Marjorie Graham Murray
Xmas 1903. from
a Stodart Walker

LITTLE MEMOIRS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Art. Pepe Sc.

Lady Craven and Son.

From an unfinished Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

LITTLE MEMOIRS

OF THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

Emily Morse Symonds

GEORGE PASTON

WITH PORTRAITS IN PHOTOGRAVURE

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON AND CO.
GRANT RICHARDS
LONDON
1901

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First printed March 1901

Reprinted May 1901

Edinburgh: T. and A. CONSTABLE, (late) Printers to Her Majesty

PREFACE

In the following Memoirs I have invited the reader to meet a little company of men and women who may seem, at first sight, to have little or nothing in common with one another, consisting as they do of two grandes dames *of the second George's Court, a poet playwright who dabbled in diplomacy, an aristocratic* déclassée *who died in the odour of royalty, an ex-shoemaker turned bookseller, a Highland lady with literary proclivities, and a distinguished scholar who was chiefly remarkable for his misfortunes. Yet the points of resemblance, though less obvious, are scarcely less decided than the points of contrast, for all were children of the same century, all belonged to the genus 'self-revealer,' all have left their 'confessions,' in the form of letters or autobiography, all were celebrated, or at least notorious, in their own day (with the exception of John Tweddell, whose notoriety was posthumous), and all have fallen, whether deservedly or not, into neglect, if not oblivion.*

It has seemed almost like an act of charity to resuscitate these sociable garrulous beings, if only for half an hour, and allow them to gossip to a modern reader. The long stories that they told to a more leisured age would strain the patience of a twentieth-century audience; yet there are

in these long-winded chronicles many quaint reflections, many curious traits of character, many intimate records of men and manners, which, like the dried petals in a bowl of pot-pourri, still preserve their savour and pungency.

I have made no attempt to act as special pleader for any member of my little company. While allowing them to tell their own stories in their own complacent fashion, I have quoted, by way of corrective, certain of the more candid comments of their contemporaries. Horace Walpole disposes of Lady Pomfret's pretensions to learning, and pricks the bubble of Lady Craven's reputation; Cumberland is satirised by Sheridan, and a member of the Pindar family pokes fun at Mr. Lackington; while the kind-hearted Sir Walter gives Mrs. Grant a rap on the knuckles, and poor John Tweddell is jilted by his sweetheart—the most practical of all adverse comments. Thus, having presented the evidence to the best of my ability, I leave to the judicious reader the task of summing up and finding a verdict.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LADY HERTFORD
AND
LADY POMFRET

A

LADY HERTFORD

(1699-1754)

AND

LADY POMFRET

(*circa* 1700-1761)

THERE is a little group of noble dames whom, by reason of the frequency with which they smile and curtsey to us out of the letters and memoirs of past days, we come at last to look upon as old acquaintances, if not as intimate friends. We hear of their flirtations from one chronicler, of their follies from another, a feminine correspondent describes their 'birthday clothes,' a wicked epigram hits off their personal defects, a flowery dedication credits them with all the virtues. Among the ladies whose doings supplied much material for contemporary gossips, and who themselves wielded only too fluent pens, were my Lady Hertford and my Lady Pomfret. Their correspondence, which was published in 1804, met with a success that would have delighted them had they been alive to witness it; but its popularity was not of a lasting quality, like that of their contemporary, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and in a few years its vogue was over, and the writers forgotten by the public. At the time of its publication the editor, a Mr. Bingley, had not the opportunities which we enjoy of comparing his

material with the numerous letters of Horace Walpole which have been printed since the beginning of the century. The Lady Pomfret of the correspondence is represented to us as a *grande dame* of the utmost refinement and culture, but the Lady Pomfret drawn for us by Walpole's malicious pen is the most perfect specimen of a *précieuse ridicule* that her century has produced. We have more than a suspicion that Lady Hertford belonged to the same genus, but in her case there are fewer data to go upon. It is certain that she too prided herself upon being something more than a mere woman of fashion; for she ostentatiously patronised the poets, took an interest in the fine arts, and dabbled, not too successfully, in the rhymed couplets so dear to the poetaster of the period.

Frances Thynne was the elder of the two daughters and co-heiresses of the Hon. Henry Thynne, only son of the first Lord Weymouth, and was born at Longleat in 1699. In 1713—though then only fourteen, if her biographer's dates are correct—she was married to Lord Hertford, son of that domestic Tartar, the 'proud' Duke of Somerset. Soon after her marriage she became one of the Ladies of the Bedchamber to Queen Caroline, then Princess of Wales, and continued in her office until the Queen's death in 1737, when she retired into private life. She had distinguished herself during her stay at Court by interposing with the Queen on behalf of Savage when he was found guilty of murder in a drunken brawl. 'His merit and calamities,' says Johnson, in his *Life* of the poet, 'happened to reach the ear of the Countess of Hertford, who engaged in his support with all the tenderness that is excited by pity, and all the zeal which is

kindled by generosity; and demanding an audience of the Queen, laid before her the whole series of his mother's cruelty, exposed the improbability of an accusation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and soon convinced her how little his former conduct could deserve to be mentioned as a reason for extraordinary severity. The interposition of this lady was so successful that he was soon after admitted to bail, and on March 9, 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.'

In the same year, 1728, Thomson dedicated his poem 'Spring' to Lady Hertford, 'whose practice it was to invite some poet into the country every summer to hear her verses and assist her studies. This honour was once conferred upon Thomson, who took more delight in carousing with Lord Hertford and his friends than in assisting her ladyship's poetical operations, and therefore never received another summons.' It must have been before she had marked her sense of his misdemeanours that the poet addressed her in the lines:—

> 'Oh, Hertford, fittest or to shine in courts
> With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
> With innocence and meditation joined
> In soft assemblage, listen to my song,
> Which thy own season paints; when nature all
> Is blooming and benevolent, like thee.'

Both Shenstone and Dr. Watts dedicated poems to Lady Hertford, who was also the patroness of minor poets of her own sex, such as Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Mrs. Rowe. According to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Lady Hertford was the original

of Arabella in Mrs. Lennox's once famous novel, *The Fair Quixote*, though without Arabella's beauty.

Henrietta, Countess of Pomfret, was also an heiress, being the only surviving child of Lord Jeffries of Wem, and granddaughter of the first and infamous Lord Jeffries. In 1720 she married Thomas Fermor, Lord Lempster, who, a year later, was created Earl of Pomfret. Shortly after her marriage she, like Lady Hertford, was appointed one of the Ladies of the Bedchamber to Caroline, Princess of Wales. During the early years of her marriage she was a friend and *protégée* of Mrs. Clayton's, afterwards Lady Sundon, and many of her letters to that lady, in which she asked advice in Court difficulties, have been preserved. In April 1726 Lady Pomfret went to Bath in attendance on the Princess Amelia, daughter of George II., and from thence she writes to Mrs. Clayton:—

'The Princess Amelia is the Oddest, or at least one of the Oddest Princesses that was ever known; she has her Ears shut to flattery, as her heart open to Honesty; she has Honour, justice, good-nature, sence, wit, resolution, and more good qualities than I have time to tell you; so mixed that (if one is not a divel) 'tis impossible to say she has too much or too little of any; yet all these does not in anything (without exception) make her forget the King of England's daughter, which dignity she keeps up with such an obliging behaviour that she charms everybody. Don't believe her complaisance to me makes me say one silible more than the Rigid truth, tho' I confess, she has gained my Heart; and has added one more to the number of those few whose Deserts forces one's affection.'

This letter, which was probably intended for Caroline's ears, is signed

'Dearest Mrs. Clayton's
Most grateful, faithful and sincere
friend and servant.'

In 1727 Lord Pomfret was appointed Master of the Horse to Queen Caroline, a post which he is said to have bought of Mrs. Clayton with a pair of diamond earrings worth £1400. This transaction gave rise to a well-known *bon mot* of Lady Mary Wortley's, who, hearing the old Duchess of Marlborough express surprise that Mrs. Clayton should call on her 'with her bribe in her ear,' exclaimed, 'How are people to know where wine is to be sold if she does not hang out a sign?'

In 1728 Lady Pomfret was again at Bath with the Princess Amelia, and in the following letter to Mrs. Clayton gives a curious glimpse into the troubles of a lady-in-waiting:[1]—

'I hear from London that it is said at St. James's I have offended a woman of great Quality by leaving her out in an invitation to play at Cards with the Princess. I am so altered about vexing myself for triffles, and there is in reality so little in this, that till you tell me the Queen is displeased I will not be so about it; yet as it has an odd appearance in the terms I have put it, have patience to read the matter of fact, and then judge for yourself and me. When the Princess first came down every Person of Quality (that ever went to Court) both sent and came to enquire after her Health. In two or three days she went to drink the Waters, and between every glass, walked in Harrison's Gardens, where all people of Fashion came and walked with

[1] Now first published.

her; the others (that were not known to her) walked at a little distance. The third morning Lady Frances Manners asked me if I knew Lady Wigtoun (a Scotish Countess); I said I had never heard of her in my life, and believed she had not yet sent to the Princess, upon which both she and the Duchess of Rutland smiled, and said, "No, nor she won't, I can tell you; for seeing the Princess coming to the Pump the morning before, she had run away like a fury, for fear of seeing her, and declares so public an aversion to the King that she would not go to the Ball made on the Queen's Birthday." They laughed much at her open violence, and said she would not speak to any one she thought a Whig. All the Company agreed in this discourse, but while 'twas about she herself came into the gardens, and walked very rudely past the Princess, and pushed away the Duchess of Rutland and myself that was near, and neither offered to make the least curtsey, for two or three turns and then went out. After the Princess came home she told me to send for six Ladies to play at cards with, which I did of the most considerable at Bath. Next day Lady Wigtoun went to Scotland for her whole life, as 'twas fixed she should long before the Princess came. Neither the Princess nor myself said one word when she passed by in that rude manner.' . . . Lady Pomfret concludes by begging her friend to clear her from the accusation of having shown neglect or incivility towards a great lady.

The greater part of this unpublished correspondence[1] has little intrinsic interest; but one more letter to Mrs. Clayton (now become Lady Sundon) may be quoted, which is dated from Hanover Square, August 1735.

[1] Now in the British Museum.

Lady Pomfret had evidently just come up to town for her term of waiting, and writes to describe her first visit to Kensington, where the Queen was then living during the King's absence at Hanover. 'All I can say of Kensington,' she writes, 'is that 'tis just the same as it was; only pared so close as the King does the Sacrament. My Lord Pomfret and I were the greatest strangers there; no Secretary of State, no Chamberlain or Vice-Chamberlain, but Lord Robert, and he just in the same Coat on the same spot of ground, with the same words in his mouth, that he had when I left 'em. Miss Meadows in the window at work, etc., but tho' half an hour after two, the Queen was not quite dressed; so I had the Honour of seeing her before she came out of her little blew room, where I was graciously received, and acquainted her Majesty to her great sorrow how ill you have been; and then to alleviate that sorrow I informed her how much Sundon was altered for the better, and that it looked like a Castle. From hence we proceeded to a very short Drawing-room, where the Queen joked much with my Lord Pomfret about Barbadoes; and told me she would have wished me joy of it, but that Lady Pembroke being in waiting, she feared to put her in mind of her Brother. I heard, but not at Court, that the two Ladies of the Bedchamber and the Governess are yet on so bad a Foot, that upon the latter coming into the room, the others went away, tho' just going to sit down. I am very unwilling to mention one thing, because I fear 'twill displease Miss Dive,[1] who has so much pleased me, but it is the Discour at present that the Prince his Wedding is put off till May, as the King's return is to the latter end of October; this, with Mr.

[1] One of the maids of honour and niece of Lady Sundon.

Hervey's intention of resigning his Equerry's Place, is all the news I have—— Thus, dear Lady Sundon, you see I am plunged as deep in chitchat as if I had not been out of it: and 'tis but like a Delightful Dream, that calmness, that freedom of Thought, of Look, of Action, enjoyed at Home, and improved at Sundon—but here 'tis otherwise, and our first Parents at leaving Paradise could not find it more necessary to hide part of their Bodies than we at Court do to hide part of our Minds.'

Lady Pomfret, like Lady Hertford, retired from public life after the death of the Queen in 1737, and it was about this time that the ardent friendship began between the two ladies who, during the period of their employment at Court, seem to have considered it prudent to refrain from any close intimacy. In the autumn of 1738 Lady Pomfret went abroad with her husband and elder daughters for three years, during which time she kept up a regular correspondence with Lady Hertford. Her first letter to that lady is dated September 2, 1738, and is written from Monts, near Paris, where the Pomfrets stayed during the first six months of their sojourn abroad.

'Your ladyship's obliging commands that I should write to you,' she begins, 'I with great pleasure obey, but I am ashamed to think how little entertainment I can send you from a country that is esteemed an inexhaustible fund of amusement to all the polite world who visit it. I am not insensible to its charms, a clear air, a beautiful well-cultivated soil, with a civil and diverting people; yet all this is nothing but what Gordon's Grammar can tell you better than I.' Refraining on this occasion from describing well-known sights, Lady Pomfret contents herself with sketching in

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Henrietta, Countess of Pomfret

From a Crayon Portrait by Caroline Watson.

few words her old-fashioned house, her large garden, and her quiet occupations—'working a little, reading more, and walking very much'—and signs herself with the flourishes then fashionable:—

'Dear Madam,
Your Ladyship's
Most obliged and
Most obedient humble servant.'

This formality was somewhat relaxed in the course of a correspondence which was carried on with marvellous diligence by the friends, who seldom allowed a week to elapse without posting a letter, though the punctual delivery of their epistles was quite another matter. A lesson on the courtly good manners of the period may be learned from the compositions of both ladies, though one may be permitted to rejoice that so much ceremony and such high-flown acknowledgments of small favours are not expected between intimate friends in the present day. Lady Pomfret, more especially after her arrival in Italy, draws her material rather too unblushingly from histories and guide-books; but Lady Hertford, living for the most part a retired life in the country, relies more upon her own reflections, and upon such scraps of gossip as may come her way; consequently, her letters are more interesting as well as more illustrative of the social history of her period than are those of her friend.

Her first letters are dated from a house in Windsor Forest, called St. Leonard's Hill, where there was little to record except the folly of the Duke of Marlborough,[1] who had bought a small island at Bray, and built a little pleasure-house on it in full view and hearing of the

[1] This was the second Duke of Marlborough, nephew of the great Duke.

bargemen on the river; and the gallantries of the young Duke of Cumberland,[1] with which the forest was ringing. A trip to London in January 1739 to attend the Birthday is productive of little news except that the Duke of Marlborough has lost seven hundred pounds on Twelfth Night, and that 'the Princess Amelia was on Banstead Downs during all the rain on Wednesday engaged in a fox-chase. It is a happy thing to have so robust a constitution as receives no injury from such Amazonian entertainments; and if the poor Queen were not too late an instance to the contrary, I should begin to fancy that princesses were not of the same composition with their inferiors.' The modern reader might find Lady Pomfret's descriptive letters somewhat tedious, but Lady Hertford declares that she passes no part of her time so agreeably as when she is reading them, and that there is scarce a day in which she does not go through them more than once. In one of these absorbing communications there is an account of a jaunt to Paris, which Lady Pomfret describes as a fine town where the generality of the people live with more gaiety than those of London.

'The public diversions, however,' she continues, 'are inferior to ours; the theatres are less, ill-shaped, and worse ornamented; and though their comedians excel, their music is below that of a dog-kennel. To their masquerades they admit the meanest of people, and the greatest part are so ill-dressed that they rather resemble the crowd of a mob than a civil assembly. As to the more private entertainments in particular houses, they are very elegant, and have an air of magnificence not common in our country. The dress of the company

[1] The hero of Culloden was then only eighteen.

makes a great show; and I have been at several balls where in this respect they far outshone some of our latter birthdays. The different-coloured furs with which they trim their clothes in winter have a nobler appearance than one can imagine without seeing them. But to give you an instance of true French splendour, I must conduct you to Versailles, the fine apartments of which, for above these twenty years, have rather been looked upon as the monument of the dead Louis than the Court of the living one. But all things have their period, and love, mighty love, has roused the sleeping monarch. He is to Madame de Neuilly the most tender and most submissive of men. He frequents and gives entertainments; and as I was a spectator at his Majesty's masquerade, I must say that I never saw a more glorious sight than his palace when lighted up with more than 40,000 wax candles. There never was a greater plenty of fine things to eat and drink, nor better order in the distribution of them, and the constant attendance to supply light and food as each diminished was admirable.'

While Lady Pomfret is slowly journeying *viâ* Lyons and Marseilles to Sienna, and writing many sheets of condensed guide-book on the way, Lady Hertford indites a sort of fashionable and literary chronicle for the amusement of her friend. Mr. Pope, she records, has lately thought fit to publish a new volume of poems, and she gives as a specimen an epigram which had been engraved upon the collar of the Duke of Cumberland's dog:—

> 'I am his highness' dog at Kew:
> Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?'

'Does it not remind you,' asks her ladyship, 'of one

of a more ancient date which I believe is repeated in all the nurseries in England ?—

> "Bow, wow, wow, wow,
> Whose dog art thou ?"

'I do not infer from hence that Mr. Pope finds himself returning into childhood, and therefore imitates the venerable author of the last, in order to shine among the innocent inhabitants of the apartments where his works are most in vogue. . . . I have been agreeably amused by reading Signor Algarotti's *Newtonianismo per le Dame*, translated into English in very good style by a young woman not more than twenty years old.[1] I am well informed that she is an admirable Greek and Latin scholar, and writes both those languages, as well as French and Italian, with great elegance. But what adds to the wonder she excites is that all this learning has not made her the less reasonable woman, the less dutiful daughter, or the less agreeable and faithful friend. . . . I conclude you have heard of Miss Campbell's[2] preferment, who is married to my Lord Bruce. She is eighteen, and he is fifty-seven ; however, I hear my Lady Suffolk[3] and Lady Westmoreland have convinced her that she is very happy. I cannot say that I wish either your daughter or my own a happiness so circumstanced.'

In June 1739 people are talking of war, and the preparations for it engross a great part of the public attention, but the enemy is as yet incognito. 'Mr.

[1] Elizabeth Carter.

[2] Caroline Campbell, daughter of General John Campbell, afterwards Duke of Argyle. She was the third wife of Lord Bruce.

[3] Better known as Mrs. Howard.

Whitfield and his fellow-Methodists, we read, 'are likewise a subject of much conversation, and people either espouse or oppose their cause with a great degree of warmth. With some people he is considered as a saint or an apostle; but with others a hypocrite, an enthusiast, a madman, or a blockhead. My Lord Lonsdale, and others who have heard him, believe him to be a man of great designs and to have a capacity equal to anything. . . . At first he and his brethren seemed only to aim at restoring the practice of the primitive Christians as to daily sacraments, stated fasts, frequent prayer, relieving prisoners, visiting the sick, and giving alms to the poor; but upon some ministers refusing these men their pulpits, they have betaken themselves to preaching in the fields; and they have such crowds of followers they have set all the clergy in the kingdom in a flame. . . . The Bishop of London has thought it necessary to write a pastoral letter, to warn the people of his diocese from being led away by them, though at the same time he treats them personally with great tenderness and moderation. I cannot say Dr. Trapp has done as much in a sermon entitled "The Great Folly and Danger of being Righteous overmuch," a doctrine which does not seem absolutely necessary to be preached to the people of the present age. What appears to be most blamable in the Methodists is the uncharitable opinions they entertain in regard to the salvation of all who do not think and live after their way. The recorder of Bristol says that Mr. Whitfield has been much among the colliers in that neighbourhood, and has collected so much money from them as to erect a building large enough to contain five thousand people. It is to serve them as a church and schoolhouse. He says also they

are so much reformed in their manners that one may pass a whole day among them without hearing an oath.'

Meanwhile Lady Pomfret has arrived at Sienna after a perilous voyage from Marseilles to Genoa. 'Imagine me,' she exclaims, 'embarked in bad weather on board a small tottering boat, the Mediterranean raging, and the mariners frightened out of their wits; with great difficulty getting to shore at Savona, where we stayed three days for want of a wind, with stinking victuals, no wine, and beds worse than none; after this setting out in a storm, with the sea coming into the boat the whole way, and arriving at last at Genoa.' Lady Pomfret was charmed with Genoa, and extols the gracious Italian custom of placing a foreign visitor under the protection of a native lady, whose office it was to act as a social cicerone to her charge. 'As I did not like play,' she writes, 'the Signora Durazzi, a woman of infinite wit and agreeable conversation, always entertained me; for it is not here, as in France, that you must pay the lady of the house, or never get into it. . . . I am very proud of the genius that honours our sex in the person of the young woman you mention [Elizabeth Carter], and in return will inform you of a parallel to her. This is another female [Signora Bassi], of about twenty-four, of mean birth, but of such superior knowledge and capacity that she has been elected the philosophy professor at Bologna, where she now gives lectures as such.'

The Hertfords' house in Windsor Forest being much out of repair, in the course of this year they bought from Lord Bathurst, the friend and patron of many poets,[1] the estate of Richkings near Colnbrook, which

[1] Pope addressed to Bathurst the third of his moral essays, 'On the Use of Riches,' and Sterne drew his portrait in the 'Letters to Eliza.'

Pope had called his '*extravagante bergerie*.' The surroundings, says Lady Hertford, perfectly answer that title, and come nearer her idea of a scene in Arcadia than any place she ever saw. Not only was there a boat, a cave, a greenhouse to drink tea in, but, more delightful still in the eyes of a literary lady, there was 'an old covered bench in the garden, which has many remains of the wit of my Lord Bathurst's visitors, who inscribed verses upon it. Here is the writing of Pope, Prior, Congreve, Gay, and (what he esteemed no less) of several great ladies. I cannot say that the verses answered my expectations from such authors; we have, however, all resolved to follow the fashion, and to add some of ours to the collection. That you may not be surprised at our courage in daring to write after such great names, I will transcribe one of the old ones, which I think as good as any of them :—

> "Who set the trees shall he remember
> That is in haste to fell the timber?
> What then shall of thy woods remain
> Except the box that threw the main?"'

In January 1740 Lady Pomfret has arrived at Florence, which she much prefers to the dearness and dulness of Sienna; and has received civilities from Horace Walpole, then on his travels, from his notorious sister-in-law Lady Walpole, and from Mr. (afterwards Sir Horace) Mann. From this time forward we get an occasional report of her ladyship's sayings and doings, as well as of the flirtations of her handsome daughters, the Ladies Fermor, in the letters of Horace Walpole. Among Lady Pomfret's early visits at Florence was one to the Electress Palatine, the only survivor of the House of Medici. This lady was generally thought proud and

forbidding; 'but to me,' writes this particular visitor, 'she was easy and entertaining. She kept me ten times longer than her usual audiences, and talked over my own family and that of our Court, one by one. . . . When I departed her Lord-Chamberlain followed me a room further than usual; and she has since done me the honour to say to others that my behaviour had given her no ill opinion of the English Court.'

Lady Pomfret prides herself upon having discovered a very scarce and valuable book, of which there is but one copy to be sold in Florence at a price too great for her to give. This is the novels of Bandello,[1] which, however, was less scarce than she imagined; for Lady Hertford replies that she has just been reading this book, of which a new edition was about to be published in London. She offers, with a touch of patronage, to procure a copy for Lady Pomfret, as well as a copy of the papers of Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary, which were to be published by subscription. Then follows a little fling at Mr. Pope, who was evidently not one of the tame poets who were invited to correct their hostess's verses on summer visits:—

'The severity of the weather [February 1740] has occasioned greater sums to be given in charity than was ever heard of before. Mr. Pope has written two stanzas on the occasion, which I must send you because they are his, for they have no merit to entitle them to be conveyed so far:—

'"Yes!—'tis the time," I cried, "impose the chain
Destined and due to wretches self-enslaved;
But when I saw such charity remain,
I half could wish this people should be saved.

[1] Born 1480, died 1562. His novels were published in 1554.

Faith lost, and hope, our charity begins,
And is a wise design of pitying heaven—
If this can cover multitudes of sins,
To take the only way to be forgiven.'"

