. This she betrayed by a constant fidgetting anxiety to know whatever passed at Princess Emily's parties, who came and who went, and what her Royal Highness said or did. The Princess survived their final rupture but two or three years.

Very little remains to be added. After the Prince of Wales grew up, his conduct engrossed almost all Lady Mary's attention ; you may suppose not often winning her praise : and as for his connection with Mrs. Fitzherbert, it went near to make the old Gloucester and Cumberland fever rage in her veins anew. The Regency question in 1789 kindled, if possible, a still fiercer flame, and enabled her to do something more than scream her Anathemas ; since then, for the first time in that reign, ladies obtained a power of meddling

with State affairs which—lady though I am who say it—may they never have again. While the poor King held the reins in his own hands, he resolutely kept petticoats aloof; but now his calamity forcing the Queen into the front of the battle, every woman belonging to court, lady or lady's chambermaid, arose and was busy. The opposition *Shes* took care not to fall short of them in activity, and as a peaceable stander-by I saw enough to convince me that female whisperings and caballings greatly envenomed the public contest. A good work which Lady Mary forwarded with all her might; besides blowing the coals in some private families divided in opinion (as many were) upon a subject that produced more bitterness and ill-blood than any other within my remembrance.

Here, then, I think I may pause, as I have nearly brought my recollections down to the place where yours may be expected to begin. I need not tell you how Lady Mary passed the latter years of her life, nor assist you to piece what you witnessed with what I have related; as you will find it all dove-tail together perfectly well. Her character was throughout singular, if not *unique*; but never contradictory: you always knew in what direction to look for her, although sometimes your imagination might not stretch far enough, or soar high enough to overtake her.

It may be worth while to bestow a moment's consideration on the manner in which that character affected her relations and familiar society. People who plod straight along the beaten road of life, leave

no mark of their passage ; but the footsteps of those uncommon travellers who go trampling over strange ground are in general traceable. You can distinguish the effects of their influence, whichever way it operates. If directly, as with some, it founds a sort of school : their example and spirit continue to bear sway even after their existence is at an end. With others, on the contrary, it works—and strongly, too—in an inverse ratio to what they would have wished. This was the case with Lady Mary, who preached us out of good-breeding, regular œconomy, respect for authority, and many other commendable things, by dint of incessantly preaching us into them ; and as her notions were ordinarily more exaggerated than erroneous, one was at times half-tempted to regret the certainty of their summary condemnation without appeal. You may have heard it observed that Cervantes brought about an unfavourable change in the character of the Spanish nation, because while he demolished what was fantastic and absurd, his resistless attack overthrew the chivalrous spirit itself, and with it much that it would have been desirable not only to preserve but to cherish. The very same thing might be said of Lady Mary, who, without doubt, was the person of all actually treading on earth that came nearest to the Hero of his work. She lowered the tone of thinking in those connected with her as Don Quixote did in his readers. Every act or opinion bordering on the great, the noble, the dignified, every thing elevated above the conceptions of the common “working-day world,” had a chilling

shadow of ridicule cast over it, as "just suited to Lady "Mary Coke." And the fear of being pronounced like her frequently led one to stifle one's real sentiments, if not force a laugh, on occasions when one's young heart beat quick, and inwardly glowed with feelings very opposite to derision.

In another respect, too, this anti-influence of hers had mischievous consequence. It became the ready shield of protection for a degree of housemaid-ish ignorance which people would otherwise have blushed to avow. If you were caught supposing Lord Chatham and Lord Clarendon to have flourished together, or concluding that James the first was Queen Elizabeth's eldest son, you had but to shrug your shoulders and cry, "Well, for my part, I don't pretend to Lady "Mary Coke's amazing knowledge of history," and you came off with flying colours. So likewise for the time present: you might confound the offices of Chamberlain and Chancellor, and ask whether the Secretary of State usually voted with Ministry or Opposition, yet have the laugh for you instead of against you, as soon as you declared yourself "no profound stateswoman, "like Lady Mary Coke." There might sometimes be malice in the matter, I own: a mischievous contention who should scandalize poor Lady Mary most. Her skill in genealogy and etiquette made one flippant girl think it a pretty air not to know how she was related to her first cousins; and another assert she could not see the use of bowing and curtsying to the King and Queen: the men, indeed, only grew a little more

bearish after one of Lady Mary's lectures, resuming tolerable good manners as the taste of it wore off. To wind up all with something like a moral, be it remembered that we do the worst office possible to whatever is serious or praiseworthy, by carrying it to an extreme which must inevitably excite laughter; but at the same time be it confessed, that we cannot habituate ourselves to look constantly and exclusively at the ridiculous side of almost any object without in some degree injuring, if not debasing, our own minds.

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Finished at Ditton Park in March, 1827.

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