In a letter dated May 1, 1740, Lady Hertford complains: 'We talk of nothing but encampments, bringing in Spanish prizes, taking forts, and such-like heroic exploits, and this eternal turn of conversation makes me envy the description given in the First Book of Kings of Solomon's people who dwell safely, each under his own vine and fig tree.'

Lady Pomfret deals conscientiously, and at great length, with the churches and galleries of Florence, but she is more readable when she describes the characters and customs of Florentine society. In one letter there is a curious sketch of the old Marchese Riccardi, a rich and eccentric personage, who also figures in Walpole's correspondence. 'He has a fine palace,' we read, 'full of the best pictures, statuary, and furniture in Florence, as well as a noble collection of books, medals, intaglios, cameos, and so vast a quantity of plate that it appears like the furniture of a sovereign prince. This man's dress and person greatly resemble those of an old broken-down shopkeeper. The object of his constant attention is news of every kind; and in order to retain what he learns, he keeps a great number of people who have filled hundreds of volumes with his observations, or rather his collections. He has correspondents in all parts of Europe, in order to be informed who gives dinners or balls, who are invited, what the dishes are, how every person is drest, etc. He regularly goes out every morning and evening, attended by six footmen, and in a quarter of an hour he has not one left, dispersing

them all into different parts of the town to get at these remarkable intelligences, which are no sooner obtained than they are committed to writing by his secretaries.'

In another letter Lady Pomfret writes with great delight of an improvisation which had been arranged for her at the house of an Italian friend. 'A man and a woman (the former celebrated for his learning, and the latter for her genius) maintained a dialogue to music. I was requested to give the subject, and I proposed the question, "Why are women generally more constant than men?" They began, and with an infinite deal of wit on both sides they each supported their opinions with quotations from both sacred and profane history, which they applied in a most lively and varied manner for near two hours, without any pauses more than were necessary for the music. I wished to have their composition in writing; but they told me that was impossible, for were they to begin again immediately, they should not be able to repeat what they had said before. In this woman there is something very extraordinary and interesting. The Princess Violante, driving one day in the country, heard her singing as she spun; and being then but seventeen, she was immediately taken to Court, where she was advanced to be dresser. In this situation, though her genius has improved, her humility and virtue have not decreased, but she has lived with the esteem and love of every one who has known her. She is married to a substantial tradesman, and enjoys a small fortune, which she owes to the bounty of the princess; and from a respect to her memory and commands, she has refused all proposals for performing in public.'

Horace Walpole, writing from Florence to his cousin,

Mr. Conway, in July 1740, says: 'Lady Pomfret has a charming conversation once a week. She has taken a vast palace and a vast garden, which is vastly commode, especially to the *cicisbeo* part of mankind, who have free indulgence to wander in pairs about the arbours. You know her daughters: Lady Sophia is still, nay, she must be, the beauty she was; Lady Charlotte is much improved, and is the cleverest girl in the world, speaks the purest Tuscan like any Florentine. . . . On Wednesday we expect a third she-meteor. Those learned luminaries, the Ladies Pomfret and Walpole, are to be joined by the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. You have not been witness to the rhapsody of mystic nonsense which these two fair ones debate incessantly, and consequently cannot figure what must be the issue of this triple alliance; we have some idea of it. Only figure the coalition of prudery, debauchery, sentiment, history, Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and metaphysics; all, except the second, understood by halves, by quarters, or not at all. You shall have the journals of this notable academy.'

Lady Mary was a correspondent of Lady Pomfret's, and had professed to come to Italy in 1739 in order to be near her friend; but as she had stayed several months at Venice on her way to Florence, the compliment had lost some of its flattery. Lady Hertford is evidently keenly interested in all that relates to her sister-scribe, with whom she does not appear to have been personally acquainted. In writing to thank Lady Pomfret for sending her Lady Mary's essay on La Rochefoucault's maxim, 'Qu'il y a des mariages commodes mais point de délicieux,' she observes:—

'I own it gives me great pleasure to find a person

with more wit than Rochefoucault himself undertaking to confute any of his maxims; for I have long entertained an aversion to them, and lamented in secret that a man of his genius should indulge so invidious an inclination as that of putting his readers out of conceit with the virtuous actions of their neighbours, and scarcely allowing them to find a happiness in their own. . . . Montaigne is another author whom I cannot sincerely admire, and I never see a volume of his work lie on the table of a person whom I wish to be my friend without concern. If I were to educate a child to be suspicious, splenetic, and censorious, I would put those authors into his hands; and in order to prepare him to read them with a proper relish, instead of the *History of the Seven Champions*, or the exploits of Robin Hood, *Gulliver's Travels* should be put into his hands; and when he had a mind to sing, the ballads of "Chevy Chase," or the "Children in the Wood," should be laid aside, and some of Dean Swift's modern poetry should be set to music to supply their place. I own when I see people delight in painting human nature in such sombre colours I am apt to believe they are giving us the picture of their own minds; for a man of true virtue and benevolence would not find it easy to persuade himself that there are such characters in the world as these gentlemen seem pleased to exhibit to us.'

With some rather pessimistic and sceptical verses of Lady Mary's, Lady Hertford is much less pleased, remarking that it was a pity the writer did not look into the New Testament for the conviction that she sought in vain from pagan authors. 'How agreeable and just,' responds Lady Pomfret, 'are your reflections upon the verses I sent you! What pity and terror does

it create to see wit, beauty, nobility, and riches, after a full possession of fifty years, talk that language, and talk it so feelingly that all who read must know it comes from the heart! But indeed, dear madam, you make me smile when you propose putting the New Testament into the hands of the author. Pray, how should you or I receive Hobbes' *Philosophy* if she, with all her eloquence, should recommend it for our instruction? I remember having heard a very observing person say that our first twenty years belong to our hearts, and the next twenty to our heads; meaning that till the first are over, the adorning of our persons, and love, occupy most of our thoughts, and that the other twenty by degrees form our minds, and settle certain principles which seldom or never change. According to this rule, Lady Mary Wortley has been ten years (at least) immovably fixed. I therefore have contented myself with the amusement that arose from the genius which God Almighty has bestowed upon her, leaving to her the care and consequence of being grateful to the donor.'

A lurid light is thrown on the manners of the golden youth of Italy and England a century and a half ago by a couple of anecdotes related in these letters. The first is told by Lady Pomfret, and deals with the behaviour of a young Guadagni to the Marchesa Corsi, granddaughter of old Riccardi. The young man treated his *fiancée* so roughly during the time of their betrothal, telling her that she 'danced like a devil,' and that he should lock her up after the marriage, that she broke off her engagement, a proceeding almost without precedent in Florentine society. Lady Hertford caps this story with the following account of the conduct of Lord

Euston, son of the Duke of Grafton, to his betrothed, Lady Dorothy Boyle, daughter of Lord Burlington, the 'architect Earl':—

'Though Lady Dorothy, besides her vast fortune, is said to have all the good sense and gentleness of temper that can be desired in a wife, and has so fine a face that were her person answerable to it, one could hardly imagine anything more beautiful; yet he takes every opportunity to show his contempt and even aversion for her, while she entertains very different sentiments for him, which, notwithstanding the great modesty of her temper, she cannot always conceal. Amongst the many balls that were given last spring, there was a very magnificent one at the Duke of Norfolk's, where I saw so many instances of the slighting manner in which he treated her, and of her attention to him, as raised both my indignation and my pity. But I heard that at another ball he carried his impoliteness much further; for when the company was sitting at supper, after looking upon her for some time in a very odd manner, he said, "Lady Dorothy, how greedily you eat! It is no wonder that you are so fat." This unexpected compliment made her blush extremely, and brought the tears to her eyes. My Lady Burlington, who sat near enough to hear what passed, and see the effect it had upon her daughter, coloured as much as the young lady, and immediately answered, "It is true, my lord, that she is fat, and I hope she will always be so, for it is her constitution, and she will never be lean until she is less happy than we have always tried to make her, which I shall endeavour to prevent her being." Those last words were spoken in a tone which gave the company reason to believe that her ladyship's eyes were at last opened to

what everybody else had seen too long. . . . I know of nothing since but that they are not married, and indeed I hope they never will be so. Were the young lady my daughter, I should with less reluctance prepare for her funeral than for such a marriage.'

There is something like a prophetic ring in those words, for poor Lady Dorothy was married to Lord Euston in October 1741, and died from his ill treatment of her six months later, being then only just eighteen. Horace Walpole, writing to Sir Horace Mann only a fortnight after the marriage, says: 'I wrote you word that Lord Euston is married; in a week more I believe I shall write you word that he is divorced. He is brutal enough, and has forbid Lady Burlington his house, and that in very ungentle terms! The whole family is in confusion, the Duke of Grafton half dead, and Lord Burlington half mad. The latter has challenged Lord Euston, who accepted the challenge, but they were prevented. . . . Do you not pity the poor girl, of the softest temper, vast beauty, birth, and fortune, to be so sacrificed?' After Lady Dorothy's death her mother painted a portrait of her from memory, on which was placed the following inscription:—

LADY DOROTHY BOYLE.

Born May the 14th, 1724.

She was the comfort and joy of her parents, the delight of all who knew her angelick temper, and the admiration of all who saw her beauty.

She was married October the 10th, 1741, and delivered (by death) from misery,

May the 2nd, 1742.

This portrait was afterwards engraved, and prints were distributed by Lady Burlington to all her friends.

The inscription, of which two versions are quoted by Walpole, is said to have been written by Pope.

The present of a pair of alabaster vases from Lady Pomfret to Lady Hertford calls forth a letter of thanks which may be taken as a typical specimen of the acknowledgment which the good breeding of the period demanded in return for even a trifling gift. 'There is,' writes the recipient of the vases, 'an elegance in them superior to anything I ever saw; and yet, estimable and beautiful as they are in themselves, their being a mark of your friendship enhances their value to me even beyond their own merit. I sit and look at them with admiration for an hour together. . . . I have not a room in the house worthy of them; no furniture good enough to suit with them; in short, I find a thousand wants that never entered my head before. I am grown ambitious all at once, and want to change my *bergerie* for a palace, and to ransack all the cabinets in Europe for paintings, sculptures, and other curiosities to place with them.' This letter belongs to the same genus as that written by the Princess Craon to Horace Walpole, in which, after thanking him for some bagatelles he has sent her, she concludes: 'The generosity of your friendship for me, sir, leaves me nothing to desire of all that is precious in England, China, and the Indies!' Even Lady Pomfret, herself a phrase-monger, seems to have been a little overwhelmed by her friend's gratitude, for she replies, 'You quite confound me, dear madam, with the encomiums you bestow upon a couple of alabaster vases, fit only for the obscurity of a grotto; and very justly make me blush for having sent so trifling a present.'

In November 1740 Lady Hertford writes that she is

going to town for the winter, her lord being so subject to attacks of the gout at this season—the result probably of his revellings with Thomson and others—that she thinks it best he should be near skilled advice. 'Otherwise,' she continues, 'I confess that a winter passed in the country has in it nothing terrible to my apprehension. I find our lawns (though at present covered with snow) a more agreeable prospect than dirty streets, and our sheep-bells more musical than the noise of hawkers. I fear my taste is so depraved that I am as well pleased while I am distributing tares to my pigeons, or barley to my poultry, and to the robin redbreasts and thrushes that hop under my window, as I shall be when I am playing cards in an assembly, or even in the ——' The blank which discretion dictated in the days when the post-office suffered from political curiosity may probably be filled up by the word 'Court.'

That Lady Hertford's taste was in some respects in advance of her age is proved by the regret she expresses at the prevailing rage for pulling down venerable castles and abbeys, and replacing them by modern Gothic. She attributes her unfashionable love of ancient buildings to the fact that she spent her early childhood at Longleat, parts of which dated from the reign of Edward the Sixth, and which is said to have been the first well-built private house erected in England. 'Though I was only nine when my father died,' she continues, 'I still remember his lamenting that my grandfather had taken down the Gothic windows on the first floor and put up sashes, in order to have a better view of his garden. As soon as the present Lord Weymouth married and came to live here, he ordered the sashes to be

pulled down and the old windows to be restored. I flattered myself that this was a good omen of his regard for a seat which for two hundred years had been the delight and pride of his ancestors. But, alas! how short-lived is human judgment! Longleat, with its gardens, park, and manor, is mortgaged (though its owner never plays) to gamesters and usurers for £25,000. So that probably in twenty years' time, as Mr. Pope says, it may "slide to a scrivener or city knight," which I must own would mortify me exceedingly, notwithstanding the assertion of the same author that "Whatever is, is right."' Fortunately this gloomy prophecy was not fulfilled; for Lady Hertford's cousin, the second Viscount Weymouth, died in 1751, when Longleat descended to his son, afterwards created Marquis of Bath.

A letter from London, dated Christmas Day 1740, contains an amusing description of the difficulties of social entertainers in the days when party feeling ran inordinately high. 'It is so unfashionable to pass this season in London,' writes Lady Hertford, 'that the streets seem quite depopulated. All the young, the gay, and the polite are retired to their villas to serious parties of whist and cornette; and the politicians are gone to their several boroughs to make converts and drunkards. . . . The Dukes of Queensberry and Bedford, Lords Holdernesse, Rochford, Conway, Brooke, and others set on foot a subscription for a ball once a week at Heidegger's rooms. Every subscriber had liberty to invite a lady and a married man, and every lady was to bring a married woman by way of chaperon. For these last there were tables and cards provided, and a magnificent supper for the whole company. Monday

was the first, and is likely to prove the last; for the day before, the Duchess of Queensberry[1] found it necessary to desire that my Lord Conway would send word to Sir Robert Walpole to keep away, because if he did not, neither she nor any of her friends would come. My Lord Conway very politely said that he should be exceedingly sorry to lose so great an honour and ornament as she would have been to the entertainment, but that neither his good breeding nor his inclination would permit him to send so mortifying a message to his uncle. An hour or two afterwards she sent word that if Lord Conway would undertake for Sir Robert's absence she would take care that Mr. Pulteney should also keep away. In reply, Lord Conway said that he was so far from desiring any such bargain, that he should be extremely glad of Mr. Pulteney's company. Her Grace at last desisted, and brought herself to endure the sight of the minister; but took care to show that it was so much a *contre-cœur* as to cast a cloud on the whole assembly. This conduct has made the greater part of the subscribers resolve to withdraw their names and spend no more money, since they have no better prospect than that of being forced to shock some people and disoblige others, when they were only ambitious to amuse.'

In the spring of 1741 Lady Pomfret is in Rome, painstakingly 'doing' the sights and ceremonies of the Holy City. But she finds time to thank her friend for her letters and a copy of original verses with as much hyperbole as were ever bestowed upon the alabaster vases. 'How agreeable you can make even the disorder of factious envy!' she exclaims. 'But how much above all praise is your verse! such sentiments! such language!

[1] This was, of course, Prior's 'Kitty.'

such goodness for me! I have read it three times over, and can now only leave to thank you for it; but to do that no words are sufficient, unless, like you, I could make a Clio attend me whenever I pleased; and were that in my power, I do assure you I should think I repaid her gifts when I employed them on so noble a subject as doing justice to your merit, which you treat too lightly.'

The reader may be curious to see the verses which evoked such ecstatic praise. The following lines are a characteristic specimen, not only of the poem in question, but of Lady Hertford's genius. She is writing of Richkings, which Lord Bathurst had arranged as a retreat for statesmen, poets, and the beauties of the Court:—

'For such he formed the well-contrived design,
Nor knew that Fate (perverse) had marked it mine.
Amazing turn! Could human eyes foresee
That Bathurst planted, schemed, and built for me?
That he whose genius vast designs engaged,
Whom business surfeited, and rest enraged,
Should range those alleys, bend those blooming bow'rs,
To shelter me in my declining hours?

He to whom China's wall would seem a bound
Too narrow for his thoughts' inclusive round;
Who, in the senate, Tully's fame would reach,
In courts, magnificence to Paris teach;
In deep philosophy with Plato vie,
With Newton, follow meteors through the sky;
With gay Demetrius charm (and leave!) the fair,
Yet, with good breeding, shield them from despair.
Again, I ask, could human eyes foresee
That such a one should plant and build for me?
For me whom Nature soberly designed
With nothing striking in my face or mind;
Just fitted for a plain domestic life,
A tender parent and contented wife. . . .'

Lord Bathurst was evidently an object of interest to feminine poets; for Lady Hertford, in another letter, acknowledges the receipt of a poetical epistle to his lordship, written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. 'It is,' she observes, 'a very just picture of my Lord Bathurst's importance and pursuits. I begin to fear that the air of Richkings is whimsically infectious; for its former owner had scarcely more projects than my lord and myself find continually springing up in our minds about improvements here. Yesterday I was busy in buying paper to furnish a little closet in that house where I spend the greatest part of my time; and what will seem more strange, bespeaking a paper ceiling for a room which my lord has built in one of the woods. The perfection which the manufacture of that commodity is arrived at in the last few years is surprising. The master of the warehouse told me that he is to make some paper at the price of twelve or thirteen shillings a yard for two different gentlemen. I saw some at four shillings, but contented myself with that of only elevenpence, which I think is enough to have it very pretty, and I have no idea of paper furniture being very rich. I enclose you some verses by Mrs. Carter, who gave them to me. She was here the other morning, and surprised me with her looks and conversation. The former resemble those of Hebe; the latter has a tendency to a little pedantry; however, she certainly has real and extensive learning.'

Lady Pomfret describes with her usual prolixity, and —if Horace Walpole be accepted as a critic—infelicity, the Easter ceremonies at Rome; but more interesting is a passing reference to a meeting with a tall, fair young man called 'il Principio,' who was none other

than the Chevalier de St. George *alias* the Young Pretender. Another historical character then living at Rome was 'my Lady Nithsdale, who managed so cleverly in getting her husband out of the Tower the night before he was to have been beheaded. She is now grown very old, but has been much of a woman of quality, and is in great esteem here.' Lord Nithsdale, it will be remembered, was impeached for treason in 1715, and escaped from the Tower in a woman's dress, conveyed to him by his wife.

In March 1741 the Pomfrets set out upon a leisurely journey home, stopping a few days at most of the places of interest on their route. At Bologna, Lady Pomfret was taken to the house of the famous feminine professor, Signora Laura Bassi.[1] 'She is not yet thirty,' we read, 'and did not begin to study till she was sixteen, when, having a serious illness and being attended by a physician who was a man of great learning, he perceived her genius, and began to instruct her with such success that she is able now to dispute with any person whatever on the most sublime points. This she does with so much unaffected modesty, and such strength of reason as must please all hearers, of which number we were; for the Signora Gozzadini, who is herself very clever and prodigiously obliging, had got two doctors to meet us here. With the first, called Beccari [President of the Institute of Science and Art at Bologna], she discoursed in Latin upon light (for which I was not much the better); but afterwards Doctor Zanotti [probably Eustachio Zanotti, Professor of Astronomy at the University of Bologna], with an infinite deal of wit, started a question in Italian,

[1] Born in 1711, took her doctor's degree in 1732, married to Dr. Verati in 1748, died in 1778.

"Whether we were not in some danger of losing the benefit of the moon, since the English had affirmed that the sun attracted all planets to itself?" He desired her not to compliment the English, but to free him from the fears which their assertions justly caused him. I wish I was capable of translating the dialogue, for I flatter myself our tastes are so much alike that you would no more tire of reading than I of hearing it.'

The correspondents were both, as has been seen, keenly interested in the question of feminine learning, and there was no clever woman who exercised their curiosity more than that intellectual meteor, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Lady Pomfret had cooled towards her to some extent since the visit to Florence, but Lady Hertford is again dilating upon her merits about this time, in consequence of a perusal of *A Week of Town Eclogues*. 'There is,' she declares, 'more fire and wit in all the writings of that author than one meets with in almost any other; and whether she is in the humour of an infidel or a devotee, she expresses herself with so much strength that one can hardly persuade oneself she is not in earnest on either side of the question. Nothing can be more natural than her complaint of the loss of her beauty [*vide* the 'Saturday' in her *Town Eclogues*]; but as that was only one of her various powers to charm, I should have imagined she would only have felt a very small part of the regret that many other people have suffered on a like misfortune; who have nothing but the loveliness of their persons to claim admiration; and consequently, by the loss of that, have found all their hopes of distinction vanish much earlier in life than Lady Mary's;—for if I do not mistake, she was near thirty

before she had to deplore the loss of beauty greater than I ever saw in any face beside her own.'

Play and inoculation seem to have been the principal excitements of the London season of 1741. 'Assemblies are now so much in fashion,' we read, 'that most persons fancy themselves under a necessity of inviting all their acquaintances three or four times to their houses, not in small parties, which would be supportable, but they are all to come at once; nor is it enough to engage married people, but the boys and girls sit down as gravely to whist-tables as fellows of colleges used to do formerly. It is actually a ridiculous, though, I think, a mortifying sight, that play should become the business of the nation, from the age of fifteen to fourscore. . . . (April 13th.) Inoculation is more in fashion than ever; half my acquaintances are shut up to nurse their children, grandchildren, nephews, or nieces. I should be content to stay in town upon the same account if I were happy enough to see my son desire it, but that is not the case, and at his age it must either be a voluntary act or left undone.' Lady Hertford's anxiety on her only son's account was not unfounded, for only three years later he died of smallpox at Bologna on his nineteenth birthday.

Lady Pomfret meanwhile journeyed from Bologna to Venice, where she stayed long enough to exhaust all the principal sights. Among the 'lions' interviewed was the pastel painter, Rosalba,[1] who, says her ladyship, 'is now old, but certainly the best, if not the only artist in her way. This, her excellence, does not make her the least impertinent, her behaviour being as good as her

[1] Rosa Alba Carriera, born in 1671 at Venice, where she died in 1757.

work.' Several convents were visited, and a curious account is given of the non-ascetic manner in which the majority of them were conducted at that period. At one of these establishments, for example, each nun was allowed an apartment and a garden to herself, while there was frequent dancing, and even performances of operas, though no profane auditors were admitted. The vows of celibacy and seclusion were not invariably regarded as perpetual, and in certain cases the nuns were allowed to go out and take part in the carnivals.

Lady Pomfret's enjoyment of her stay in Venice was spoilt by the news of the death of Lord Aubrey Beauclerk at the battle of Carthagena, her second son being on Lord Aubrey's staff. 'This misfortune,' she writes, 'leaves my son without a protector, in an unwholesome climate, exposed to a thousand dangers besides the common ones of his profession, and perhaps to necessities, it being impossible to remit money to him in his present situation; but God knows whether he is alive to want it, for I hear the ship he was in has suffered much, and lost many men. I own I am not patriotic enough to rejoice at a victory that may have cost me so dear; though could I hear that my child was safe, nobody would be better pleased with it than myself.'

Lady Hertford, on May the 27th, encloses a letter from the hero of Carthagena, Admiral Vernon, thinking that her friend might like to see the style of a man whose actions formed so great a part of the conversation of all Europe. 'I own,' she remarks, 'that I am pleased to find him begin by attributing his success, not to his own bravery or conduct, but to the Giver of all victory, and praising Him that the English colours are now flying on Castillio Grande. However a sense of religion

may be out of fashion amongst some polite people, it certainly adds a great lustre to the characters of any persons who are so happy as to act under its influence. The lower part of the people have been transported beyond measure by what they call an auspicious omen —two young lions have been whelped in the Tower on the day that the news of the taking of Carthagena arrived, and they have been called Vernon and Ogle. Yet to prove that the English mob can never be so thoroughly pleased as not to have a delight in doing mischief, they assembled in vast bodies, and demolished every window in London where there were not lights for four nights successively. This vengeance fell chiefly on empty houses, or on those whose owners were out of town; for everybody else illuminated their rails and houses in the greatest profusion. I do not know by what accident the Bishop of Oxford and Doctor Pearce happened to be out of the way, or not to think of this testimony of their joy in time; but neither of them has a pane of glass or a window-frame left in their houses. The High Constable of Westminster not only made a very great bonfire, but gave a hogshead of strong beer at his door. This the mob had no sooner consumed than they broke all the windows, and fell to demolishing his house in such a manner that if a guard had not immediately been sent for, it would have been pulled down in about two hours. They had several men in the middle of them with great flashets of paving-stones ready for the slingers to demolish what was out of their reach by throwing with their hands. In short, the disorders were so great that the regents have thought it necessary to issue a proclamation for the discovery of the ringleaders.' It is gratifying to reflect how much

the London populace has improved in character between the (so-called) victory of Carthagena and the relief of Mafeking.

A glimpse of the fashions of the period is given in a letter of Lady Hertford's, dated June 3, 1741, which is in answer to an inquiry from Lady Pomfret on that subject. 'I must begin by asking your pardon for having forgot to answer you in my last about the dress of the fashionable young ladies. This, on the whole, is neither quite French nor quite English, their hair being cut and curled after the mode of the former, and their bodies dressed in the way of the latter, though with French hoops. Few unmarried women appear abroad in robes or sacques, and as few married ones would be thought genteel in anything else. I am myself so awkward as to be yet unable to use myself to that dress, unless for visits of ceremony; since I do not feel at home in my own house without an apron; nor can endure a hoop that would overturn all the chairs and stools in my closet.' To show the minute accuracy of Horace Walpole as a chronicler of contemporary trifles, the above passage may be compared with a paragraph in a letter of his to Sir Horace Mann, dated October 13, 1741 (just after the Pomfrets' return to England), in which he observes that Lady Sophia Fermor's head is to be dressed French and her body English, for which he is sorry, since her figure is so fine in a robe. It will be noted that the fashions had not changed between June and October.

The Pomfrets travelled from Venice over the Tyrol, and through Germany to Brussels, where they made a long stay. In one of the letters written from Brussels, Lady Pomfret describes a visit to Antwerp, where she

made the acquaintance of a very remarkable character, a Mrs. Blount, sister-in-law of Pope's friend and correspondent. 'Mrs. Blount,' she relates, 'lives a little way out of the city, in a small but convenient house, moated round. To this she has a drawbridge that pulls up every night. This lady was the daughter of Sir John Guise, and was endowed with a most surprising genius, which he took care to improve by having her taught the Latin, Spanish, Italian, and French languages, all of which she is perfect mistress of, as well as all the best books in them (!). Music and poetry assisted in the completing of her mind; and love led her choice to a younger brother of Sir Walter Blount, whom you may remember as often mentioned in Mr. Pope's letters. Since the death of this gentleman, and the disposal of her daughters, she is retired (with three or four servants) to prepare for the next world, and she calls herself the Solitaire. Her dress is plain, and she never goes into company; but if any persons come to her, she receives them with the greatest apparent pleasure, and with such vivacity and variety of wit that you would imagine she was still in the midst of the *beau monde*. . . . The oddness of this lady's turn and way of life gave many different sentiments to our company. Some of us pitied her, and some of us pitied the world for losing her; but all wondered at her except myself, who really wonder that no persons ever thought of secluding themselves in this manner before. To be weary of the hurry of the world at a certain age, for people of any degree of sense, is the most natural thing imaginable; and no longer to seek company when the dearest and best of company has left us, is equally conformable to a tender heart and strong understanding. But to shut oneself

up irrevocably in a prison,[1] to torment the body and try the constitution, because our minds are already too much distressed, is what I cannot so well comprehend; therefore, I confess myself an admirer of Mrs. Blount's disposal of her remaining days. Nobody can say or imagine that she repents of a retirement which her children and friends solicit her every day to leave, and which she has no sort of obligation but what arises from choice to stay in. Nobody that visits her finds by her reception of them that her own thoughts are insupportable to her; but she rather seems to have been storing up entertainment for her guests, which she presents with as much readiness, and in as great plenty, as if she expected to receive cent. per cent. for it; whereas few are able to return her half the real value.'

Lady Hertford is charmed with this account of Mrs. Blount's mode of living, and quotes the somewhat similar case of the Dowager Duchess of St. Albans, who, in her declining years, never went outside her house at Windsor, though she was always ready to receive visitors at home. 'It has long been my fixed opinion,' continues her ladyship, 'that in the latter part of life, when the duty to a family no longer calls upon us to act on the public stage, it is not only more decent, but infinitely more eligible, to live in an absolute retirement.' This letter is dated from the house at Marlborough, whither the Hertfords had retired for the summer months. 'We had the finest weather imaginable for our journey,' writes Lady Hertford; 'and though the distance was fifty-nine miles, we performed the journey in eleven hours and three-quarters, including the time we baited. I never saw such an air of plenty as appeared on both sides of the

[1] Lady Pomfret means a convent.

road, from the vast quantities of corn with which the fields are covered, and the addition of many hop-gardens. . . . I find my own garden full of sweets, and I have a terrace between a border of pinks and a sweetbriar hedge. Whether it is because this was the first habitation I was mistress of, in those cheerful years when everything assumed a smiling aspect from the vivacity that attends that season of life; or because almost every little ornament has been made either by my lord's or my own contrivance, I cannot tell; but I certainly feel a partiality for this place which an indifferent person would be at a loss to account for.'

An agreeable company was staying in the house, among others Lady Hertford's nephew, the diminutive Lord Brooke, afterwards created Earl of Warwick. The conversation would seem to have been superior in quality to that talked in the average country house. 'An argument was started one night after supper,' reports the hostess, 'which produced a dialogue of above an hour that I secretly wished you had heard, because I thought it might give you some entertainment, being managed on both sides with a great deal of wit and politeness. The subject was, "Whether a sincere love could subsist where there was not an attention paid to the object?" Two of the company, having a particular friendship for a gentleman who has lately married a very agreeable woman with a very great fortune, who loves him to distraction, thought it necessary to vindicate their friend, who they say loves her extremely though he has not this attention, to prove that the truest love was often without it. This appeared so paradoxical to Mr. Leslie and a very ingenious young clergyman who was present, that it

produced a dispute which, could I have written shorthand, I should have thought well worth taking down. Yet after all that was said, with a great deal of life and spirit on both sides, I believe both still retained their first opinions, as I confess I did mine; so that love without attention still appears a chimera to me.'

The Pomfrets were detained at Brussels longer than they wished on account of the disturbed state of the Continent, and the fact that Spanish privateers were patrolling the seas and rendering the passage of non-combatants insecure. The last letter from Brussels is dated October 6, 1741, and the next day the Pomfrets left for England. The correspondence came to an end with the meeting of the friends, but the career of Lady Pomfret and her beautiful daughters may be traced through the gossiping letters of Horace Walpole, while there is an occasional allusion to the Hertfords. Lady Sophia Fermor returned to England to take up a position as one of the chief beauties of her time, and Walpole watches with his usual malicious interest the flirtations of the young lady and the ambitions of her mother.[1] At a ball given by Sir Thomas Robinson in November, there were many belles, but Lady Sophia outshone them all, though a little out of humour at the scarcity of minuets. 'However, as usual, she danced more than anybody, and as usual, too, took out what men she liked, or thought the best dancers. Lord Lincoln[2] and Lord Holdernesse were admirers-in-chief, and it was generally believed that a match would be arranged with the former, but he took fright at the net that seemed

[1] There is a tradition in the Fermor family that Horace was in love with the second daughter, afterwards Lady Charlotte Finch.

[2] Son of the Duke of Newcastle.

to be laid for him, and ended by marrying his cousin, Miss Pelham.'

Lady Pomfret is described by Walpole as a sort of aristocratic Mrs. Malaprop; and many of her sayings are recorded by him in his letters to Sir Horace Mann, who had been well acquainted with her ladyship at Florence. Writing on November 23, 1741, Walpole observes: 'Lady Townshend told me an admirable history; it is of our friend Lady Pomfret. Somebody that belonged to the Prince of Wales said they were going to *Court*; it was objected that they ought to say, going to Carlton House; that the only *Court* is where the King resides. Lady Pomfret, with her paltry air of significant learning and absurdity, said, "Oh, Lord! is there no *Court* in England but the King's? Sure there are many more! There is the *Court* of Chancery, the *Court* of Exchequer, the *Court* of King's Bench, etc." Don't you love her? Lord Lincoln does her daughter. He is come over and met her the other night; he turned pale, spoke to her several times in the evening, but not long, and sighed to me at going away.' Describing a masquerade given in February 1742, he writes: 'Of all extravagant figures, commend me to our Countess [of Pomfret]. She and my Lord trudged in like pilgrims, with vast staffs in their hands; and she was so heated that you would have thought her pilgrimage had been like Pantagruel's voyage to the Oracle of the Bottle! Lady Sophia was in a Spanish dress, so was Lord Lincoln; not to be sure by design, but so it happened.'

The Lincoln affair dragged on for some time longer. Lady Mary Wortley, writing to Lady Pomfret in June, remarks: 'Apropos of angels, I am astonished Lady

Sophia does not condescend to leave some copies of her face for the benefit of posterity; 'tis quite impossible she should not command what matches she pleases when such pugs as Miss Hamilton[1] become peeresses, and I am still of opinion that it depended on her to be my relation.' Lady Mary had, of course, numerous relations, eligible and otherwise, but she was probably alluding to her kinsman, Lord Lincoln. Lady Pomfret in the intervals of match-making continued to amuse her friends with her preciosity. 'You have no notion,' writes Walpole in allusion to a story of Mann's, 'how I laughed at the man that "talks nothing but Madeira." I told it to my Lady Pomfret, concluding that it would divert her too, and forgetting that she repines when she should laugh, and reasons when she should be diverted. She asked gravely what language that was! "That Madeira being subject to an European Prince, to be sure they talk some European dialect!" The grave personage! It was of a piece with her saying "that Swift would have written better if he had never written ludicrously."' In November we read: 'The Pomfrets stay in the country most of the winter; Lord Lincoln and Mr. George Pitt [an admirer of Lady Charlotte Fermor] have declared off in form. So much for the schemes of my lady. The Duke of Grafton used to say that they put him in mind of a troop of Italian comedians; Lord Lincoln was Valere, Lady Sophia Columbine, and my lady the old mother behind the scenes.'

There is no more mention of the Pomfrets for about eighteen months, and then in March 1744 comes the announcement: 'Who do you think is going to marry

[1] Daughter of Lord Archibald Hamilton. Married to Lord Brooke in May 1742.

Lady Sophia Fermor?—Only my Lord Carteret!—this very week!—a drawing-room conquest. Do but imagine how many passions will be gratified in that family! Her own ambition, vanity, and resentment—love she never had any; the politics, management, and pedantry of the mother, who will think to govern her son-in-law out of *Froissart*.[1] Figure the instructions she will give her daughter! Lincoln is quite indifferent, and laughs. My Lord Chesterfield says, "It is only another of Carteret's vigorous measures." I am really glad of it; for her beauty and cleverness deserve a better fate than she was on the point of having determined for her for ever. How graceful, how charming, and how haughtily condescending she will be! How, if Lincoln should ever hint past history, she will

> "Stare upon the strange man's face,
> As one she ne'er had known."'

Lord Carteret, afterwards Earl Granville, was at that time Secretary of State, the period of his ascendency being known as the Drunken Administration. He was then fifty-four years of age, with several grown-up daughters, and had lost his first wife only nine months before. The engagement caused a great sensation in society, partly on account of the bridegroom's high position, and partly on account of the difference in age between the pair. An epigram upon Lady Sophia at this time is quoted by Walpole:—

> 'Her beauty, like the Scripture feast,
> To which the invited never came,
> Deprived of its intended guest,
> Was given to the old and lame.'

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[1] Lady Pomfret had translated *Froissart*.

The wedding had to be deferred because, to quote a letter of Mrs. Delany's, who was a cousin of the bridegroom, 'Lord Carteret has hurried Lady Sophia's spirits into a scarlet fever, and she was in great danger for twenty-four hours; and she has thrown him into the gout, with which he has been confined this week.' The jointure was fixed at sixteen hundred pounds a year, and the pin-money at four hundred, while there were to be two thousand pounds' worth of jewels. The couple corresponded every day, Lord Carteret reading his lady's letters to the Cabinet Council.

The marriage seems to have been a happy one for the short time it lasted. Lord Carteret made up for what he lacked in youth by his brilliant parts, his high spirits, his overflowing vitality, and his devotion to his young bride; while she, clever, cold-hearted, and ambitious, was more than satisfied. We hear of the pair at Ranelagh, where they are all fondness—walk together, and stop every five minutes to kiss. We meet the bride and her mother at Knapton's, the fashionable crayon artist. Lady Carteret is drawn crowned with corn, like the goddess of plenty, and a mild dove in her arms like Venus. 'We had much of *my Lord* and *my Lord*,' says Walpole. 'The Countess-mother (Lady Pomfret) was glad *my Lord* was not there—he was never satisfied with the eyes; she was afraid he would have had them drawn bigger than the cheeks.' On November 9, we read that 'the new Lady Granville [Lord Carteret had just succeeded to the Earldom] was at home the other night for the first time. I was invited, for I am much in favour with them all, but found myself extremely *déplacé*: there was nothing but the Winchilseas and Baths, and the gleanings of a party stuffed out

into a faction, and the whole blood of Fermor.' Lady Pomfret in the course of conversation remarked that Horace's conduct in respect to a certain action had been 'very *ministerial*,' an awkward word, it was felt, to apply just then to the son of a newly-fallen minister, but pronounced by the Queen-mother, says Walpole, 'with all the importance with which she was used to blunder out pieces of heathen mythology.'

Three weeks later Lord Granville himself had fallen, driven from office by the jealousy of the Pelhams. From that time, according to Macaulay, his lordship relinquished all ambitious hopes, and retired laughing to his books and his bottle. 'No statesman ever enjoyed a success with so exquisite a relish, or submitted to defeat with so genuine and unforced a cheerfulness.' His wife and her mother were not so happy; indeed, they are said to have felt bitter mortification at the failure of all their ambitions. 'However,' writes Walpole, 'the daughter carries it off heroically; the very night of her fall she went to the Oratorio. I talked to her much, and recollected all that had been said to me upon the like occasion three years ago; I succeeded, and am invited to her assembly next Tuesday.' The poor beauty's short but brilliant career was nearly over. There are a few allusions to the expectation of a young Carteret, and the delighted importance of the Countess-mother; then the news of the birth of a daughter in September; and finally, in a letter dated October 11, 1745, we read the melancholy conclusion of the story;—

'Before I talk of any public news, I must tell you what you will be very sorry for—Lady Granville is dead. She had a fever for six weeks before her lying in, and could never get it off. Last Saturday they called in another

physician, Doctor Oliver, and on Monday he pronounced her out of danger. About seven in the evening, as Lady Pomfret and Lady Charlotte (Fermor) were sitting by her, the first notice they had of her immediate danger was her sighing and saying, "I feel death come very fast upon me!" She repeated the same words frequently, remained perfectly in her senses and calm, and died about eleven at night. Her mother and sister sat by her till she was cold. It is very shocking for anybody so young, so handsome, so arrived at the height of happiness, so sensible of it, and on whom all the joy and grandeur of her family depended, to be so quickly snatched away. Poor Uguccioni![1] he will be very sorry and simple about it.'

Lady Pomfret's grief at the death of Lady Granville was probably somewhat softened by the marriage, in 1746, of her second daughter, Lady Charlotte, to William Finch, brother and heir of Lord Winchelsea. Lady Charlotte afterwards held the post of governess to the children of George III., and is said to have acquitted herself admirably in her difficult and responsible task. The fourth daughter, Lady Juliana, married Thomas Penn, son of the famous William Penn, and one of the proprietors of Pennsylvania. In 1753 Lord Pomfret died, and was succeeded by his ne'er-do-weel son, Lord Lempster. 'The Countess,' says Walpole, 'has two thousand pounds a year rent-charge for jointure, five hundred as lady of the bedchamber to the late Queen, and fourteen thousand pounds in money, in her own power—what a fund for follies! The new Earl has about two thousand four hundred a year, but deep debts and post-obits. . . . There are rents worth ten

[1] A Florentine admirer, who afterwards wrote an Elegy on her.

thousand pounds left to little Lady Sophia Carteret, and the whole personal estate between the two unmarried daughters, so the seat (Easton Neston) must be stripped. . . . The statues, which were part of the Arundel collection, are famous, but few good.'

These statues had been bought from Lord Arundel by Sir William Fermor, father of Lord Pomfret. At the Easton Neston sale they were purchased by Lady Pomfret, who was not on terms with her son. Walpole, in a letter to Mann, dated March 10, 1755, says: 'If you are there [at Rome] when you receive this, pray make my Lady Pomfret's compliments to the statues in the Capitol, and inform them that she has purchased her late lord's collection of statues, and presented them to the University of Oxford. The present Earl, her son, is grown a speaker in the House of Lords, and makes comparisons between Julius Cæsar and the watchmen of Bristol, in the same style as he compared himself [or rather his debts] to Cerberus, who, *when he had his head cut off, three others sprang up in its room.*'

A year later, in July 1756, we learn from the same authority that 'our old friend the Countess has exhibited herself lately to the public exactly in a style you would guess. Having given her lord's statues to the University of Oxford, she has been there at the public act to receive adoration. A box was built for her near the Vice-Chancellor, where she sat for three days together for four hours at a time, to hear verses and speeches, and to hear herself called Minerva; nay, the public orator had prepared an encomium on her beauty, but being struck with her appearance, had presence of mind to whisk his compliments to the beauties of her mind. Do but figure her; her dress had all the tawdry

poverty and frippery with which you remember her. . . . It is amazing that she did not mash a few words of Latin, as she used to *fricassee* French and Italian! or that she did not torture some learned simile, like her comparing the tour of Sicily, the surrounding a triangle, to squaring the circle; or as when she said it was as difficult to get into an Italian coach as for Cæsar to take Attica, which she meant for Utica.'

In December 1761 Lady Pomfret died suddenly while on a journey to Bath. She was buried at Easton Neston; but a 'neat cenotaph' in the University Church of Oxford commemorates her virtues and accomplishments in sonorous Latin phrases, which would have given her intense satisfaction and delight could she have been alive to read—and misconstrue—them.

To return to Lady Hertford. There is extant a little volume of manuscript letters addressed by her to Lady Luxborough,[1] Shenstone's patroness, between 1742 and 1754, from which we may gain a glimpse into her life after the discontinuance of her correspondence with Lady Pomfret.

In September 1742 Lady Hertford writes: 'I have not seen Thomson almost these three years. He keeps company with scarce any one but Hallett and one or two players, and indeed hardly anybody else will keep

[1] Lady Luxborough was half-sister of Lord Bolingbroke. Some letters of hers were published in a collection of Shenstone's correspondence. Horace Walpole says that she was 'a high-coloured lusty black woman, who was parted from her husband upon a gallantry she had with Parson Dalton (chaplain to the Duchess of Somerset), the reviver of "Comus."' Lady Luxborough, he continues, 'retired into the country, corresponded as you see by her letters with the small poets of that time; but having no Theseus among them, consoled herself, it is said, like Ariadne, with Bacchus.'

company with him. He turns day into night, and night into day, and is (I am told) never awake till after midnight, and I doubt has quite drowned his genius.' Evidently Thomson's former patroness had never quite forgiven him for neglecting to correct her poems in order to carouse with her lord.

The death of the Hertfords' only son, Lord Beauchamp, in 1744, was a terrible blow to his mother, and henceforward her letters are full of allusion to her loss. Walpole, in chronicling the event, observes that if the parents were out of the question, no one would be sorry for such a mortification to the pride of old Somerset, Lord Hertford's father. 'He has written the most shocking letter imaginable to Lord Hertford, telling him that it is a judgment on him for his undutifulness, and that he must always look upon himself as the cause of his son's death. Lord Hertford is as good a man as lives, and has always been most unreasonably used by that old tyrant. The title of Somerset will revert to Sir Edward Seymour, whose line has been most unjustly deprived of it since the first creation.'

In a letter to Lady Luxborough, written a year after her son's death, Lady Hertford says that she has been to town to show herself at St. James's, and has had some fine clothes for the occasion; 'but, alas! you may guess how unsuitably they sate upon me, as I had till that time (though a month beyond the year from the sad time when I put it on) worn a dress much better suited to the sentiments of my heart, which must ever labour under its irreparable misfortune. The King was obliging to the last degree; but the compassion which his good-nature made him feel for me was so visible, both in his looks and in the alteration it occasioned in the tone of his voice, that

it was impossible for me to restrain my tears till he had done speaking to me. There was a great crowd, *but I had so thick a mist before my eyes the whole time that I don't know how anybody was dressed.*'

The old Duke of Somerset died unregretted in 1748, and Lady Hertford was transformed into the Duchess of Somerset. Her only surviving child, Lady Betty, married a Yorkshire baronet, Sir Hugh Smithson, whose grandfather was said to have either let or driven stage-coaches. A part of the great Northumberland estates, and the Percy barony, descended to Lady Betty, her grandmother, the proud Duke of Somerset's first wife, having been the heiress of the house of Percy. Rather to the scandal of society, Sir Hugh was created successively Earl and Duke of Northumberland, and is reported to have given himself all the airs of a genuine Percy. On the death of Lady Hertford's husband in 1749, the Dukedom of Somerset passed to Sir Edward Seymour, the representative of the elder branch of the family, while Francis Seymour, Lord Conway, was created Earl of Hertford.

Lady Hertford, now Dowager-Duchess of Somerset, lived quietly during the five years of her widowhood at Richkings, the name of which house had been changed to Percy Lodge. She still kept up with the literature of her day. 'Have you met,' she asks Lady Luxborough, 'with two little volumes which contain four contemplations written by a Mr. James Hervey,[1] a young Cornish or Devonshire clergyman? The subjects are upon walking upon the tombs, upon a flower-garden, upon night, and upon the starry heavens. There is

[1] Hervey's *Meditations among the Tombs* appeared in 1745, and his *Contemplations* in 1747.

something poetical and truly pious in them. . . . I have been very well entertained lately with the two first volumes of *The Foundling* [*Tom Jones*], written by Mr. Fielding, but not to be published till January (1749). If the same spirit runs through the whole work, I think it will be much preferable to *Joseph Andrews*.'

In 1753 the Duchess sends a message through Lady Luxborough to Shenstone, thanking him for the honour he had done her in inscribing his *Ode upon Rural Elegance* to her, and continues: 'I am persuaded he is master of the subject, for I have heard from people who saw his gardens not long ago that they are the most perfect models of it. I hope you will prevail on Mr. Shenstone to let me see his Ode.' After she had read the poem, the Duchess wrote to Shenstone (with whom she was not personally acquainted) begging him to insert stars or dashes wherever her name or that of Percy Lodge was mentioned in it, observing; 'The world in general, since they can find no fault with your poem, will blame the choice of the person to whom it is addressed, and draw mortifying comparisons between the ideal lady and the real one.' These alterations may have been made at the time, but in Shenstone's published works the names appear in full. A verse or two from the *Ode to Rural Elegance* may here be quoted as a specimen of the complimentary poetry of a period when the poet's chief hope of pecuniary reward rested upon aristocratic patronage. Shenstone celebrates the Duchess's encouragement of the fine arts in the lines:—

'And tho' by faithless friends alarmed,
Art have with Nature waged presumptuous war;
By Seymour's winning influence charmed,

In whom their gifts united shine,
No longer shall their counsels jar.
'Tis her to mediate the peace;
Near Percy Lodge, with awestruck mien,
The rebel seeks her awful queen,
And havoc and contention cease.
I see the rival powers combine,
And aid each other's fair design;
Nature exalt the mound where art shall build;
Art shape the gay alcove, while Nature paints the field.

Begin, ye songsters of the grove!
O warble forth your noblest lay!
Where Somerset vouchsafes to rove,
Ye leverets, freely sport and play.
—Peace to the strepent horn!
Let no harsh dissonance disturb the morn,
No sounds inelegant and rude
Her sacred solitudes prophane!
Unless her candour not exclude
The lonely shepherd's votive strain,
Who tunes his reed amidst his rural cheer,
Fearful, yet not averse, that Somerset should hear.'

The Duchess survived this ode (which scarcely reaches the level of her own verse) just four years, dying in 1754 at the age of fifty-five. She was buried in St. Nicholas' Chapel, Westminster Abbey. For several years after the publication of Lady Hertford's and Lady Pomfret's correspondence, the two friends were held up to young people as models of virtue, culture, and refinement; and it must have come as a sensible shock to many excellent people when the bubble of their pretensions was pricked by Horace Walpole, and they were exhibited as two well-meaning ladies with a tendency to talk and write upon subjects which they did not altogether understand.

RICHARD CUMBERLAND

RICHARD CUMBERLAND

(1732-1811)

PART I

Richard Cumberland, playwright, novelist, poet, essayist, and editor, civil servant and amateur diplomatist, belongs to that numerous body of authors who have had to pay for temporary popularity by permanent neglect. His comedies have not held the stage like those of his contemporaries, Sheridan and Goldsmith; his novels are no longer read like those of his model, Henry Fielding; his *Observer* essays have not become a classic like the *Spectator* and the *Rambler*; his poems are dead; his pamphlets are forgotten; and even his delightful *Memoirs* have hardly taken the place they deserve in the biographical literature of his period. Yet this last book is a veritable human document, the confessions of an original character, the candid record of an eventful life. The intimate friend of Johnson, Boswell, Garrick, and Reynolds, who was commemorated as the 'Terence of England' by Goldsmith, and caricatured as Sir Fretful Plagiary by Sheridan, who lived to edit a rival to the *Quarterly Review*, and to appoint the poet Rogers as his executor,—is not this a man worth listening to when he chooses to gossip to us of his works, his friendships, his adventures and experiences?

Of one fact the reader of the *Memoirs* is speedily convinced, namely, that the author of them missed his true vocation in life. The great-grandson of Dr. Richard Cumberland,[1] appointed Bishop of Peterborough in 1691, and author of a learned refutation of the tenets of Hobbes; and grandson, on the maternal side, of that giant of criticism and controversy, Dr. Richard Bentley, Master of Trinity, young Cumberland seems to have had a congenital inclination towards a life of learned ease, secluded by college or cloister walls from the noise and bustle of the outside world. He would have been happy could he have spent his days in a quiet study, editing some obscure Greek author, or preparing erudite theological pamphlets wherein to crush a heretic bishop or cross swords with a wire-drawing metaphysician. But this was not to be. The world claimed the would-be recluse, and the earnest student fell a prey to politicians and the theatrical public.

Cumberland, who was born at Trinity Lodge in 1732, draws an unexpectedly attractive portrait of his famous grandfather, for 'Slashing Bentley with his desperate hook' was longsuffering with children, advocated the answering of their incessant questions, and patiently interpreted their first attempts at reasoning. 'When I was rallied by my mother for roundly asserting that I never slept,' says his grandson, 'I remember full well his calling me to account for it; and when I explained myself by saying that I never knew myself to be asleep, and therefore supposed I never slept, he gave me credit for my defence, and said to my mother, "Leave the boy in possession of his opinion; he has as clear a concep-

[1] A college friend of Samuel Pepys. The diarist was anxious that Cumberland should marry his sister 'Poll.'

tion of sleep, and at least as comfortable a one, as the philosophers who puzzle their brains about it, and do not rest so well."' The good doctor showed perhaps more zeal than judgment when he took down picture-books from his shelves in order to amuse his grandchildren, these books containing for the most part anatomical drawings of dissected bodies, and proving, we may believe, a fruitful source of nightmare.

Bentley's daughter and Cumberland's mother, Joanna, was the Phœbe of Byrom's pretty pastoral, written when the poet was a student at Trinity College, and first printed in the *Spectator*. The poem begins:—

> 'My time, O ye Muses, was happily spent
> When Phœbe went with me wherever I went,
> Ten thousand sweet pleasures I felt in my breast:
> Sure never fond shepherd like Colin was blest.
> But now she is gone and has left me behind,
> What a marvellous change on a sudden I find!
> When things were as fine as could possibly be,
> I thought 'twas the spring, but, alas! it was she.'

Joanna was no unworthy specimen of the Bentley stock. 'All that son can owe to parent or disciple to teacher, I owe to her,' says Richard, as so many other successful men have said of their mothers. 'She had a vivacity of fancy and a strength of intellect in which few men were her superiors; she read much, remembered well, and discerned acutely; I never knew the person who could better embellish any subject she was upon, or render common incidents more entertaining by the happy art of relating them. . . . Though strictly pious, there was no gloom in her religion, and she possessed the happy faculty of making every doctrine pleasant and every duty sweet.'

Richard Cumberland the elder, for many years Rector

of Stanwick in Northamptonshire, was, one suspects, scarcely so highly endowed in intellect as his wife, but we are assured that 'in moral piety he was truly a Christian, in generosity and honour he was perfectly a gentleman.' With two such parents it seems a pity that young Richard should have been sent off to a school at Bury St. Edmunds when only six years old. He confesses that for some time he was supremely idle, and always at the bottom of his class. But being publicly lectured on his iniquities by the headmaster, and asked what sort of report he could expect to have sent to his grandfather Bentley, he at once set to work in good earnest, and, quickly rising to the top of each class in turn, presently became the head boy of the school, which proud position he held against all competitors. The holidays were generally spent at Cambridge; but when at home the boy used to go out hunting with his father, both being admirably mounted. Mr. Cumberland shared a pack of harriers with a neighbouring gentleman, and was himself a first-rate horseman.

'In my first attendance on him to the field,' observes Richard, 'the joys of hunting scarcely compensated for the terrors I sometimes felt in following him upon a racing galloway whose attachment to her leader was such as left me no option as to the pace I would go or the leaps I wished to take.'

At home the boy read aloud the best authors to his mother, thus early acquiring a taste for literature, and more especially for the works of Shakespeare. 'The comments and illustrations of Bentley's daughter were such aids to a pupil in poetry as few could have given. With all her father's critical acumen she could trace and teach me to unravel all the meanders of the poet's

metaphor, and point out where it illuminated, and where it only obscured the text.' In his twelfth year Richard composed a kind of cento in blank verse, called *Shakespeare in the Shades*, in which some of the poet's characters plead their cause before him in Elysium, and have judgment passed upon them. Speeches from the plays are ingeniously woven into the texture of the work, which was an extraordinary production for a twelve-year-old schoolboy.

From Bury St. Edmunds Richard was sent to Westminster, and, unlike most boys, speaks of the school, the masters, and his fellow-pupils in the most glowing terms. There was a high standard of scholarship in the school; and his Latin verses, which at Bury had been thought to contain too much 'fancy,' here found appreciative notice. A court of honour was held among the boys, to which every member of the community was amenable, Dr. Nichols having the art of making all his scholars gentlemen. A first visit to the play was a great event in the life of a boy who had already tried his hand at dramatic writing. Richard was lucky enough to see *Lothario* acted by the chief stars of the time—Mrs. Cibber, Quin, and Garrick. The actress, we are told, recited Rowe's lines in the manner of an improvisatore, while Quin rolled out his heroics with little variety of tone. 'But when after long and eager expectation I first beheld little Garrick,[1] then young, and light, and active in every muscle and every feature, come bounding on the stage, heavens, what a change! It seemed as if a whole century had been stept over in the transition of a single scene. This heaven-born actor was then struggling to emancipate his audience

[1] This must have been about 1744-45, when Garrick, who was born in 1716, would be under thirty.

from the slavery they were resigned to; and though at times he succeeded in throwing some light upon them, yet in general they seemed to love darkness better than light.'

Cumberland condescends to but few dates in the course of his story; but we know when we have reached the year 1745 by the fact that the Scottish rebels were marching through England, and had got as far south as Derby. The outlook was a gloomy one; but that muscular Christian, the Rector of Stanwick, assembled his neighbours and persuaded them to turn out in defence of their country. At the expense merely of the enlisting shillings, he raised two full companies of a hundred each, and marched them to Northampton, where he was received with shouts and acclamations by the populace. Lord Halifax, who was to command the regiment, insisted upon bestowing one of the companies on Richard, who, however, was too young to take up the commission. Many of the recruits afterwards lost their lives at the siege of Carlisle, and the distress in which their families were left brought a considerable and lasting charge upon Mr. Cumberland.

In the following year the Cumberlands paid a visit to London, where their eldest daughter, Joanna, a girl of sixteen, fell a victim to confluent smallpox. The shock of this event, and the abhorrence of London aroused by it in the father's mind, determined him to remove his son from Westminster, and, though the boy was only in his fourteenth year, to enter him at Trinity College, Cambridge. During his first two years at the University, Richard was entirely neglected by his tutors, and amused himself in his own fashion with his favourite authors, and an occasional ride into the country. In his third

year, however, he was turned over to more conscientious tutors, and urged to work for his degree. Determined to make up for lost time, he now allowed himself only six hours' sleep, lived almost entirely on milk, and 'frequently used the cold bath.' By the help of this discipline he mastered the best treatises on mechanics, optics, and astronomy, worked out all his propositions in Latin, and acquired great facility in expounding and arguing in that language. He also entered for the public exercises, keeping two acts and two opponencies in the year, and triumphing over all his adversaries. After going in for his B.A. examination he collapsed, as might have been expected, and lay between life and death for the best part of six months. His convalescence was cheered by the news of the high station he had been adjudged among the wranglers of his year, and he felt that at last he had conquered a position of ease and credit in his college, his chief object at this time being to follow his learned ancestors in their profession, and not to fall behind them in their fame. In the course of three years he had every reason to expect a fellowship; and quite content with his prospects, he returned to college, where he began to form a Collectanea of his studies, and with youthful modesty contemplated writing a Universal History!

But Fate had very different intentions with regard to him. At a recent general election Mr. Cumberland had given his active support to the Whig candidate for Derby; and Lord Halifax, then Lord-Lieutenant of the county, wishing to make some return for his services, offered his private secretaryship to the energetic parson's son. This offer, with all it might be supposed to lead to, was considered too good to be refused; and after

another term at Cambridge, Richard went to London to take up his duties, though his post seems to have been little more than a sinecure. He was, he tells us, quite unfitted for dependence, had studied books, not men, and asked nothing better than to be left in his learned seclusion. 'With a head filled with Latin and Greek,' he continues, 'and a heart left behind me in college, I was completely out of my element. I saw myself unlike the people about me, and was embarrassed in circles which, according to the manners of those days, were not to be approached without a set of ceremonies and manœuvres not very pleasant to perform, and when awkwardly practised not very interesting to behold.'

Lord Halifax,[1] then President of the Board of Trade, is described as a fine classical scholar, as well as a model of all the graces. He was married to Miss Dunk, a great heiress and most exemplary lady; and as long as she lived Richard seems to have got on fairly well with his patron, though he was not intrusted with much confidential employment. It is evident that he was not happy in the career that had thus been thrust upon him. He still lived a sequestered life; and though he had plenty of opportunities of advancement, never turned them to his own advantage. In the recess he went to Cambridge for his final examination, and was elected a Fellow of Trinity. Now was his time to have broken off his connection with Lord Halifax and returned to his chosen walk in life. But fearing to disappoint his family, he let the chance slip, and settled down again in London, where he published a churchyard elegy which

[1] Born in 1716, died in 1771. He earned the title of the Father of the Colonies.

failed to interest the public, and contemplated an epic poem on India.

The death of Lady Halifax in 1753 was a misfortune for her whole household, and little short of a disaster for her husband. 'About this time,' to use our hero's own method of dating events, Mr. Cumberland the elder exchanged the living of Stanwick, which he had held for thirty years, for that of Fulham, in order that he might be near his son. In the adjoining village of Hammersmith, Bubb Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe, had a splendid villa, which for some reason best known to himself he was pleased to call 'La Trappe.' Young Cumberland made the acquaintance of this distinguished neighbour, and became a frequent visitor at his house. In the summer of 1756, when Lord Halifax had thrown up his office in consequence of a squabble with the Duke of Newcastle, Richard, now the ex-secretary of an ex-statesman, was glad to accept Dodington's invitation to stay at Eastbury, his country-house in Dorsetshire. Our hero had a pretty touch in character-drawing, and he gives an amusing sketch of the eccentricities of his host.

The future Lord Melcombe had a brilliant wit, and was an elegant Latin scholar, but he dearly loved a lord, and Lord Bute was the god of his idolatry. He kept up great state at Eastbury, we are told, though at less cost than could have been done by most men. His salon was hung with the finest Gobelin; and he slept in a bed encanopied with peacocks' feathers. His wardrobe was loaded with rich and flaring suits of past dates, but he contrived never to put his old dresses out of countenance by any variation in the fashion of the new. Pictures he only estimated by their

cost, and he possessed none himself; but he told his guest that if he had half a score worth a thousand pounds a-piece, he would gladly decorate his rooms with them. In the absence of works of art, however, 'he had stuck up immense patches of gilt leather, shaped into bugle-horns, upon hangings of rich crimson velvet; and round his state-bed he displayed a carpet of gold and silver embroidery which glaringly betrayed its derivation from coat, waistcoat, or breeches, by the testimony of pockets, loops, and button-holes!'

It was Dodington's custom to entertain his company with reading aloud in the evening, and in this art he excelled. His selections, however, were more curious than appropriate; for he treated his feminine guests, among whom were Lady Hervey[1] and the Dowager Lady Stafford, with the whole of *Jonathan Wild*, in which choice he consulted his own turn for irony rather than theirs for elegance, but the old ladies were polite enough to be pleased, or at any rate to appear so. Cumberland was shown the famous, or rather the infamous Diary; and being asked what he would do with it if it were left to his discretion, instantly replied that he would destroy it, whereat the writer was obviously disgusted. A more attractive work was a manuscript collection of witticisms, of which Dodington was part author, part compiler. With this he was accustomed to refresh his memory when he expected to meet any man of conspicuous wit or conversational talent.

'During my stay at Eastbury,' writes Cumberland, 'we were visited by the late Mr. Henry Fox[2] and Mr.

[1] Mary Lepel, widow of John, Lord Hervey.
[2] Afterwards the first Lord Holland.

Alderman Beckford;[1] the solid good sense of the former, and the dashing loquacity of the latter, formed a striking contrast between the characters of these gentlemen. To Mr. Fox our host paid all that courtly homage which he knew so well how to time and where to apply; to Beckford he did not observe the same attentions, but in the happiest flow of his raillery and wit combated this intrepid talker with admirable effect. It was an interlude truly comic and amusing. Beckford, loud, voluble, self-sufficient, and galled by hits that he could not parry, and probably did not expect, laid himself more and more open in the vehemence of his argument; Dodington, lolling in his chair in perfect apathy and self-command, dozing and even snoring at intervals in his lethargic way, broke out every now and then into such gleams and flashes of wit and irony, as by the contrast of his phlegm with the other's loquacity made his humour irresistible, and set the table in a roar.'

On his return to town Cumberland wrote his first legitimate drama, *The Banishment of Cicero.* Although he was not, as he confesses, very happy in the choice of a subject, the play was read and praised by Lord Halifax and by Dr. Warburton. The former proposed to take it to Garrick, who was then living at Hampton, and recommend it to him for representation. Patron and secretary accordingly bearded the manager in his own home; but Cumberland was quick to perceive the embarrassment which the introduction of his manuscript occasioned, and recognised that his cause was desperate, though his advocate continued sanguine, and Garrick promised an attentive perusal. 'But those tell-tale features, so miraculously gifted in the art of assumed

[1] Father of the author of *Vathek*, and twice Lord Mayor of London.

emotions, could not mask their real ones, and I had no expectation of my play being accepted.' A day or two later Garrick returned the manuscript with many apologies to his lordship for his inability to use it, and a few qualifying words to its author, which, as Cumberland admits, was as much as could be expected from him, though it did not satisfy the patron of the play, who warmly resented this non-compliance with his wishes, and for a length of time forbore to live in his former habits of good neighbourhood with Garrick. Poor Garrick! how often in his career must he have had to choose between offending a powerful patron and boring his public!

In February 1759, on his twenty-seventh birthday, Cumberland was married to his cousin, Elizabeth Ridge. He had previously obtained a small place as Crown Agent for the colony of Nova Scotia, worth two hundred a year, which in addition to his own means was considered just sufficient to support a modest establishment, until such time as Lord Halifax came into place again. Upon the death of George II. in the following year, all eyes were turned upon the favourite, Lord Bute. With his accession to power, Lord Halifax obtained the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, and prepared to open his Majesty's first Parliament in that country. The vicar of Fulham was appointed one of the chaplains, with a prospect of a mitre later on, while Richard obtained places for two of his brothers-in-law. He was disappointed at only receiving the Ulster Secretaryship for his own share, 'Single-speech' Hamilton having negotiated himself into the office of Chief Secretary. Leaving his two children with their grandmother Ridge in England, Cumberland sailed for Ireland in 1761 with his

wife and parents, and established his family in a house at Dublin.

He had taken leave of his friend Dodington, now Lord Melcombe, the day before the Coronation, and had found him before a looking-glass in his new robes, practising attitudes, and debating within himself upon the most graceful mode of carrying his coronet in the procession. 'He was in high glee with his fresh and blooming honours, and I left him in the act of dictating a billet to Lady Hervey, apprising her that a *young lord* was coming to throw himself at her feet.' At this time Cumberland's uncle, Richard Bentley, was patronised by Lord Melcombe as a man likely to do good service to the party with his pen. Bentley is now chiefly remembered as the friend and correspondent of Horace Walpole, with whom, as Cumberland said, he carried on for a long time a sickly kind of friendship, which had in it too much of the bitter of dependence to be gratifying to the taste of a man of spirit and sensibility. The friendship, however, had its hot fits and cold fits, and in one of the former Walpole writes: 'I adore Mr. Bentley; he has more sense, judgment, and wit, more taste and more misfortunes than sure ever met in any man. I have heard that Dr. Bentley, regretting his want of taste for all such learning as his, which is the very want of taste, used to sigh and say "Tully had his Marcus."'

Unfortunately, Bentley was an unpractical genius, whose debts, together with an unsatisfactory wife, kept him in constant hot water. In June 1761, however, fortune seemed to smile upon him. He wrote a clever, though unequal comedy, with a political *motif*, called *The Three Wishes*, which Walpole heard Lord

Melcombe read aloud in a circle at Lady Hervey's. 'Cumberland,' writes Horace, 'had carried it to him (Lord Melcombe) with a recommendatory copy of verses, containing more incense to the King and my Lord Bute than the Magi brought in their portmanteaux to Jerusalem. The idols were propitious. A banknote of £200 was sent from the Treasury to the author, and the play was ordered to be performed by the summer company.' *The Wishes* was acted at Drury Lane by Foote, Murphy, and O'Brien; but though Lord Halifax and Lord Melcombe were in the stage-box, the one prompting the actors, and the other running backwards and forwards behind the scenes, the play was a failure, only surviving five performances.

The pictures drawn by Cumberland of Irish life and society in the early years of George III.'s reign are both characteristic and amusing. Like most of his contemporaries who visited Dublin, the young Ulster secretary found the society of the Irish capital very different in tone and manner from that of London. The profusion of the tables struck him with amazement, while 'the professional gravity of character maintained by our English dignitaries was laid aside; and in several prelatical houses the mitre was so mingled with the cockade, and the glass circulated so freely, that I perceived the spirit of conviviality was by no means excluded from the pale of the Church.' Of the intellectual powers of his fellow-secretary, Hamilton, Cumberland held a high opinion, declaring that he spoke well, though not often, and that his style strongly resembled the style of Junius. Edmund Burke he only saw once by accident while the young orator was in attendance upon Hamilton, but it was about this time

that Burke broke off his connection with his patron of single-speech fame.

One of the most entertaining of Cumberland's Irish acquaintances was George Faulkener, the piratical publisher, whose name was blasphemed by most of the English authors of the period. Faulkener's niece had been engaged as governess to Lord Halifax's daughter, and for some time past had been carrying on a *liaison* with her employer. For her sake he had broken off a proposed match with the daughter and heiress of Sir Thomas Drury. Miss Faulkener accompanied him to Ireland, and obtained an evil celebrity as a place-monger. Her uncle, according to Cumberland, was the only person whom Foote's extravagant pencil could not caricature, for he had a solemn intrepidity of egotism and a daring contempt of absurdity that fully outfaced imitation. 'I sate at his table once from dinner till two in the morning,' he tells us, 'whilst George swallowed immense potations, with one solitary strawberry at the bottom of his glass, which he said was recommended to him by his doctor for its cooling propensities. He never lost recollection or equilibrium the whole time, but was in excellent foolery. It was a singular coincidence that there was a person in company who had been reprieved from the gallows, as well as the judge who had passed sentence upon him. This did not in the least disturb the harmony of the society, nor embarrass any human creature present.'

In 1762 Lord Halifax was appointed Secretary of State, and returned to England. The short sojourn in Ireland did not result in much advantage to the Ulster secretary, who was offered a baronetcy at the conclusion of his patron's term of office, 'a mouthful of moon-

shine' which he refused. His father, however, obtained the Bishopric of Clonfert, and 'wore the mitre to his last hour with unblemished reputation, adored by his people for his benevolence, equity, and integrity.' When Lord Halifax returned to London to take the seals, he appointed Sedgewicke as his Under Secretary, passing over Cumberland on the ground that he was not fit for every office, and could not speak French. 'I had a holding on Lord Halifax,' says Richard, 'founded on a long and faithful attachment; but as I had hitherto kept the straight and fair track in following his fortunes, I would not consent to deviate into indirect roads and disgrace myself in the eyes of his and my own connections.' It is probable that Cumberland had found his position in Lord Halifax's household more difficult since Miss Faulkener's accession to power, and that, refusing to pay his court to the lady, he lost what little influence he ever possessed with his patron.

Finding himself cast out of employment, our hero thought it worth while to try and succeed Sedgewicke in his situation as Clerk of Reports at the Board of Trade. The new place, worth about two hundred a year, was obtained; but our hero, now the father of three young children, began to look about him for some other means of increasing his income. Bickerstaff having lately brought out his *Love in a Village* with considerable success, Cumberland determined to attempt a little piece of the same kind. The result was a pasticcio called *The Summer's Tale*, a tale about nothing, even its author confesses, and very indifferently told. It was then suggested that he should try his hand at high comedy instead of wasting his talents over popular trifles. Accordingly, he set to work during a summer

visit to his parents at Clonfert, and produced the first of a long series of comedies called *The Brothers.*

It was at Clonfert that Cumberland studied the Irish life and character which he was afterwards to turn to good account upon the stage. The church of Clonfert, by custom called a cathedral, and the episcopal residence, by courtesy called a palace, stood on the banks of the Shannon in a nook of land surrounded on three sides by an impassable bog. The peasants were but little removed from savages, and their mode of life and methods of cultivating the land were of the most primitive order. The bishop undertook to improve matters in his own immediate neighbourhood. He held a large portion of land in his own hands, and employed a numerous tribe of labourers. His first object was to induce the people to adopt the same methods of husbandry as were practised in England—a difficult matter, since they predicted that the new-fangled haystacks would catch fire, and the corn be unfit for use. Gradually, however, they were prevailed upon to provide their cabins with chimneys, while outside each door was to be seen a stack of hay made in English fashion, and a plot of potatoes, carefully planted and kept free from weeds. Then the bishop turned his attention to their persons, a Sunday dinner being offered as a premium to all who should present themselves in clean linen and well-combed hair, without the customary addition of a scarecrow wig. The old barbarous habit of working with a greatcoat hung loosely over the shoulders and the sleeves dangling at the sides was now discarded, and the bishop's labourers turned into the fields stripped to their shirts, and proud to show themselves in whole linen.

In October Richard Cumberland and his family

returned to town, when his comedy was brought out with fair success at Covent Garden. Horace Walpole says in a letter to George Montagu, dated Dec. 14, 1769: 'Mr. Cumberland has produced a comedy called *The Brothers*. It acts well, but reads ill, though I can distinguish strokes of Mr. Bentley in it.' George Montagu says in his reply: 'I am glad it [the comedy] succeeds, as he has a tribe of children, and is almost as extravagant as his uncle, and a much better man.' Garrick was among the audience, and an unexpected compliment[1] to himself in the epilogue led him to cultivate a friendship with the author. Cumberland was now fairly launched on his career as a playwright, a career which he pursued till near the end of his long life. In his old age he declared that he had never written a line to puff or praise himself, or to decry a brother dramatist. 'I have stood for the corps wherein I have enrolled myself, and never disguised my colours by abandoning the cause of the legitimate comedy to whose service I am sworn, and in whose defence I have kept the field during nearly half a century, till at last I have survived all true national taste, and lived to see buffoonery, spectacle, and puerility so effectually triumph, that now to be repulsed from the stage is to be recommended to the closet, and to be applauded by the theatre is little else than a passport to the puppet show.'

The following summer, probably that of 1770, Cumberland visited Clonfert again; and in a tiny closet at the back of the palace, his view bounded by a peat-

[1] 'Who but hath seen the celebrated strife
Where Reynolds calls the canvas into life,
And 'twixt the tragic and the comic Muse
Courted of both, and dubious where to choose,
The immortal actor stands.'

stack, began to plan and compose his most successful comedy, *The West Indian.* His idea in writing this play, he tells us, was to introduce characters who had usually been exhibited on the stage as the butts for abuse or ridicule, and to endeavour to present them in such a light as might reconcile the world to them and them to the world. 'I thereupon looked into society,' he continues, 'for the purpose of discovering such as were the victims of its national, professional, or religious prejudices; and out of these I determined to select and form heroes for my future dramas.' The characters of a West Indian and an Irishman were chosen for the play on which he was then at work, the former being described as extravagant and dissipated, but also honourable and generous, while 'the Irishman I put into the Austrian service, and exhibited him in the livery of a foreign master, in order to impress on the audience the melancholy and impolitic alternative to which his religious disqualifications had reduced him—a gallant and loyal subject of his natural king. I gave him courage, for it belongs to his nation; I endowed him with honour, for it belongs to his profession; and I made him proud, jealous, and susceptible, for such the exiled veteran will be who lives by the earnings of his sword, and is not allowed to draw it in the service of that country which gave him birth, and which he was bound to defend.' This Major O'Flaherty was the father of a large family of stage Irishmen, of whom Sir Lucius O'Trigger is the most celebrated. It may be permissible to wonder whether the principal character was intended as a compliment to the West Indian, Samuel Martin, who was Secretary to the Treasury when Lord Bute was First Lord. When Lord Bute resigned in 1768, Horace

Walpole says, 'Young Martin, who is older than I am, is named my successor [as Usher of the Exchequer]; but I intend he shall wait some years.'

The neighbourhood of Clonfert seems to have offered plenty of opportunity for the study of national character in every rank. A near neighbour was Lord Eyre of Eyre Court, an eccentric gentleman who had never been out of Ireland, nor even far away from his own house. 'His Lordship's day,' we read, 'was so apportioned as to give the afternoon by far the largest share of it, during which, from an early dinner to the hour of rest, he never left his chair, nor did the claret ever quit the table. This did not produce inebriety, for it was sipping rather than drinking that filled up his time, and this mechanical process of gradually moistening the human clay was carried on with very little aid from conversation. He lived in an enviable independence as to reading; indeed, he had no books. Not one of the windows of his castle was made to open, but luckily he had no liking for fresh air, and the consequences may be better conceived than described.'

Lord Eyre, who had a great passion for cock-fighting, and whose cocks were the crack of all Ireland, engaged Cumberland in a main. 'I was a perfect novice in that elegant sport,' he explains, 'but the gentlemen from all parts sent me in their contributions, and I won every battle but one.' The rival parties got gloriously drunk afterwards, and Cumberland slipped away, having first begged a young officer among Lord Eyre's guests to endeavour to keep the peace, and above all things to avoid the introduction of party politics. The officer so far forgot his undertaking, when in his cups, as to ask the company to drink to the glorious and immortal

memory of King William. This was a mortal affront to one section of the party, and a duel in the early dawn was the immediate consequence. Fortunately, the shots did no execution—probably the combatants' hands were shaky—and the affair ended without bloodshed.

Fairies were frequent visitors to this part of the country, and it was not the peasant class alone that believed in them. Richard, riding out with his father one day, met the Roman Catholic priest of the parish. The Bishop begged his colleague to caution his flock against the idle superstition of the fairies, when the good man confessed that he was himself far from being a sceptic as to the fact of their existence. Dr. Cumberland thereupon turned the conversation to the padre's steed, which was in sorry condition. Its owner explained that, having a mighty deal of work and very little pay, he could not afford to feed his beast as well as he would like. 'Why, then, brother,' said the Bishop, ''tis fit that I, who have the advantage of you in both respects, should mount you on a better horse, and furnish you with provender to maintain him.' Orders were at once given for a stock of hay to be made ready at the priest's cabin, and in a few days a steady horse was purchased and presented to him. No wonder that the good Bishop was popular with Catholics and Protestants alike. One of his labourers trudged the whole way to Dublin to ask his lordship's blessing, while another threw himself out of a tree for joy at the Bishop's arrival, and was laid up with a bruised hip for several months.

The West Indian was brought out by Garrick at Drury Lane, and had the unusual run of twenty-eight nights. From his author's nights Cumberland received very large profits; the theatrical manager who brought

the sums to his house in a huge bag of gold, declaring that he had never paid any author so much at one time. Lord Lyttelton observed that the comedy would have been a faultless composition if one of the characters had not listened behind a screen. 'I consider listening,' he said, 'a resource never to be allowed in any pure drama, nor ought any good author to make use of it.' Cumberland urged that there was plenty of precedent for it; and alluding to this point in his *Memoirs*, declares that if Aristotle had written a whole chapter professedly against screens, and Jerry Collier had edited it with notes and illustrations, he personally would not have placed Lady Teazle out of earshot to have saved his ears from the pillory. This, from Cumberland, is a rare tribute to a brother dramatist's genius, which must be set against a good deal of envy and uncharitableness.

The success of *The West Indian* brought the author a numerous literary acquaintance, and it is evident that his house was an agreeable one. He was happy in his domestic life; and though at this time he had six children under six, 'they were,' he tells us, 'by no means trained and educated with that laxity of discipline which renders so many houses terrible to the visitor, and almost justifies Foote in his professed veneration for the character of Herod. My young ones stood like little soldiers to be reviewed by those who wished to have them drawn up for inspection, and were dismissed, like soldiers, at a word.'[1] Cumberland explains that he was careful to study the proper assortment of his guests, two of the most attractive among whom were Garrick and

[1] Mrs. Thrale told Fanny Burney that Mr. Cumberland was a very amiable man in his own house, but as a father mighty simple, which accounted for the ridiculous conduct and manners of his daughters.

Soame Jenyns. The latter, who was one of the Commissioners of the Board of Trade, published a treatise on the *Art of Dancing*, an *Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil*, and other forgotten works. His prose style was commended by Burke, and regarded by his contemporaries generally as a model of ease and elegance. According to Cumberland, Jenyns was an exceptionally unattractive-looking man, with eyes that protruded like a lobster's, and a figure of the exact mould of an ill-made pair of stiff stays; yet he innocently remarked, when Gibbon published his *History*, that he wondered anybody so ugly could write a book!

'This expert in dancing and metaphysics,' writes Cumberland, 'was the man who bore his part in all societies with the most even temper and undisturbed hilarity of all the good companions whom I ever knew. He came into your house at the very moment you had put upon your card; and he dressed himself to do your party honour in all the colours of the jay. . . . His pleasantry was of a sort peculiar to himself; it harmonised with everything; it was like the bread to your dinner; you did not perhaps make it the whole or the principal part of your meal, but it was an admirable and wholesome auxiliary to your other viands. Soame Jenyns told you no long stories, engrossed not much of your attention, and was not angry with those that did. He wrote verses upon dancing, and prose upon the origin of evil, yet he was a very indifferent metaphysician, and a worse dancer. Ill-nature and personality, with the exception of the lines upon Johnson,[1] I never heard fall from his lips.'

[1] The epitaph, of which the two best-known lines are:—

'Boswell and Thrale, retailers of his wit,
Will tell you how he wrote and talked and coughed and spit.'

Another amusing new acquaintance was Foote, of whom the following characteristic anecdote is told :—

'I went with Garrick to visit Foote at Parson's Green. Sir Robert Fletcher made the fourth at dinner. After about two hours, Sir Robert rose to depart; there was an unlucky screen that hid the door, behind which Sir Robert hid himself; but Foote, supposing him gone, instantly began to play off his ridicule at the expense of the departed guest. I must confess it was a way he had, and just now a very unlucky way; for Sir Robert, bolting from behind the screen, cried out, "I am not gone, Foote; spare me till I am out of hearing; and now with your leave I will stay till these gentlemen depart, and then you shall amuse me at their cost, as you have amused them at mine." A remonstrance of this sort was an electric shock that could not be parried. This event, however, which deprived Foote of all his presence of mind, gave occasion to Garrick to display his genius and good-nature in their brightest lustre. I never saw him in a more amiable light; the infinite address and ingenuity which he exhibited in softening the enraged guest, and reconciling him to pass over an affront as gross as could be well put upon a man, were at once the most comic and the most complete I ever witnessed. Why was not James Boswell present to have recorded the dialogue and action of the scene?'

Cumberland now became a member of a pleasant artistic and literary coterie that used to dine on stated days at the British Coffee-house. Among the members were Goldsmith, Reynolds, Garrick, 'Ossian' Macpherson, and Dr. Beattie. Of Goldsmith, his vanity, his whimsicality, his good-heartedness and frivolity, our author gives much the same account as others of his con-

temporaries. 'That he was a poet there is no doubt,' is his verdict. 'But the paucity of his verses does not allow us to rank him in that high station where his genius might have carried him. There must be bulk, variety, and grandeur of design to constitute a first-rate poet. *The Deserted Village*, *The Traveller*, and *The Hermit* are all beautiful specimens, but they are only birds' eggs on a string, and eggs of small birds too. . . . Distress drove Goldsmith upon undertakings neither congenial with his studies nor worthy of his talents. I remember him, when in his chambers in the Temple he showed me the beginning of his *Animated Nature*, it was with a sigh, such as genius draws when hard necessity diverts it from its bent to drudge for bread, and talk of birds and beasts and creeping things, which Pidcock's showman would have done as well.' This passage throws a lurid light upon the estimation in which the study of natural history was held in the last century, and reminds the reader of the Rev. Edward Topsell's dedication to his *History of Four-footed Beasts and Serpents*, in which he apologises as a priest for devoting his talents to so frivolous a subject as zoology.

Cumberland knew Johnson well, and draws an unusually pleasing portrait of the great man. He doubts whether Johnson would have been such a champion of literature had he not been driven on to glory with the bayonet of sharp necessity pointed at his back; but rather inclines to believe that if fortune had turned him into a field of clover, he would have lain down and rolled in it. 'I respected him highly,' he proceeds, 'and loved him sincerely. It was never my chance to see him in those moments of moroseness and ill-humour that are

imputed to him.[1] . . . In quickness of intellect few ever equalled him, in profundity of erudition many may have surpassed him. I do not think he had a pure and classical taste, nor was apt to be pleased with the best authors, but as a general scholar he ranks very high. . . . He was always in perfectly good trim, and with the ladies whom he generally met he had nothing of the slovenly philosopher about him; he fed heartily, but not voraciously, and was extremely courteous in his commendations of any dish that pleased his palate. . . .

'At the tea-table he made considerable demands upon his favourite beverage; and I remember when Sir Joshua Reynolds at my house reminded him that he had drunk eleven cups, he replied; "Sir, I did not count your glasses of wine; why should you number up my cups of tea?" And then laughing in perfect good-humour, he added: "Sir, I should have released the lady from any further trouble if it had not been for your remark; but you have reminded me that I want one of the dozen, and I must request Mrs. Cumberland to round up my number." When he saw the readiness and complacency with which my wife obeyed his call, he turned a kind and cheerful look on her, and said: "Madam, I must tell you for your comfort you have escaped much better than a certain lady did a while ago, upon whose patience I intruded greatly more than I have done on yours; but the lady asked me for no other purpose than to make a zany of me, and set me gabbling to a parcel of people I knew nothing of; so, Madam, I had my revenge

[1] 'Mr. Cumberland assures me,' says Boswell, 'that he was always treated with great courtesy by Dr. Johnson, who in his *Letters* to Mrs. Thrale thus speaks of that learned, ingenious, and accomplished gentleman: "The want of company is an inconvenience, but Mr. Cumberland is a million."'

on her, for I swallowed five-and-twenty cups of her tea, and did not treat her with as many words." I can only say' (adds Cumberland) 'that my wife would have made tea for him as long as the New River could have supplied her with water.'

On the first night of *She Stoops to Conquer* the whole Society dined together, and went afterwards to the theatre in order to lend their support to Goldsmith. According to our author's account, Adam Drummond, who had a sonorous and contagious laugh, was posted in an upper box; and as he could not be trusted to laugh in the right place, Cumberland sat at his elbow to give him the signal. 'Having begun to laugh where he found no joke, he began to fancy that he found a joke in almost everything that was said, so that some of his bursts were *malapropos*. These were dangerous moments, for the pit began to take umbrage; but we carried our play through, and triumphed not only over Colman's (the manager) judgment, but our own.' The story reads circumstantially enough, but doubt has since been thrown upon its accuracy. According to the papers of the day, Cumberland, instead of sitting by Drummond's side, and telling him when to laugh, was visibly chagrined by the success of the piece, and as wretched as any man could be.

It was now suggested to Cumberland that he should do for Scotland what he had done for Ireland, and bring the character of a North Briton on the stage. Accordingly, he studied the language and idiosyncrasies of a Highland servant at a friend's house, and presently produced *The Fashionable Lover*, in which a certain Colin Macleod plays a prominent part. The play was less successful than *The West Indian*, though the dramatist preferred it to his earlier work. 'I should be inclined

to say,' he writes, 'that it was a drama of a moral, grave, and tender cast, inasmuch as I discovered in it sentiments laudably directed against national prejudice, breach of trust, seduction, and the general dissipation of the time.' This description does not sound exactly promising as applied to a comedy, and it is small wonder that some of the critics fell foul of the piece. The author was foolish enough to make serious appeals against the judgment of those whom he admitted to be cavillers and slanderers below notice, and attacked the critics in the advertisement to the published edition of his work, a proceeding which induced Garrick to nick-name him 'The Man without a Skin.' Probably Cumberland had inherited some of the pugnacity of 'slashing Bentley'; and indeed he had already taken up the cudgels against a pamphlet by Bishop Lowth, which, though professedly aimed againt Warburton, contained an onslaught upon Bentley. Cumberland's reply in defence of his grandfather went through two editions, and was left unanswered by Lowth.

The death of Goldsmith in April 1774 was followed by the publication of his poem *Retaliation*, to which Cumberland alludes with gratitude for the lines bestowed on himself. The poem owed its inception to a literary party at the St. James's Coffee-house, where it was suggested that extempore epitaphs should be written upon the persons present. Garrick and Dr. Bernard, Dean of Derry, both wrote comic epitaphs upon Goldsmith, which Sir Joshua illustrated with a caricature of the poet. Observing that Goldsmith appeared a little sore, Cumberland wrote a serious and complimentary epitaph, which was the more pleasing for being entirely unexpected. At the next meeting Goldsmith produced his

own epitaphs as they stand in the posthumously printed *Retaliation*. The lines relating to Cumberland may be quoted here, if only to show that our hero was sometimes grateful for small mercies :—

> 'Here Cumberland lies, having acted his parts,
> The Terence of England, the mender of hearts ;
> A flattering painter who made it his care
> To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are ;
> His gallants are faultless, his women divine,
> And comedy wonders at being so fine :
> Like a tragedy queen he has dizened her out,
> Or rather like tragedy giving a rout.
> His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd
> Of virtues and feelings that folly grows proud,
> And coxcombs alike in their failings alone,
> Adopting his portraits, are pleased with their own ;
> Say, where has our poet this malady caught?
> Or wherefore his characters thus without fault?
> Say, was it that vainly directing his view
> To find out men's virtues, and finding them few,
> Quite sick of pursuing each troublesome elf,
> He grew lazy at last, and drew from himself?'

Of Sheridan, from the first appearance of *The Rivals* in 1775, Cumberland is said to have been uncontrollably jealous. The story goes that the author of *The West Indian* was present at the first night of *The School for Scandal*, and might have sat for the portrait of Uncle Oliver by reason of his 'villainous disinheriting countenance.' When this was reported to Sheridan, the wit observed that this behaviour showed ingratitude, for that when he went to see Cumberland's tragedy, *The Carmelite*, he laughed from beginning to end. Sheridan revenged himself by pillorying Cumberland in the character, which all his contemporaries recognised, of Sir

Fretful Plagiary.[1] It will be remembered that Sneer says of Sir Fretful, before the entry of the latter: 'He's as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six-and-thirty; and then the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion of his works can only be exceeded by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations. . . . Then his affected contempt of all the newspaper strictures, though at the same time he is the sorest man alive, and shrinks like scorched parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism; yet is he so covetous of popularity that he had rather be abused than not mentioned at all.' Sir Fretful in his first scene is made to exclaim: 'Newspapers! Sir, they are the most villainous, licentious, abominable, infernal——Not that I ever read them. No, I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper. . . . Their abuse is, in fact, the best panegyric. I like it of all things. An author's reputation is only in danger from their support.'

Cumberland seems to have earned Walpole's lasting dislike by his inability to appreciate Gray's *Letters*, although he wrote an ode in praise of Gray's *Odes*, 'charitably no doubt,' says Horace, 'to make the latter taken notice of. Garrick read it the other night at Mr. Beauclerk's, who comprehended so little what it was about that he desired Garrick to read it backwards, and try if it would not be equally good; he did, and it was.' Three months later, in March 1776, Walpole returns to the same

[1] Fanny Burney thought that Cumberland was intensely jealous of her fame, and observes: 'This poor man is so wonderfully narrow-minded in his authorship capacity, that though otherwise good, humane, and generous, he changes countenance at either seeing or hearing of any other writer.'

subject in a letter to Mason, observing: 'Mr. Cumberland has published two Odes, in which he has been so bountiful as to secure immortality for Gray, for Dr. James's Powder, and indeed for his own Odes, for Father Time would fall asleep before he could read them through. There is a dedication to Romney the painter that hisses with the pertness of a dull man.'[1]

Fresh cause of offence was given to the Lord of Strawberry Hill by a note to the *Life of Dr. Bentley* (in the *Biographia Brittanica*), communicated by Cumberland, who, says Horace, 'giving an account, too, of his uncle, Mr. Bentley's writings, *because* the latter has the honour of being related to *him*, says, speaking of *Philodamus*,[2] "it was esteemed by the late eminent poet, Mr. Gray, to be one of the most capital poems in the English language. *Accordingly*, Mr. Gray wrote a laboured and elegant commentary upon it, which abounds with wit, and is one of his best productions." I say nothing of the excellent application of the word *accordingly*, nor of the false English in the last *which*, which should refer to *it*, and not, as he means it should, to *commentary*, nor to the pedantic and Bentleian epithets of *laboured* and *elegant*, terms far below anything of Gray's writing, and only worthy of prefaces written by witlings who are jealous of and yet compliment one another; but *laboured* I dare to swear it was not, and for the wit of it, though probably true,

[1] 'Sir Joshua mentioned Mr. Cumberland's *Odes*, which were just published. Johnson: "Why, sir, they would have been thought as good as Odes commonly are if Cumberland had not put his name to them; but a name immediately draws censure unless it be a name that bears down all before it."'—Boswell.

[2] A poem of Richard Bentley's.

Cumberland, of all men living, is the worst judge, who told me it was a pity Gray's *Letters* were printed, as they disgraced him. I should be glad to see what this jackadandy calls a commentary, and which I suppose was a familiar letter, and perhaps a short one; for Gray could express in ten lines what the fry of scholiasts would make twenty times as long as the text! . . . Mr. Cumberland has written a *laboured* and *elegant drama*, which by the title I concluded was to be very comical, and more likely to endanger the celebrity of Aristophanes than of any living wight. It is called *The Widow of Delphi, or the Descent of the Deities*, and I am told is to demolish the reputation of *Caractacus*. A *précis* of the subject was published two days ago in the *Public Advertiser* for the benefit of the *illiterati*, who are informed that poor Shakespeare was mistaken in calling the spot of the scene *Delphos* instead of *Delphi*. I hope there will be a dance of Cyclops*es* (I don't know whether commentators will allow that termination), hammering, by the order of Venus, armour to keep the author invulnerable, who has hitherto been terribly bruised in all his combats with mortals.'

PART II

The next few years of Cumberland's life may be passed over rapidly, since they contain no events of special importance. His father, transferred to the Bishopric of Kilmore, died shortly after entering upon his new see, and was soon followed by his wife. There was now a new

chief at the Board of Trade in the person of Lord George Germaine, afterwards Lord Sackville, the hero, in a contrary sense, of Minden. Between Lord George and Cumberland grew up a steady friendship, which was only broken by the death of the former in 1785. The duties of his office being presumably light, Cumberland continued his dramatic work, the *Choleric Man* being brought out with success by Garrick, though the malevolence of the public prints suffered no abatement, which is hardly surprising, since the playwright lost no opportunity of retorting upon his critics. A dedication to Detraction was prefixed to the printed copies of this comedy; and Tom Murphy observed that if the reader wished to have a true idea of the *Choleric Man*, he would find it in the dedication.

After Garrick retired from the stage, Sheridan brought out Cumberland's tragedy, *The Battle of Hastings*, at Drury Lane. His adaptation of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* had previously been produced by Garrick and coldly received. Walpole, however, writing to Lady Ossory in December 1771, says: 'There is a new *Timon of Athens*, altered from Shakespeare by Mr. Cumberland, and marvellously well done, for he has caught the manners and diction of the original so exactly that I think it is full as bad a play as it was before he corrected it.' Truly, a back-handed kind of compliment!

The Cumberland children were now growing up; the four boys at Westminster, the two girls about to be introduced to the world. It was their father's wish that one or more of his sons should enter at Trinity and adopt the studious life that he himself had so unwillingly renounced. But those were stirring times; the War of Rebellion had broken out in America, and

in Europe we had the Spanish quarrel on our hands. The Cumberland boys saw no charm in the student's career when the trumpets were calling to the youth of England to fight their country's battles, and when the sound of shot and shell was ever in their ears. Two of them went into the army and two into the navy; the second son, George, being killed at the siege of Charleston.

The year 1780 was an eventful and, as it proved, a disastrous year for the Cumberland family. Our hero had discovered, through a secret channel, certain things passing between the agents of France and Spain, which led him to believe that the Family Compact might be broken, and that negotiations might be opened through the Spanish Minister, Florida Blanca, with a view to arranging a peace between Spain and England. So persuaded was he of the feasibility of the scheme, that he made application to the Government for permission to attempt this delicate and dangerous task.

In the result he was allowed to repair to the port of Lisbon, where he was bidden to remain till the Abbé Hussey, the Irish chaplain of his Catholic Majesty, proceeded to Aranjuez to reconnoitre. According to the report that he received from Hussey, Cumberland was to be governed in the alternative of going into Spain to carry out his mission, or returning to England by the ship that had brought him out. He was to take with him his wife and daughters, in order to give colour to the pretence of travelling into Italy in search of health on a passport through the Spanish dominions. It will readily be understood that this mission meant fame and fortune if it succeeded, but something not far short of disgrace if it failed, even though the failure

should not be the fault of the unaccredited ambassador of peace.

The party started from Portsmouth in the frigate *Milford* on 22nd April 1780, but were detained in the Channel by unfavourable winds until the 2nd of May. When at last they got clear away, the sea ran mountains high, and broke over the low and leaky frigate, till one at least of the passengers thought that the ship could not possibly live out such a gale. When the wind abated, a new danger appeared in the shape of a French frigate, which was attacked by the *Milford*, and after a bloody fight surrendered to the English ship. In these days it seems strange to read of a naval fight taking place with ladies on board one of the combatant vessels; but Cumberland writes as though the incident were a mere matter of course, and rather apologises for describing the affair, which, he says, would seem but trifling to a naval reader. Yet, in the course of the action the French ship lost her captain, second captain, and fifty men killed or wounded, while the *Milford* had three men killed and four wounded. That the 'handy man' was made of the same stuff in those days as in these may be gathered from Cumberland's account of the battle.

'When I witnessed the despatch with which a ship is cleared for action,' he says, 'the silence and good order so strictly observed, and the commands so distinctly given, I was impressed with the greatest respect for the discipline and precision observed on our ships of war.' One of the marines had his arm shattered, but refused to leave the quarter-deck till the action was over; when going down to have his wound dressed he met Miss Cumberland coming up, and gallantly presented the injured arm to assist her. She, noticing that he flinched

upon her touching it, said, 'Sergeant, I am afraid you are wounded'; to which he replied, 'To be sure I am, madam, else I should not have been so bold as to have crossed you on the stairs.' The shifting of the prisoners was a task of danger, as they were very drunk, but at last the *Milford* was able to proceed on her voyage in company with her prize. Cumberland tells us that he wrote a sea-song descriptive of the fight; but although there were some good singers among the crew, their delicacy would not allow the song to be heard until their prisoners were removed, after which they sang it every night.

After being chased by a French battle-ship, which she managed to outsail, the *Milford* arrived safely in the mouth of the Tagus, and for the next few weeks the travellers stayed at Lisbon while the Abbé Hussey proceeded to Aranjuez to see whether the stars were propitious for the prosecution of a peace mission. Cumberland's latest instructions were to return to England or to advance into Spain according as that country should, or should not, make the cession of Gibraltar the basis of a negotiation. The Abbé had special orders to be explicit on this point; but in the course of time a letter arrived from him which gave no precise information, though on the whole he encouraged his colleague to proceed. Cumberland now found himself in a dilemma. He had no time to communicate with his own Government, and probably his wisest course would have been to return home at once. But his ambition was too strong for his prudence, and he decided to go on with his mission, though he knew that if it was unsuccessful he alone would be blamed.

Having got across the frontier with considerable difficulty, the party found a coach and six mules awaiting

them at Badajos, and on June 18 arrived at Aranjuez. Here the envoy was met with an account of the Gordon riots in London, which news all but extinguished his prospects of success at the outset. Apart from this, all had promised well. Spain was on delicate terms with France, she had recently received a check from Rodney, and Gibraltar had been relieved. But the recent insurrections in Madrid lent undue importance to the riots in London, Florida Blanca professing to believe that the downfall of the British capital was imminent, and that the American rebellion was spreading to England. Cumberland, knowing nothing of the true state of affairs, could only express his conviction that the tumult would be promptly quashed, and in a few days learned that his prophecy had been fulfilled. He now tried by every means in his power to bring back the negotiation to the stage it had reached before the report of the riots had arrived at Madrid; but during a stay of nearly a year no moment occurred so favourable to the business as that of which ill-fortune had deprived him at the outset.

Towards the end of June the family removed to Madrid; and while Cumberland awaited the answer of Government to his first despatch, the capture of our great East and West Indian convoys by the Spanish fleet, together with other influences that were brought to bear upon Spain, changed the general outlook for the worse. When the despatch arrived, it proved unsatisfactory. Cumberland was expressly forbidden to enter upon any negotiations in which even the name of Gibraltar was mentioned, while there was an implied reproof for his conduct of the business as far as it had gone. Meanwhile, the Court had removed to San Ildefonso, and thither Cumberland followed to attend upon the

Minister, from whom, however, he could only obtain evasive replies; while Gibraltar, like King Charles's head in Mr. Dick's narrative, forced its way into every draft treaty. The Abbé Hussey was sent home as the bearer of fresh propositions, and our hero, unwilling to give up his mission, returned to Madrid to await events.

Apart from political vexations and the surveillance of spies, the stay in Spain was pleasant enough. Whatever might be the attitude of the Minister, the Cumberlands were graciously entertained by the Royal Family, who invited them to the Escurial, showed them the art treasures of the palace, and ordered engravings to be made of any pictures that they might specially admire. The King sent a couple of his finest horses as a present to his avowed enemy George III., and offered to supply blocks of the finest marble for the building or ornamenting of any of the royal palaces in England. Walking one day through the Escurial, Cumberland surprised the King in his bedroom. His Majesty was very poorly lodged, in a room furnished with a small camp bedstead and faded curtains, but by his bedside hung the *Mater Dolorosa* of Titian, which he carried about with him as his private altar-piece. He showed his visitor some small American deer which he kept under a netting, and a little green monkey, undesirable room-fellows, one would think, either for kings or commoners.

Among the chief friends of the family at Madrid was Count Kaunitz, the Imperial Ambassador,[1] who fell desperately in love with the elder Miss Cumberland, and, being rejected by her, died shortly after her departure for England. Another lover was the Empress-Queen's

[1] Son of the famous Austrian Minister, who was called 'Le Cocher de Europe.'

gallant General Pallavicini, who tried to win the hand first of the elder and then of the younger daughter, but with no success. The Miss Cumberlands seem to have made a sensation in Spain by riding in the English fashion, and we are told that the princesses asked leave to take the pattern of their habits.[1]

The theatre, though small and dark, was celebrated at that time for its wonderful gypsy actress, La Tiranna. This woman, having heard of the high expectations that the English playwright had formed of her genius, sent to desire that he would not come to the theatre till she let him know, as she wished him to see her at her best. He was at length permitted to witness her performance of a tragedy, in the course of which she murdered her infant children, and exhibited them dead on the stage; while she, sitting on the bare floor between them, presented such a high-wrought picture of hysteric frenzy, 'laughing wild amidst severest woe,' as placed her, in his judgment, at the very summit of her art. 'In fact,' he continues, 'I have no conception that the powers of acting can be carried higher; and such was the effect upon the audience that, while the spectators in the pit having caught a kind of sympathetic frenzy from the scene, were rising up in a tumultuous manner, the word was given out by authority for letting the curtain fall, and a catastrophe, probably too strong for exhibition, was not allowed to be completed.'

The expenses of this actress were defrayed by the

[1] Writing from Brighton in 1779, Fanny Burney says that the Miss Cumberlands 'are reckoned the flashers of the place, yet everybody laughs at them for their airs, affectations, tonish graces, and impertinences.' They are reported (by Mrs. Thrale) to have been hissed out of a playhouse on account of the extreme height of their feathers.

Duke of Osuna, Commander of the Spanish Guards, who found it indispensable for his honour to have the finest woman in Spain on his pension-list, but thought it unnecessary to be acquainted with her, and at this time had never even seen her. He had once accepted an invitation to take a cup of chocolate at her house, but fell asleep on the way; and not waking when his carriage stopped at her door, was driven home again, having slept away his curiosity to see the lady who was nominally under his protection.

The peace negotiations still hung fire, intrigues were going on between Spain and Russia, and at last Cumberland became convinced that his mission was hopeless.[1] He received his recall in February 1781. Before his departure Florida Blanca informed him that the King of Spain had been so entirely satisfied with his conduct, that, apprehending he would find himself forsaken by his employers, he offered him full compensation for his expenses. Cumberland refused the offer, having come into Spain, as he said, relying solely upon the goodwill of his own Government, pledged to him through the Secretary of State. He had received a promise that all bills drawn by him upon his banker in London would be instantly replaced to his credit as long as they were accompanied by a letter of advice to the Secretary. Secure in this promise, Cumberland set out on the return journey on March 24 with his family, increased by the

[1] Horace Walpole has a sneer at 'Mr. Cumberland's *successful* negotiations in Spain, where he stayed begging peace till Gibraltar was battered to the ground. I hope he will write an Ode himself on that treaty he did not make; and, like Pindar, fill it with the genealogy of the mule on which he ambled from the Prado to the Escurial, and when I am a mule I will read it.'—From the letter to Mason, dated June 14, 1781.

birth of an infant daughter, in two Spanish coaches, each drawn by six mules, with outriders. In this fashion they were to travel as far as Bayonne, a journey that took them seventeen days to perform, and was not accomplished without adventures.

At Burgos, Cumberland found a 'parcel' of British seamen, prisoners of war, whom the Bishop of Burgos in his zeal for making converts had taken into his list of pensioners as true proselytes. The sailors begged their countryman to let them make their way out of Spain under his protection; and the bishop, who was heartily sick of his converts, gladly gave his consent to their departure, on the understanding that a like number of Spanish prisoners should be liberated. At the next stopping-place Cumberland offered his snuff-box to a grave, elderly man who had sat down beside him. The stranger, looking steadily in his face, took a small portion of the snuff, and said, 'I am not afraid, sir, of trusting myself to you whom I know to be an Englishman, and a person in whose honour I may perfectly repose. But there is death concealed in many a man's snuff-box, and I would seriously advise you on no account to take a pinch from the box of any stranger who may offer it to you; and if you have done that already, I sincerely hope that no such consequences as I allude to will result from your want of caution.' The poisoned snuff, he further explained, always operated on the brain.

This conversation returned to Cumberland's mind when, on reaching Bayonne, he was seized with excruciating pains in the head, and for three wretched weeks was confined to his bed in continual delirium. To add to his troubles, it was found that, as none of the

bills drawn upon his bankers had been honoured by the Treasury, his credit was completely exhausted, and he was liable to arrest for debt at this stage of his journey. Fortunately, he was able to tide over this difficulty by borrowing five hundred pounds of Marchetti, his friend and fellow-traveller. As soon as the invalid was sufficiently recovered, the journey was resumed with post-horses to Paris, and thence *viâ* Ostend and Margate to London. On arriving at home, Cumberland discovered that from the day that he left England to the day of his return, a period of fourteen months, not a single shilling had been replaced to his banking account by the Treasury, though he had attached his letter of advice to every draft that he had made. Except for a thousand pounds advanced to him on setting out, his private fortune had supplied the whole of the expenses, which amounted to between four and five thousand pounds.

A long memorial to Lord North, setting forth his claims in detail, received no reply; but Cumberland was convinced that his lordship had never read it, or he could hardly have disregarded such just demands. The end of the matter was that no compensation was ever received, and the unfortunate envoy had sacrificed fortune, and in some sort reputation, for nothing. To quote his own words: 'I wearied the door of Lord North till his very servants drove me from it. I withstood the offer of a benevolent monarch [the King of Spain], whose munificence would have rescued me, and I embraced ruin in my own country to preserve my honour as a subject of it; selling every acre of my own hereditary estate, jointured on my wife, who generously concurred in the sacrifice which my improvident reliance upon the faith of Government compelled me to make.'

When Lord North's Ministry was overturned in 1782, the Board of Trade was abolished, and Cumberland, then Secretary, was set adrift upon a compensation which represented less than half his former salary. At the same time his friend and chief, Lord George Germaine, was called to the Upper House under the title of Viscount Sackville. The ex-secretary now retired with his family to Tunbridge Wells, where he spent the next twenty years of his life, devoting himself with a fatal industry to the ceaseless production of plays, novels, essays, and poems. Tunbridge he regarded as an ideal place of residence, observing that 'it is not altogether a public place, yet it is at no period of the year a solitude. A reading man may command his hours of study, and a social man will find full satisfaction for his philanthropy. Its vicinity to the capital brings quick intelligence of all that passes there: the morning papers reach us before the hour of dinner, and the evening ones before breakfast next day.' For the men of Kent he conceived a great admiration; and in his novel *Arundel* described them as being 'distinguishable above their fellows for the beauty of their persons, the dignity of their sentiments, the courage of their hearts, and the elegance of their manners.'

In his new leisure Cumberland cultivated his garden with lover-like devotion, finding a little friendly spot in which his laurels flourished, 'the only one yet discovered'; and collected materials for the essays which he afterwards published under the title of *The Observer*. He had already brought out his *Anecdotes of Eminent Painters in Spain*, of which work the implacable Walpole observes, in a letter to Mason, dated April 13,

1782: 'Cumberland's book is called *Anecdotes of Spanish Painters*. To show he has been in Spain (of which he boasts, though with little reason) he spells every name (that is not Spanish) as they do; the Fleming Rubens he calls (to Englishmen) *Pedro Pablo* Rubens, and Vitruvius *Viturbis*. Two pages are singularly delectable; one of them was luckily criticised this morning in the *Public Advertiser*, and saves me the trouble of transcribing; the other is a *chef d'œuvre* of proud puppyism. Speaking of the subjection of Spain to the Carthaginians, he says: "When Carthage was her mistress it is not easy to conceive a situation more degrading for a noble people than to bear the yoke of *mercantile* republicans, and do homage at the shopboards of upstart demagogues." Would not one think it was a Vere or a Percy who wrote this impertinent condolence, and not a little *commis*? He goes on: "Surely it is in human nature *to prefer* the tyranny of the most absolute despot that ever wore a crown to the mercenary and imposing insults of a trader. *Who* would not rather appeal to a *court* than a counting-house?" A most worthy ejaculation. This in a free country, from a petty scribe in office!'

From his retirement in the country Cumberland still kept in touch with his friends of the literary and artistic world. He attended Garrick's funeral in 1779, where he saw 'old Samuel Johnson standing beside the grave, at the foot of Shakespeare's monument, bathed in tears.' Romney, whom our author was one of the first to encourage, is described as being in art the rival but in nature the very contrast of Reynolds. Shy, studious, contemplative and hypochondriacal, with aspen nerves that every breath could ruffle, he was a man of

Richard Cumberland.
From a Portrait by Romney

few wants and strict economy, with no dislike to money. 'He had opportunities enough to enrich him even to satiety; but he was at once so eager to begin, and so slow in finishing his portraits, that he was for ever disappointed of receiving payment for them by casualties and revolutions in the families they were designed for. So many of his sitters were *killed off*, so many favourite ladies dismissed, so many fond wives divorced, before he would bestow half an hour's pains upon their petticoats, that his unsaleable stock was immense; whilst with a little more regularity and decision he would have more than doubled his fortune.'

Cumberland gives an amusing account of his taking Garrick to Romney's studio in the early and struggling days of the painter's career. 'When I first knew Romney,' he writes, 'he was poorly lodged in Newport Street, and painted at the small price of eight guineas for a three-quarters portrait. I sat to him, and was the first who encouraged him to advance his terms by paying him ten guineas for his performance. I brought Garrick to see his pictures, hoping to interest him in his favour. A large family piece unluckily arrested his attention; a gentleman in a close buckled bob-wig and a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold, together with his wife and children, had taken possession of some yards of canvas, very much as it appeared to their own satisfaction, for they were perfectly amused in a contented abstinence from all thought or action. When Garrick had fixed his lynx eye upon this unfortunate group, he began to put himself in the attitude of the gentleman; and turning to Mr. Romney, "Upon my word, sir," said he, "this is a very regular, well-ordered family, and that is a very bright, well-rubbed mahogany

table at which that motherly good lady is sitting, and this worthy gentleman in the scarlet waistcoat is doubtless a very excellent subject of the State (if all these are his children), but not for your art, Mr. Romney, if you mean to pursue it with that success which I hope will attend you." The modest artist took the hint in good part, and turned his family with their faces to the wall. When Romney produced my portrait, "It was very well," Garrick observed. "That is very like my friend, and that blue coat with a red cape is very like the one he has on, but you must give him something to do; put a pen in his hand, a paper on his table, and make him a poet; if you can set him well down to his writing, who knows but in time he may write something in your praise?"'

Cumberland pays a graceful tribute to the hospitable bookseller, Mr. Dilly, whose table, as he says, was ever open to the patrons and pursuers of literature. 'Under this roof the biographer of Johnson and the pleasant tourist to Corsica and the Hebrides passed many jovial hours; here he has located some of the liveliest scenes and most brilliant passages in his entertaining anecdotes of his friend Samuel Johnson, who yet lives and speaks in them. The book of Boswell is ever, as the year comes round, my winter evening's entertainment. I loved the man; he had great convivial powers, and an inexhaustible fund of good-humour in society. Nobody could detail the spirit of a conversation in the true style and character of the parties more happily than my friend, James Boswell, especially when his vivacity was excited and his heart exhilarated by the circulation of the glass and the grateful odour of a well-broiled lobster.'

To these parties of Dilly's, Cumberland owed many agreeable acquaintances among the younger *littérateurs* of his period, the mention of one of whom seems to bring us down with a jerk to quite recent times. 'I can visit,' he writes, 'the justly admired author of *The Pleasures of Memory*, and find myself with a friend who, together with the brightest genius, possesses elegance of manners and excellence of heart. He tells me he can remember the day of our first meeting at Mr. Dilly's; I also remember it. And though his modest, unassuming nature held back, and shrank from all appearance of ostentation and display of talents, yet even then I take credit for discovering a promise of good things to come, and suspected him of holding secret commerce with the Muse before the proof appeared in the shape of one of the most beautiful and harmonious poems in our language. I do not say he has not ornamented the age he lives in, though he were to stop where he is, but I hope he will not so totally deliver himself over to the arts as to neglect the Muses; and I now publicly call upon Samuel Rogers[1] to answer to his name, and stand forth in the title-page of some future work that shall be in substance greater, in dignity of subject more sublime, and in purity of versification not less charming than the poem aforesaid.'

Among the most successful of the dramas that continued to pour forth from Tunbridge Wells were *The Wheel of Fortune*, *The Mysterious Husband*, *The Natural Son*, and *The Jew*, the latter being inspired by its author's wish to awaken sympathy in the minds of the

[1] Rogers, who was born in 1763 and died in 1855, published his *Pleasures of Memory* in 1792.

public for an oppressed race. He was fortunate in having his pieces presented by such actors as Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Abington, Miss Farren, Henderson, and John Kemble. Cumberland, who apologises for his prolificness on the ground that he 'never did nothing,' and never injured his health nor blunted his senses by intemperance, also wrote numerous sermons, versified fifty of the Psalms, and published a tract called *A Few Plain Reasons for Believing in the Evidence of the Christian Religion*, which is said to have almost persuaded Foote to be a Christian. His *Observer*, which consisted of critical researches, brief accounts of the philosophers and poets, and historical anecdotes, was well received by the critics, his inquiry into the history of the Greek comic poets being considered a contribution of genuine value.

It is curious, perhaps, that the son of a well-read and highly intellectual woman, who had specially declared that he owed everything to his mother's teaching, should have gone out of his way to throw ridicule on learned women. In three of the early numbers of the *Observer* a female pedant is exhibited, who is in danger of forfeiting the hand of a lover unless she burns all her books and engages never again to quote a line of poetry as long as she lives. 'For God's sake,' exclaims the lover, 'what have women to do with learning?' The required promise is given, and shortly after her marriage the lady is asked at a dinner-party to help out a fellow-guest with a quotation from Pope's *Essay on Man*. She remembers the passage perfectly; but catching her husband's eye, is reminded of her promise, and finally becomes so embarrassed that she bursts into tears. 'Nothing ever equalled the tenderness of Henry on that

occasion'—the lady is supposed to be telling the anecdote against herself—'nay, I thought I could discover that he was secretly pleased with the event, as it betrayed a consciousness of former vanities, and seemed to prove that I had repented of them.' In Cumberland's comedy, *The Natural Son*, there is a passage on the same subject, in which, however, the author's bias is less apparent. One lady, assuring another that reading is ruinous to the complexion, observes: 'Dr. Calomel says that a lady, to preserve her beauty, should not even think; he has wrote a book purposely to dissuade people from reading.'—'Every book he writes will do that,' is the witty reply.

A new departure was the production of a novel called *Arundel*, which was rapidly written during a few weeks' stay at Brighton. 'I believe,' says the author, 'that *Arundel* has entertained as many readers, and gained as good a character in the world as most heroes of that description, not excepting the immaculate *Sir Charles Grandison*, in whose company I have never found myself without being puzzled to decide whether I am most edified by his morality or disgusted by his pedantry.'

The success obtained by this first novel, composed with so little labour, determined Cumberland to write a second, upon which he was resolved to bestow his utmost care and diligence. He took Fielding's *Tom Jones* as his model in point of detail, copying its arrangement into chapters and books. He had this work, which he entitled *Henry*, in hand for two years, and bestowed unusual polish and correction upon the style. A few rules which he laid down for his own guidance may be worth the attention of novel-writers even in these enlightened times.

'I would have the story,' he observes, 'carried on in a regular uninterrupted progression of events, without those dull recitals that call the attention off from what is going on, and compel it to look back, perhaps in the very crisis of curiosity, to circumstances antecedent to, and not always materially connected with, the history in hand. I am decidedly averse to episodes and stories within stories, like that of the "Man of the Hill" in *Tom Jones*; and in general all expedients of procrastination which come under the description of mere tricks to torture the curiosity, are, in my opinion, to be very sparingly resorted to, if not totally avoided. Casualties and broken bones, faintings and high fevers, with ramblings of delirium and rhapsodies of nonsense, are perfectly contemptible. I think descriptive writing, properly so distinguished, is very apt to describe nothing, and that landscapes on paper leave no picture in the mind, and only load the page with daubings that in the author's fancy may be sketches after nature, but to the reader's eye offer nothing but confusion.

'A novel, professing itself to the delineation of men and women, as they are in nature, should in general confine itself to the relation of things probable; and though in skilled hands it may be made to touch upon things barely possible, the seldomer it risks those experiments, the better opinion I should have of the contriver's conduct. I do not think quotations ornament it, and poetry must be extremely good before I can allow it is of any use to it. In short, there should be authorities in Nature for everything that is introduced; and the only case I can recollect in which the creator of the fictitious man may and ought to differ from the biographer of the real man is that the former

is bound to deal out his rewards to the virtuous and punishments to the vicious, while the latter has no choice but to adhere to the truth of facts and leave his hero neither better nor worse than he found him. Monsters of cruelty and crime, monks and Zelucos, horrors and thunderings and ghosts are creatures of another region, tools appropriated to another trade, and are only to be handled by dealers in old castles and manufacturers of romance. . . . I am encouraged to believe that in these volumes I have succeeded in what I laboured to effect—a simple, clear, harmonious style; which, taken as a model, may be followed without leading the novice into turgidity or obscurity, holding a middle tone of period, neither swelling into high-flown metaphor, nor sinking into inelegant or unclassical rusticity. Whether or not I have succeeded, I have certainly endeavoured to reform and purify my native language from certain false, pedantic prevalences which were much in fashion when I first became a writer.'

Henry was a fine spirited novel of the Fielding school, but the book apparently was not animated by the vital spark, and is now as dead as most of its fellows. The author was attacked by some of the critics for the unnecessary warmth of his love-scenes; and in reply to these strictures he says: 'If in my zeal to exhibit virtue triumphant over the most tempting allurements, I have painted these allurements in too vivid colours, I am sorry, and ask pardon of all those who thought the moral did not heal the mischief.' Of Cumberland's literary style readers will be able to judge by the extracts here quoted. To the modern ear his language sounds sufficiently dignified, though free from Johnsonian pedantry, and it is passing strange to read that he was

blamed by many of his contemporaries for using a too familiar, gossiping, and colloquial style.

Cumberland gives a pleasant account of his occupations and amusements in his later years. His wife's health never recovered from the fatigues and hardships of the Spanish journey, and she died a few years after the family had settled at Tunbridge Wells. The eldest daughter married Lord Edward Bentinck,[1] brother of the Duke of Portland, while the second made a less fortunate match with a Mr. Badcock, and was early left a widow, in straitened circumstances. But the youngest, Frances, who had been born in Spain, remained at home, and became her father's companion and amanuensis in his old age. Of all his friends and neighbours there was none whom Cumberland loved so well as Lord Sackville, whose place, Stonelands, was within an hour's ride of Tunbridge. An amusing description is given of the life led by the old nobleman in his retirement, which was evidently copied from that of a famous model. However indisposed he might be, he stepped into his breakfast-room every morning at half-past nine with a complacent countenance, and accoutred at all points. He allowed an hour and a half for breakfast, and regularly at eleven took his morning's circuit on horseback. It was his custom to make the tour of his cottages, to ascertain whether the roofs were in repair and the gardens well cropped. To this last it was his tenants' interest to attend; for, continues Cumberland, 'he bought the produce of their fruit-trees, and I have heard him say with great satisfaction that he has paid thirty shillings in a season for strawberries to a poor cottager who paid one shilling annual rent for his house and garden; this was the constant rent at which he let

them to his labourers, and he made them pay it to his steward at his yearly audit, that they might feel themselves in the class of regular tenants, and sit down to the good cheer provided on audit day. . . . Upon the very first report of an illness or accident relief was sent, and the sufferers put upon the sick list, regularly visited, and supplied with all the best medicines administered upon the best advice. It was his custom to buy his cast-off liveries of his own servants, and these he distributed to the old worn-out labourers who turned out daily on the lawn in the Sackville livery to pick up boughs, sweep up leaves, and, in short, do just as much work as served to keep them wholesome and alive. . . .

'On the Sunday morning he appeared in gala, as if dressed for a drawing-room, and marched out his whole family in grand cavalcade to church, leaving only a sentinel at home to mount guard upon the spits. He had a habit of standing up in sermon time to review the congregation and awe the idlers into decorum, that reminded me of Sir Roger de Coverley. Sometimes, when he has been struck with passages in the discourse which he wished to point out to the audience as rules for moral practice worthy to be noticed, he would mark his approbation of them with such cheerful nods and signals of assent to the preacher, as were often more than my muscles could withstand; but when to the total overthrow of all gravity, in his zeal to encourage a very young preacher, I heard him cry out to the Rev. Henry Eatoff in the middle of his sermon, "Well done, Harry!" it was irresistible.'

During his last days Lord Sackville discussed with Cumberland, plainly and temperately, the part he had

taken at the Battle of Minden. 'When I compare,' says the latter, 'what he said to me in his last moments (not two hours before he expired) with what he stated at this conference, if I did not from my heart, and upon the most entire conviction of my reason, solemnly acquit that injured man (now gone to his account) of the opprobrious and false imputations deposed against him at his trial, I must be either brutally ignorant or wilfully obstinate against the truth.' The world in general has now agreed to acquit Lord George of the charge of cowardice, and to sum up its opinion, not only of his action at Minden, but of the trial that followed, in the words, 'Somebody blundered.'

The pen alone did not occupy all our hero's leisure in his latter days, for at one time he spent almost as many hours on the drilling-ground as in the study. 'When,' he writes, 'the consequences arising from the French Revolution had involved us in a war, our country called upon its patriotic volunteers to turn out and assemble in its defence.' Several friends in the neighbourhood volunteered to mount and form themselves into a troop of yeomanry under Cumberland's command; but diffident of his fitness to act as leader, he recommended them to another gentleman, who had served in the regular army. A little later, however, when it was proposed to raise a corps of volunteer infantry, he no longer hesitated to obey the wishes of the loyal and spirited young men who offered to enrol themselves under his command. A regiment of two full companies was raised, and Cumberland received his Majesty's commission to command it with the rank of Major Commandant. He pays a high tribute to the assiduity and discipline of his men, whom he reported as ready and willing to serve in any part of

England. When disbanded at the Peace of Amiens, the regiment presented its commandant with a sword of honour, and begged permission to hold arms and serve without pay.

The renewal of hostilities again put the corps, now raised to four full companies, under arms, and Cumberland was once more placed at their head. He observes, in describing his volunteer experiences, that 'if we take into consideration the prodigious magnitude and extent of the volunteer system, we shall find that it has been productive of more real use and less incidental embarrassment to Government than could have been expected. After the proofs which the capital and the country have given of the spirit, discipline, and good order of their volunteers, both cavalry and infantry, it is not wise or politic or liberal to disparage them, as some have attempted to do.' Having described how his men, when called out on permanent duty, took their shilling a day and their straw at night in lieu of the high pay they were receiving as carpenters and masons, he continues: 'Can I suppose that men like these would disgrace their colours or desert their officers? Their officers, I am sure, will exchange that confidence with them, and I believe there was no commandant who was not satisfied of the alertness of his men in that crisis, when expectation watched the beacon that was to give the signal for their turning out upon a moment's notice. It was not then the season to inquire from what shops they issued; and the buffoon, who had risked a silly sneer at any man's vocation, would have met with about as much applause for his gabble as a goose would for her hissing. I readily admit that it must be every loyal man's wish to keep alive the martial spirit of the country, but how it

can be any rational man's expectation to accomplish that wish by discouraging and revolting the volunteers, is a riddle that defies solution.' These words were written nearly a hundred years ago by the oldest volunteer officer in the country; we have only lately realised their full significance.

Cumberland was never, one suspects, a good man of business, and in his old age his financial difficulties seem to have increased upon him. In 1804 he was induced to write his *Memoirs* by an offer from the house of Lackington and Allen of five hundred pounds. In 1806, when a second edition was brought out, he added a supplement, giving a few more details of his life, and answering the strictures of some of his critics, more especially a writer in the newly-started *Edinburgh Review*, who had blamed him for his egotism, and animadverted upon his style. The old lion still had a roar left in him, and in commenting upon this criticism he covers his wounded vanity with a mask of stately severity. 'I understand,' he observes, 'that these acrimonious North Britons are young men; I rejoice to hear it, not only for the honour of old age, but in the hope that they will live long enough to discover the error of their ambition, the misapplication of their talents, and that the combination they have formed to mortify their contemporaries is in fact a conspiracy to undo themselves.'

In addition to the plays which he continued to pour out in endless profusion, and which at last could only be forced on the stage by means of intercession and flattery, Cumberland undertook in 1809 the conduct of the *London Review*, a new literary periodical which was intended as a rival to the *Quarterly*. All the articles in this review were to be signed, the editor having, what

one of his biographers calls, 'the chimerical idea that contemporary criticism could derive advantage by being robbed of anonymous importance.' Cumberland suffered, like most pioneers, for being in advance of his time, and the *Review* died with its second or third number. In the same year the veteran writer published his last novel, *John de Lancaster*, in which he pronounced a doleful lamentation over the lack of appreciation with which he had been treated by his contemporaries. 'If, in the course of my literary labours,' he complains, 'I had been less studious to adhere to nature and simplicity, I am perfectly convinced I should have stood higher in estimation with the purchasers of copyright, and probably have been read and patronised by my contemporaries in the proportion of ten to one.' Scott, who reviewed the novel in *The Quarterly*, was probably irritated by this complaint; for he says of the author, with much less than his usual good nature, 'He has written comedies at which we have cried, and tragedies at which we have laughed; he has composed indecent novels and religious epics; he has pandered to the public lust for personal anecdote by writing his own life and the private history of his acquaintance.' Sir Walter was much kinder in the biographical notice prefixed to the edition of Cumberland's novels which he edited for the Novelists' Library. In that he awards high praise to *The West Indian*; and declares that if it had not been for Sheridan, the author of that play would have stood at the head of the dramatic writers of his period.

Cumberland does not appear to have been a prolific correspondent; at any rate, few of his letters have found their way into print. In the two volumes of Garrick's *Correspondence* are a few notes from our dramatist,

relating chiefly to details connected with the production of his plays. Two or three undated manuscript letters from him to Mrs. Abington, written apparently about 1781-82, may be seen in the Manuscript Room of the British Museum. These relate to a play, apparently the *Widow of Delphi*, in which Mrs. Abington was to play the leading part.

'I flatter myself,' runs the first, 'we shall now renew our dramatic friendship and connection with mutual satisfaction and pleasure. I have reformed the passages you pointed out, and since I have been here [Tunbridge Wells] I have written a prologue which contents me much, and an epilogue for you, which does not so easily satisfy my ambition of doing something not unworthy of the elegant representative. However, we will sit in equal and strict judgment upon it. The time I own is pressing, and the man is precarious—yet under the shelter of your shield I defy auguries. . . . I flatter myself we shall be successful; and as we started with the Bishop's blessing, we shall plead benefit of clergy in arrest of judgment. Recollect, my dear madam, that the play is got up with no other difficulty than what arises from the long and laborious part of the widow, and that will be in the hands of a lady who, whatever you may have to say to the contrary, is, in my opinion, the very first ornament of the English stage, and that in a period when it abounds with genius.—I have the honour to be that lady's most devoted old poet and obliged humble servant, RICHARD CUMBERLAND.'

The play was evidently less successful than had been anticipated, for in the next letter the author says: 'I cannot express to you how kindly I feel your sensibility

to me, and how much obliged to you I am both for your flattering and consolatory letters. If I should deprive myself of other favours of the same sort, by declaring to you that I neither do, nor ever did experience any real vexation for the treatment I have received from Mr. Harris [the manager], I should lose a great deal of pleasure for a small vanity; but in truth and sincerity I must say that no treatment from that party, nor any dramatic disappointment, can now disturb my temper. Time was (I confess it to my shame) when success was too much the object of my wishes; that anxiety has now lost its edge, and I take events as they fall, without a murmur or complaint. I enter upon these undertakings with hopes of so low a pitch, and with resolutions so well fortified against miscarriage, that I am never taken by surprise. But in the present case, what have I lost? how have I suffered? at what should I repine? I have had a piece well approved, and you have been the supporter of its introduction, representation, and success. Could I for a moment state the case that your opinion had fallen from me by the exhibition, that I confess would have been a wound; but on the contrary of this, I have gained the most pleasing proofs of your friendship, zeal, and affection for my peace of mind as well as credit, and the acquisition of such a friend is more to me than I will undertake to tell you, though I shall not be so scrupulous in speaking of it to others.'

In spite of his strongly expressed satisfaction with the success of his piece, Cumberland in his next letter is asking Mrs. Abington for her kind negotiations on behalf of the play, which he is anxious to have acted another night or two before the conclusion of the season. In any case he hopes that 'the house will have so much

consideration for me as to quit the play with a short paragraph, which will cost them nothing, and may secure it from the ill-natured conclusions of such newspaper malice as *The World* and other public prints of the day are too ready to announce, when a play is laid aside for a season.' There speaks the true Sir Fretful Plagiary, who can never help wincing under the attacks of those whom he affects to despise.

Cumberland died in 1811, aged seventy-nine, and was buried in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, near the tomb of Garrick. His friend, Dr. Vincent, Dean of Westminster, pronounced the funeral oration, in which he described the deceased author as being in his works a moralist of the highest order, who considered the theatre as a school of moral improvement, and added that 'his remains are truly worthy of mingling with the illustrious dead that surround us.' Some of the auditors are said to have wondered whether the Dean had ever read certain warmly-tinted passages in his friend's novels *Henry* and *Arundel.*

To the last Cumberland is described as an agreeable and even fascinating companion, though he was so fond of flattery himself that he supposed it to be acceptable to others, even in the most exuberant proportions. Certain it is that, although he was not altogether happy in his temperament, he made many friends; and though time has dealt hardly with his reputation, one piece of good fortune can never be taken from him, namely, the prospect of going down to posterity astride the epitaph in Goldsmith's *Retaliation* as

> 'The Terence of England, the mender of hearts.'

LADY CRAVEN

(MARGRAVINE OF ANSPACH)

LADY CRAVEN

(MARGRAVINE OF ANSPACH)

(1750-1828)

'*Her life, if faithfully written, would make a most extraordinary book.*' So wrote Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, the Scottish Horace Walpole, of the subject of this memoir. Unfortunately, Lady Craven's life never has been faithfully written though—or because—she wrote it herself. The most that can now be done is to read between the lines of her story, as she told it, and to punctuate her rose-coloured account of her own career with the gossiping comments of her contemporaries. It must be confessed that her ladyship, who is said to have been an admirable *raconteur* in society, had a dull and incoherent prose style; and was so engrossed by the contemplation of her own beauty, virtues, and accomplishments, that it is necessary to sift her autobiography and letters very carefully in order to extract a few grains of amusement, or even of truth.

Elizabeth, Lady Craven, afterwards Princess of Berkeley and Margravine of Anspach, was the youngest daughter of Augustus, fourth Earl of Berkeley, and was born in 1750. Lady Berkeley,[1] *née* Drax, was a handsome,

[1] Horace Walpole says of Lady Berkeley: 'There is nothing so black of which she is not capable. Her gallantries are the whitest specks about her.'

lively, unprincipled woman, who was chiefly remarkable for having produced three daughters at a birth when her husband particularly desired a son and heir. Elizabeth was not one of the three, who all died in infancy; but belonging to a despised sex, and being a puny, miserable-looking baby, it seems to have been taken for granted that she would not live, and she was left neglected on a chair by her mother's bedside. Lord Berkeley's aunt, Lady Albemarle, coming to visit her niece, was about to sit down on the same chair, thinking that it only contained a piece of flannel, when the screams of the nurse prevented a catastrophe, and the premature flattening of a very high-spirited young lady. Lady Albemarle, on examining the baby, declared that it would live if properly looked after, sent out for a wet-nurse, and practically saved the child's life.

Elizabeth afterwards attributed the clearness of her ideas, which she says was a comfort to both her husbands, though it is conspicuously lacking in her writings, to the fact that as a child she was too delicate to be tossed in the air or jolted about on her nurse's knees. This theory was confirmed to her own satisfaction by the testimony of Père Elisée, surgeon to Louis XVI., who declared that the reason so many English children were delicate, and suffered from water on the brain, was because of the infamous custom of shaking and tossing them before the head was properly supported by the fibres of the neck. 'Although I was always complimented on being quite superior, and otherwise gifted by nature to the generality of my sex,' she observes, with that superb complacency which was her most striking characteristic, 'I always attributed such accomplishments to the effect of my

education. Instead of skipping over ropes, I was taught to pay and receive visits with other children, and supposed myself a lady who was receiving company.'

Lady Berkeley cared more about society and admiration, to say nothing of flirtations, than about her domestic duties; and her husband, becoming anxious about the future of his two little girls, sent for the Swiss wife of a former tutor, gave her a house in the park, and solemnly requested her to take charge of Lady Georgiana and Lady Elizabeth, and never to leave them until they married. So impressive were his injunctions, that the good woman fainted away after having faithfully promised to carry out the trust. Lord Berkeley died when Elizabeth was only five years old, and shortly afterwards his widow married Lord Nugent, poet, politician, and fortune-hunter. His first wife had been a daughter of Lord Fingal, his second Ann Craggs (sister of the Secretary of State), who was old and ugly, and had already disposed of two husbands, but possessed an all-redeeming fortune of a hundred thousand pounds. After her death, though he was then fifty-five, Lord Nugent seems to have looked out for beauty and comparative youth as well as money; but having been the *enfant chéri* of two plain, elderly wives, he was unable to get on with the headstrong, high-spirited Lady Berkeley, and the pair separated after only two years of married life.

Elizabeth tells us that her passion for reading was early developed, and that she was a precocious performer at both reciting and dancing. Not being a favourite at home, she had no idea that she was pretty; while her mother's harsh treatment produced 'that look of modesty and timidity which, contrasted with my natural vivacity and love for all that was gay and cheerful, fascinated

every one in so powerful a degree.' The education of the two little girls under their Swiss governess seems to have been more sensible than that of the ordinary young lady of the period. They were taught to dress themselves, to make their own beds, and, when the weather was too wet for out-door exercise, were made to sweep the rooms and arrange the furniture. At Berkeley Castle they received regular instruction in housewifery, visiting in turn the kitchen, laundry, and cheese-farms. When the family were in London the girls were sent for once a week by their great-aunts Lady Suffolk[1] and Lady Betty Germaine (*née* Berkeley) to spend the day. Lady Suffolk was Elizabeth's godmother, and took a special interest in the child's education. Her godfather was her father's brother, Narbonne Berkeley, afterwards Lord Bottetourt, who ruined himself by his generosity, though he neither gamed nor drank. He frequently gave his god-child two guineas to spend; but finding that she always gave the money to the poor, he told her to make out a list of the things she wanted, and he would buy them for her. When she was ten years old, he gave her a magnificent doll, dressed in a Court dress, and made to resemble her as exactly as possible, with blushing cheeks, and head slightly averted, a trick that her timidity had taught her.

In the winter of 1765-6, Lady Berkeley (who seems

[1] Lady Suffolk, whose second husband was the Hon. George Berkeley, was, of course, the former Mrs. Howard, mistress of George II., while the witty Lady Betty Germaine was notorious for her connection with Lionel, Duke of Dorset, to whose second son, Lord George Sackville, she left her fortune and her name. Lady Craven was not fortunate in the example set her by her aunts, her great-great-aunt, Lady Henrietta Berkeley, having created a scandal at the end of the previous century by eloping with her brother-in-law, Lord Grey of Werk.

to have kept her first title) took her two daughters to Paris to meet her eldest son, who had been studying at the Academy of Turin. There being a great gale in the Channel, Lady Berkeley was terrified, Lady Georgiana fainted, and the maid was helpless. Elizabeth alone, according to her own account, kept her senses. 'As I thought mariners knew better than myself if there were any danger,' she says, 'I went and addressed the captain, and with one of my best curtsies, asked him if there was any danger; he told me none. I then began to feel sick, and asked him if he could give me anything to stop the sickness. He desired to know if I had ever drunk any brandy, and on my replying, "Oh, no!" he gave me some, which soon allayed the complaint.'

In Paris Lady Berkeley's house became a rendezvous for all the young Englishmen who passed through. Her two pretty daughters astonished their countrymen, we are told, by their indifference to homage, and the calmness with which they received the most flattering attentions. Elizabeth attributes this rather unusual trait to the fact that they had been accustomed to give and attend numerous children's parties in London, where the boys, among whom were numbered Lords Egremont, Tyrconnel, Cholmondeley, and Carlisle, were kept in good order by the girls, and sent to Coventry if they were inclined to be rude or boisterous. 'Such an education,' she observes, 'took from us that foolish delight and overstrained avidity with which young English ladies treat men when they are brought out into society.'

One of the most regular visitors was Lord Forbes, eldest son of the Earl of Granard, who played loo every Friday evening with Lady Berkeley without ever

addressing himself to her daughters. There was usually a lottery-table for the amusement of the young people, over which Lady Georgiana presided. After a time, however, she said that she preferred to look on at the loo-table, and left Elizabeth to manage the lottery. One night Georgiana stole to her sister's bed and said, 'Bessy, I am in love.' It turned out that Lord Forbes was the object of her passion, at which Elizabeth was amazed, for the young man was ugly, a widower, and had 'a foolish sort of Irish humour which was very disgusting.' Georgiana confessed that she had spoken first to Lord Forbes, being piqued at his openly-shown indifference.

Georgiana refused to tell her mother about her love-affair, but promised that her sister should know more the next night, when they were going to a *bal masqué*. At the ball Elizabeth herself had an adventure, which caused her more alarm than pleasure. While walking with her sister and Lord Forbes, a domino suddenly threw himself at her feet, and exclaimed, 'Lady Elizabeth, I shall die if you do not hear me.' He pulled off his mask, and she beheld 'the handsome Mr. ——, perhaps the handsomest man to be seen in any country.' Surprised and terrified, the child, for she was little more, drew back, and made no reply. The anonymous gentleman asked leave to speak to Lady Berkeley, whereupon Lord Forbes answered jokingly, 'It is a dumb chicken, but I'll roast her for this.' The admirer was in earnest, however, for a few days later he formally requested permission to pay his addresses to Lady Elizabeth, but was refused point-blank, his offer causing much amusement to her family. About the same time Lord Forbes proposed for Lady Georgiana, but was

told that he must wait for an answer until the party returned to England, as her guardians, Lord Boston and Lord Vere, must be consulted. The young lady, impatient of delay, confided to her sister her intention of running away with Lord Forbes; but Elizabeth, by dint of threats and persuasions, prevailed on her to wait until she heard what her guardians had to say in the matter.

In April the whole family was back in London. Lord Forbes' offer was refused, chiefly, it appears, on the ground of his being a widower. Georgiana cried, and vowed that she would never marry any other man; but Lady Berkeley tried to console her with the prospect of being presented at Court that season, when so many men would be in love with her that she would think no more of her first suitor. The presentation took place, and on the evening of the same day Lady Georgiana eloped with Lord Forbes. Great was the wrath of the young lady's family, while her guardian, Lord Boston, declared that he was the most unfortunate person alive, for he had never had but two wards, Miss Bayley (the first Lady Forbes) and Lady Georgiana Berkeley, and the same man had run away with both!

Elizabeth seems to have been punished for her sister's delinquencies. She was made to sleep in her mother's room until her marriage; and as Lady Berkeley was continually bemoaning the loss of her favourite daughter, poor Cinderella's lot was not a happy one. In the autumn of 1766 she was presented at Court, much against her own wishes, and thenceforward received enough admiration to have turned the head of any other girl; but nothing—we have her own word for it—could ever make her vain. The Princess of Wales

complimented Lady Berkeley upon her daughter's beauty, and the King's brother, the susceptible Duke of Cumberland, was supposed to be in love with her. Elizabeth, whose chosen *rôle* was one of modest timidity, declares that she hated all the men who made love to her, though she confesses to a *tendresse* for her cousin, the Marquis de Fitz James, grandson of the Duke of Berwick, who was violently in love with Lady Bell Stanhope. Being refused by her, he came every day to pour out his woes to his little cousin, whose pity seems to have been very near akin to love. Her refusal to encourage any of her numerous lovers enraged Lady Berkeley, who attributed this reserve to pride and disdain.

In order to free herself from continual reproaches, Elizabeth sent for one of her uncles, and created him, as she said, her ambassador. She told him that she was in constant terror lest her mother should compel her to marry a man whom she disliked, and therefore she wished to make a treaty to the effect that as long as she was not teased to accept any man who was disagreeable to her, she would agree to marry any suitor approved by Lady Berkeley to whom she herself had no personal objection. This treaty being concluded, Elizabeth enjoyed a fancied security, and amused herself in her own fashion. Her brother, Lord Berkeley, taught her to ride, shoot, and row, with a view to overcoming her natural timidity, while she was able to indulge her own taste for music and private theatricals.

This happy freedom was not to last very long. Mr. Craven, the nephew and heir of Lord Craven, fell in love with her at first sight; and though he had never been introduced to her, he sent a friend to propose for her hand. Elizabeth professed to be highly offended

at this presumption; but the match was evidently considered too good to be refused point-blank, and it was arranged that the young couple should make each other's acquaintance at a dinner at Richmond. Presumably, Elizabeth felt no actual repugnance to her latest suitor; for negotiations were entered into with his uncles, who consented to lend him a house, and make him a suitable allowance on his marriage. During the period of waiting Mr. Craven, in accordance with what seems to have been the custom among the young men of his set, asked his *fiancée* to run away with him; and when she, more prudent than her elder sister, refused, he declared that she could not be in love with him. Elizabeth confessed that she had never known love, but assured him that she felt both gratitude and regard for him, with which chilly comfort he had to be content. The wedding was, in some sort, the cause of a family reconciliation; for Elizabeth, who had persuaded Lady Berkeley to forgive and receive the runaway Lady Forbes, insisted that Lord Nugent should allow her two young step-sisters to be her bridesmaids, though he had vowed that they should never enter their mother's house again. Among the wedding presents was a purse containing a hundred newly-coined guineas from old Lady Betty Germaine, with a slip of paper on which was written, 'To my dear niece, Lady Elizabeth Berkeley, the last time that I shall call her by that name.'

In 1767, at the age of seventeen, our heroine was married, and during the next two years the couple lived at Ashdown Park, in Berkshire, where two daughters were born to them. 'Mr. Craven's attachment to me,' writes his wife, 'seemed to increase daily; my manners were such a novelty to him that he has often told me

he was as much alarmed at the delicacy of my mind as of my person.' Mr. Craven appears to have been neglected in his youth, having been left at Oxford by his guardians until he was one-and-thirty, with an allowance of only eighty pounds a year. Though Oxford was nominally his headquarters, he had spent his time in rambling from one country-house to another, hunting here and shooting there, until at last he became quite uneasy if he remained longer than three weeks in one place. 'Until I met you, my love,' he told his wife, 'I never stayed three *days* in one place.' Elizabeth describes him as having a good heart and sound judgment, but with no taste for art or literature. He was generous and extravagant, hated trouble, and had a bad habit of settling his accounts only once a year. His wife, who had been taught that weekly payments were a safer plan, asked for an allowance of pin-money; and being given four hundred a year, told him that he should never be troubled by a bill of hers. Out of this income she founded a school for orphan girls at Newbury.

Two years after his marriage Mr. Craven's uncle died, and he came into the title and a large property, which included Combe Abbey, near Coventry, and Benham House. A jointure of three thousand a year was settled on the new Lady Craven, and her husband delighted in procuring for her all the luxuries in his power. 'It was an eternal dispute between us,' she says; 'he always offering presents, and I refusing whenever I could.' Lord Craven and his mother-in-law were continually quarrelling in more serious fashion, Elizabeth being the usual subject of their disputes. 'Lady Berkeley,' she writes, 'pretended that Lord Craven spoilt me; and it appeared to excite her envy when he told

her that nothing was good or great enough for my mind and person.' Elizabeth's chief fear was lest her husband should dissipate his fine fortune, the whole of which was at his own disposal. He offered to give her half his estates, and let her manage the whole, if she would pay him a yearly stipend; but this offer, fortunately for himself as it turned out, she had the sense to refuse.

During the next few years Lady Craven was at the height of her social celebrity. Although she was the mother of several children, she preserved her looks, and was distinguished both for her beauty and her accomplishments. She is described as having magnificent auburn hair which reached below her knees, fine eyes, and a skin that showed every emotion by its varying colour. Although she was painted by Angelica Kauffmann, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Romney, and Madame Vigée Le Brun, she expresses her regret in her later years that there was no portrait of her that did her justice, or was even like her. Madame Le Brun, she complains, made a hand and arm out of all proportion to the figure, while in the Romney portrait the face was too severe and the figure too large.

Among the more interesting of Lady Craven's friends in London were Horace Walpole, Johnson, Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mrs. Montagu, Charles Fox, Lord Thurlow, and Wilkes—a curious medley. She observes that her godmother, Lady Suffolk, 'does not appear to have been a favourite with Mr. Walpole, although I was ever regarded by him with esteem, notwithstanding that I made her a pattern for my manners. This probably arose from the reluctance I always showed to display my natural love for the Muses; yet the press at

Strawberry Hill has produced some of my poetry. Mr. Walpole was extremely witty on the subject of the three children which Lady Berkeley produced at one birth—an event which certainly was not a theme for a man of taste and learning.' From Walpole's own letters we know that he was much attached to his neighbour, Lady Suffolk; and that although at one time he greatly admired Lady Craven, he did not always regard her with esteem.

Boswell mentions the fact of Johnson's dining with 'the beautiful, gay, and fascinating Lady Craven.' She tells us that he recommended her a tutor for her eldest son, and adds: 'I believe he would have been the most agreeable person in the world if he had had a female companion to suit him at home. The great fault I found with Johnson was the inveterate blame and contempt that he threw on all contemporary writers. . . . I remember one day when vices were the topic of conversation, he chose to defend drunkenness as the most innocent of all, and to prove his argument supposed me to be walking in the street and attacked by a drunken man. He ended his narrative by saying, "She might push him into the gutter with her little finger, and how impossible it must be for a man to do much mischief whom that little finger could repel! . . ." One day in a *tête-à-tête*, I asked him why he chose to do me the singular honour of sitting so often, and taking tea with me—"I, who am an ignorant woman, and who, if I have any share of wit or sense, am so afraid of you that my language and thoughts are locked up and fade away when I speak to you?" He laughed very much, and said, "An ignorant woman! The little I have perceived in your conversation pleases me." And then with an

almost religious emphasis, he added, "I do like you!" "And for what?" I asked. He put his large hand upon my arm, and with an expression I shall never forget, pressed it, and said, "Because you are a good mother."'

On another occasion Johnson asked Reynolds why he had refused to finish the portrait of Lady Craven after she had given him several sittings. Sir Joshua answered, laughing, though somewhat confused, 'There is something so comical in the lady's face that all my art cannot describe it.' Johnson repeated the word 'comical' ten times in as many different tones, finishing in one of anger. Having decided that 'comical' was not a fitting word to be applied to a beautiful lady's face, he gave Reynolds such a scolding that the poor painter must have wished that he had never seen his embarrassing sitter.

Lady Craven, who dabbled in authorship herself, was attracted by the society of the blue-stockings. Of Mrs. Montagu's friendship she was particularly proud, because that lady never spoke to any one whom she did not consider a person of information. It was at Mrs. Montagu's suggestion that Madame de Vaucluse, the French novelist, who was then living in England, undertook the education of Lady Craven's four daughters. Madame de Vaucluse[1] is reported to have said of her pupils' mother, 'J'ai vu les femmes plus belles, peut-être; mais pour sa physionomie, grand Dieu! j'ai lu, j'ai écrit beaucoup de

[1] The adopted name of Mlle. de Fauques, an ex-nun, who had been betrayed and deserted by an English 'milord.' She was French instructress to Sir William Jones, and wrote a number of tales, sentimental and Oriental, as well as a Life of Madame de Pompadour, which was bought up by Louis XV.

romans, mais elle les a tout dans sa physionomie.' Lady Craven tells us that she introduced Lord Thurlow to Madame de Vaucluse at his own special request, and the Chancellor was so well entertained by the Frenchwoman's conversation that when he went away he left his bag and seals behind him. With politics our heroine does not appear to have concerned herself, except that on one occasion she consented to drive through Coventry, wearing blue ribbons, in order to quell an election riot, in which object she was completely successful. 'Charles Fox,' she says, 'almost quarrelled with me because I was unwilling to interfere in politics—a thing which I detested, and considered as being out of the province of a woman.'

It is in Horace Walpole's *Letters* that we hear most of Lady Craven during the period that she shone in London society, and indeed long after her star had set. In a letter to Lady Ossory, dated March 1773, he describes a magnificent fancy-dress ball that had been given by that most fascinating of French Ambassadors, the Duc de Guines. Lady Craven danced in a Henri Quatre quadrille, together with the Princess Czartoriski, the beautiful Vernons, and the Duc de Lauzun of scandalous memory. The intimacy with the French Ambassador and his friends led, as we shall see, to serious consequences for our heroine. A couple of years later Walpole and Lady Craven were on such terms of mutual admiration that they were exchanging copies of complimentary verses. He says in a letter to Lady Ossory: 'I certainly did not send you Lady Craven's verses, nor intend it, though they are extremely pretty. She did not give me leave, and without it, you know I would not. Nay, I don't think I should even with her per-

mission, for she makes an Apollo of me; and if the eight other Muses called me so too, I would not accept the title without any pretensions.'

Walpole, then nearly sixty, was evidently flattered by her ladyship's attentions; for in February 1776 he writes to Mason: 'I shall take the liberty (Sir Residentiary) to trespass on your decorum by sending you an impromptu I wrote yesterday to pretty Lady Craven, who sent me an Eclogue of her own, every stanza of which ended with *January*, and which she desired me not to criticise, as some of the rhymes were incorrect, a license I adopted in my second line—

"Though lame and old, I do not burn
With fretfulness to scare ye;
And charms and wit like yours would turn
To May my January.
The God who can inspire and heal
Sure breathed your lines, sweet Fairy,
For as I read, I feel, I feel,
I'm not quite January."

Probably you would have liked better to have the Eclogue, but I had not leave to send it.'

The Strawberry Hill press was presently called into requisition to print some of Lady Craven's works. In August 1778, Walpole has just printed seventy-five copies of *The Sleep-walker*, a translation by Lady Craven of a comedy of Pont de Veyle. In 1780 Lady Craven wrote a story, with a flattering dedication[1] to Horace

[1] After observing that at Christmas he is generally confined to his fireside by an unwelcome visitor (the gout), and therefore may be entertained by a new book, since he has read all the old ones, she continues: 'Among many foolish but true things you have heard me say, I once expressed a wish to be learned, and acknowledged that I was *ignorance itself*; and to encourage that ignorance you once advised me: "Despise what is called learning, give a loose to your imagination, correct by your heart, and profit by your taste."'

Walpole, called *Modern Anecdotes of the Family of Kinkverankotsprackengotchern.* In a letter to Lady Ossory he says: 'I send your ladyship, as you order, Lady Craven's novel, which is, being very short, full of one long name, but not of long names. It is scarce a story, and I am told is a translation; but it is very prettily told, and has, I will swear, several original expressions that are characteristic and must be her own. There is no mystery or secret about it, except that it was one to me for twenty-four hours, being sent to me anonymously, and I was all that time before I guessed the author. The reason of my not naming it, madam, you will find in my character, which abhors anything that looks like vanity.'

In May of the same year Lady Craven wrote a play called *The Miniature Portrait.* According to her own account, Sheridan got possession of it under pretence of writing an epilogue for it; and then, without permission, brought it out at Drury Lane, where it was played for three nights. Although she professed to be enraged at Sheridan's audacity, Lady Craven attended one of the representations in state. Walpole gives an amusing description of the affair in a letter to Mason. 'There has been such an uncommon event,' he begins, 'that I must give you some account of it, as it relates to the Republic of Poetry, of which you are President, and to the Aristocracy of Noble Authors, to whom I am Gentleman Usher. Lady Craven's comedy, called *The Miniature Picture*, which she acted herself with a genteel set at her own house in the country, has been played at Drury Lane. The chief singularity was that she went to it herself the second night in form; sat in the middle of the front row of the stage-box, much dressed, with a

profusion of white bugles and plumes to receive the public honour due to her sex and loveliness. The Duchess of Richmond, Lady Harcourt, Lady Edgecumbe, Lady Aylesbury, Mrs. Damer, Lord Craven, General Conway, Colonel O'Hara, and I were with her. It was amazing to see so young a woman entirely possess herself; but there is such an integrity and frankness in her consciousness of her own beauty and talents, that she speaks of them with a *naïveté* as if she had no property in them, but only wore them as gifts of the gods. Lord Craven, on the contrary, was quite agitated by his fondness for her, and with impatience at the bad performance of the actors, which was wretched indeed. Yet the address of the plot, which is the chief merit of the piece, and some lively pencilling, carried it off very well, though Parsons murdered the Scotch lord, and Mrs. Robinson [Perdita], who is supposed to be the favourite of the Prince of Wales, thought on nothing but her charms or him. There is a very good though endless Prologue, written by Sheridan, and spoken in perfection by King, which was encored (an entire novelty) the first night; and an Epilogue that I liked still better, and which was full as well delivered by Mrs. Abington, written by Mr. Jekyll.

'The audience, though very civil, missed a fair opportunity of being gallant; for in one of these ——logues, I forget which, the noble authoress was mentioned, and they did not applaud, as they ought to have done exceedingly, when she condescended to avow her pretty child, and was there looking so very pretty. I could not help thinking how many deaths Lady Harcourt would have suffered rather than encounter such an exhibition: yet Lady Craven's tranquillity had nothing displeasing—it

was only the ease that conscious pre-eminence bestows on Sovereigns, whether their empire consists in power or beauty. It was the ascendant of Millamont and Lady Betty Modish and Indamore; and it was tempered by her infinite good-nature, which made her make excuses for the actors instead of being provoked at them. I have brought hither her portrait [by Romney] and placed it in the favourite Blue Room.'

One cannot help reflecting how scornful and sarcastic Walpole would have been over the whole incident if Lady Craven had been plain, middle-aged, and insignificant, instead of a beauty and a great lady. As it was, her accomplishments and her attractions, combined with her appreciation of himself, roused him to a quite unusual pitch of enthusiasm. On the Romney portrait, with which the original was so dissatisfied, he wrote the following lines:—

> 'Full many an artist has on canvas fix'd
> All charms that Nature's pencil ever mix'd,
> The witching of her eyes, the grace that tips
> The inexpressible douceur of her lips:
> Romney alone in this fair image caught
> Each charm's expression and each feature's thought;
> And shows how in their sweet assembly sit
> Taste, spirit, softness, sentiment, and wit.'

Walpole certainly did his best as log-roller to the lady whom Lord Strafford called his Sappho. In another letter to Mason he says: 'Pray read a little book, no bigger than a silver penny, called a Christmas-box, for *me*—yes, for *me*. It is a story that is no story, or scarce one; it is a sort of imitation of Voltaire, yet perfectly original. There is nature, character, simplicity, and carelessness throughout; observation without preten-

George Romney. W. Greatbatch sculp.

ELIZABETH BERKELEY, COUNTESS OF CRAVEN.

FROM THE ORIGINAL FORMERLY AT STRAWBERRY HILL.

sions, and I believe a good deal of truth in some of the incidents, that I take to have happened. My vanity may have interested me too much, though I see it as a thing not likely to please; but if you read it twice, which its brevity will easily allow, I think you will see real merit in it, especially when you know the author is young.'

In 1779, Lady Craven's youngest son, Richard Keppel, was born. One of his godfathers was Admiral Keppel, then at the height of his national popularity. The christening took place just after the court-martial which the Admiral had insisted on having in consequence of the criticisms upon his operations against the Brest fleet. The whole of London went wild with delight over the justificatory verdict; the town was illuminated for three nights; and on the evening of the baby Keppel's christening Lady Craven's porter was unable to close the hall door between half-past seven and half-past eleven in consequence of the fashionable crowds who came to offer their congratulations to her and the famous godfather. The result of all this fatigue and excitement was that the mother was taken ill with a kind of fit and lost her speech for several hours. She was repeatedly attacked in this way, until at last she was ordered to Bristol, only as it was supposed to die. While she was at Bristol the famous Jenner came to pay his respects to her, and had the courage to inform Lord Craven that in his opinion the invalid was being wrongly treated. He received permission to undertake her treatment himself, attended her to Combe Abbey, and did not leave her until she was in a fair way of recovery.

The following winter Lady Craven made the unpleasant discovery that, when her husband told her that

he was going into the country to hunt, he actually remained in London, though not in his own house. The mystery was explained by the fact that he had formed an attachment for a married woman, living apart from her husband, who had obtained a great influence over him. Lady Craven took no notice of the affair until Lord Macartney called upon her to beg that she would try and prevent her husband from travelling in one of her own coaches with a woman who called herself Lady Craven, and conducted herself in such a fashion as to tarnish the character of the real owner of the name. 'If Lord Berkeley hears of this,' added Lord Macartney, 'he will certainly call Lord Craven out.' As soon as his lordship returned to his home, his wife told him that she had a favour to ask of him, namely, that he would not allow his mistress to call herself Lady Craven. 'He looked much confused,' she continues, 'and asked how long I had known that he had a mistress. I replied, "Above a twelvemonth," whereupon he exclaimed, "By G—, you are the best-tempered creature in the world, for I have never suspected that you knew this."' Further remonstrances, and a threat of separation, only served to exasperate Lord Craven, who, after assuring his wife that her rival was 'a very good sort of woman,' departed with the lady for a six weeks' tour on the Continent.

The quarrel seems to have been patched up for the time being; for in April 1782 Walpole mentions having been present at 'a kind of pastoral opera written by Lady Craven, and acted prettily by her own and other children; you will scold me again for not telling you the title, but in truth I forgot to ask it. There was imagination in it, but not enough to carry off five

acts. The Chancellor [Thurlow][1] was there *en titre d'office*, not as head of the law, but as *cicisbeo* to the authoress,—his countenance is so villainous that he looked more like assassin to the husband. Lady Harcourt said he wanted nothing but a red coat and a black wig to resemble the murderers in *Macbeth*.'

The following Christmas, when the family were at Combe Abbey for the holidays, Lord Craven suddenly informed his wife that he was going to London, and added, 'When I go, I shall never see your face again.' To this startling announcement she answered, 'That is, you mean to part with me.' Upon his assenting, she observed: 'The parting of a husband and wife who have lived together thirteen years, and had seven children, and the fortunes of those children at the mercy of a father misled, is a thing of too great consequence to those children for me not to take the best advice on such an event.' Lord Craven set out for London next day, and his wife never saw him again. She remained to entertain the visitors who had been invited to spend Christmas at the Castle; but as soon as these had departed, she too went to town, and sent for her eldest brother. Lord Berkeley declined to give her any advice until he had heard Lord Craven's reason for parting with her. When she assured him that she had done nothing to cause her husband the slightest uneasiness, 'Lord Berkeley turned his back and walked out of the room.'

Her next step was to consult Lord Loughborough,[2] then Lord Chancellor, who flew into a passion with

[1] Thurlow was then in his fifty-second year.

[2] The Great Seal was then in commission, but Loughborough was first commissioner.

Lord Craven, and declared that the man must be mad. He advised her to prosecute her husband, and assured her that the law would allow her four or five thousand a year, and the society of her daughters. Being reluctant to take such an extreme step, Lady Craven next sent for her old friend and admirer, Lord Thurlow, and told him she understood that if she were to prosecute her husband, she would obtain redress. 'Redress!' exclaimed Lord Thurlow, 'for what? The man does injury to himself. But, tell me, is it true that Lord Craven has the whole of his large fortune at his own disposal?' Being informed that he had, Lord Thurlow asked whether she would ever forgive herself if she did not make every effort to preserve that fortune for her seven children, as she had none to give them herself; and pointed out that, as Lord Craven had placed himself in her power by his folly, he must give her at least her marriage settlement. He then suggested that she should go where she pleased, taking one, at least, of her children with her; but added, 'Leave your daughters with your Lord; otherwise that woman will go and live in all your fine places, and gain the entire and unlimited ascendency over Lord Craven's mind.' This advice was so far followed that Lady Craven decided to go to Paris for a time, taking the three-year-old Keppel with her. Before setting out, a promise was obtained from Lord Craven that her other children should write to her once a fortnight, and that when she returned to England she should be allowed to see them when and where she pleased. She undertook, on her part, to deliver up Keppel to his father as soon as he was eight years old.

So far we have followed Lady Craven's own account of the circumstances that led to her separation, in

which she poses as a deeply injured wife. She professes to be famous for her veracity, and relates how when George III. wanted to know the truth about any Court gossip, he used to ask, 'What does Lady Craven say? She always speaks the truth.' But in the matter of her separation it is to be feared that Lady Craven allowed herself a little licence. At any rate, her contemporaries seem to have thought that Lord Craven had some cause for his apparent harshness. The Duc de Lauzun, who was in London in 1773, says in his *Memoirs* that at this time the Duc de Guines was openly the lover of 'une jolie petite femme, que sa fatuité et les malheurs qu'elle a pensé causer, ont rendu célèbre à l'Angleterre. Douce, simple, tendre, il était impossible de voir Lady Craven sans s'y intéresser.' His folly and her imprudence led to a scandal; Lord Craven shut up his wife in the country, and threatened to bring an action against de Guines, and claim £10,000 in damages. The Duc de Lauzun and his *belle amie*, the Princess Czartoriski, did their best to help the foolish pair. De Guines had asked Lady Craven to fly with him, and his career depended on her reply. The Ambassador had recently been involved in a vexatious lawsuit against his secretary, and his appearance in a fresh *cause célèbre* would have been most damaging to an already tarnished reputation. The Princess Czartoriski forced her way to Lady Craven, advised her how to act, and for the time being saved the situation.

In her *Autobiography* Lady Craven alludes to M. de Guines—who was recalled to France in 1776—in the most unembarrassed fashion. She observes that he had one habit which made her watch and fear him, namely, that of appearing to admire great powers only to draw

them out, and turn them to his own advantage. In private life he was a delightful companion, and one of the best flute-players of his day. He was anxious to learn English, and insisted that Lady Craven should converse with him in that language; but his mistakes, whether purposely or not, were so *inconvenantes* that she was obliged to ask him to confine himself to his own tongue. 'At the time of the Revolution,' she relates, 'I saw this nobleman in Paris, without a *sou* to live on, cherished by Madame de Boufflers and other old friends. His despair at seeing Royalty and the nobility crushed was so great that he would no longer trouble himself about anything.'

Although de Guines was in England with his family in 1783, it does not appear that his presence contributed to the Craven separation. As usual, we must turn to Strawberry Hill for the floating gossip of the time. In a letter to his niece, the Duchess of Gloucester, dated March 13, 1783, Walpole writes: 'You must have seen in the papers much gross abuse of a pretty ingenious friend of mine for a low amour with one of her own servants, for which I seriously believe there was not the smallest foundation. The charge is now removed to much higher quarters, which, at least, are more creditable. The town has for these ten days affirmed that the Lord husband was going to cite into the Spiritual Court the head of the Temporal one—nay, and the third chief of the Common Law—nay, and the second of the Spiritual one too.[1] Such conquests would be very honourable in the records of Love,

[1] Presumably Lord Thurlow, Lord Loughborough, and the Archbishop of York, whom Mason alludes to as Lady Craven's 'lawn-sleeved Phaon' (Dec. 4, 1782).

and the first very diverting, as the hero has so much distinguished himself by severity on Bills of divorce. I do not warrant any of these stories, but must totally discredit that of the domestic. A prude may begin with a footman, and a gallant woman may end with one; but a pretty woman who has so many slaves in high life does not think of a livery, especially where vanity is the principal ingredient in her composition.'

Lady Craven spent the early part of 1783 in Paris, or rather at Versailles, where she took a house called the Pavillon de la Joncherre. She professes to have been well received; but it appears that she was not invited to the weekly receptions given by the Duchesse de Polignac, who had an allowance from the Queen for the purpose of entertaining distinguished foreigners. Lady Craven attributes the slight to jealousy, and says that the Duke of Dorset, the English Ambassador, told her that Madame de Polignac had tormented him with questions about his countrywomen. In answer to her queries—'Est-elle aussi jolie—a-t-elle autant d'esprit que le monde dit?' he replied, 'We have twenty women at Court more beautiful than Lady Craven; mais pour les grâces et l'esprit, pas une.'

Lady Craven asserts that the Queen and her sister-in-law, Madame Elizabeth, were anxious that she should settle at Versailles in order that they might visit her as a friend. With this end in view they are supposed to have set the Court milliner to spy upon her, presumably that they might satisfy themselves as to her mode of life. The milliner inquired the name of a gentleman who visited regularly at the Pavillon de la Joncherre; and Lady Craven, without resenting this curiosity, replied that it was the Margrave of Anspach,

and explained that 'he had known me from my childhood, and had conceived for me the same partiality that all who had known me from my infancy retained for me.'

On one occasion, when Lady Craven and her child were in the chapel at Versailles, Marie Antoinette and her sister-in-law passed by; and being struck by the beauty of the little Keppel, sent to inquire who he was. On their return the Royal ladies stopped opposite Lady Craven, and curtseying repeatedly, said, 'Restez avec nous, Madame.' Our heroine was looked askance upon by her own countrywomen, judging by a sentence in a letter dated March 1783 from Lady Bristol to her daughter, Lady Elizabeth Foster, who was then staying in Paris. 'You don't mention Lady Craven,' says the writer, 'so I hope she is gone some other way. You must have no intercourse there at all. She is quite undone, and has not an atom of character left.'

In the circumstances, it is rather curious that Lady Craven's younger brother, Captain Berkeley, together with his wife and her mother, Lady Louisa Lennox, should have stayed at the Pavillon on their way to the south of France. In the course of the summer Lord Berkeley wrote to propose that he should meet his sister in Florence the following November, and spend the winter with her. 'My brother,' she tells us, 'had ever given but one reason for refusing to marry; he said he would never marry until he could find a woman like me in temper and talents. Unfortunately, the woman he did marry was unlike me in every respect.' Flattered by her brother's desire for her companionship, Lady Craven placed her little boy with a tutor in Paris, and set out upon her travels alone. She corresponded

regularly during this time with the Margrave, who had invited her to come and live at his Court as soon as she was tired of wandering, in the character of his adopted sister. In her letters she addresses him as her 'dear brother,' and signs herself 'your affectionate sister.'

Two editions of Lady Craven's *Correspondence* with the Margrave were published: the first in 1789; the second, which is rather fuller, in 1812. The *Letters* were translated into French and German, and highly praised by Grimm, who was also a correspondent of the Margrave's. For the modern reader it is to be feared that they would have few attractions, since they are neither well written nor amusing, nor even indiscreet, while the information they contain is extracted, for the most part, from guide-books or works of reference. Their only merit arises from the fact that the writer, who had evidently taken Lady Mary Wortley Montagu for her model, travelled in such out-of-the-way regions as the Crimea, Turkey, the Grecian Islands, and Wallachia, whither few English ladies had ever penetrated. Lady Craven must be credited with a large allowance of courage and enterprise; but it is a pity that a lady who was famed for her vivacity of spirits and brilliant conversational powers should not have contrived to be more amusing on paper.

PART II

Lady Craven's first published letter to the Margrave is dated Paris, June 1785, and begins:—

'For the first time in my life, sir, I invoke that guardian angel who has hitherto protected me from many a precipice, into which female vanity might have

hurled me headlong, to preserve me from that inordinate pride which I must feel if I believe half what you are pleased to say. You call me *incrédule*, *insouciante*. Oh, I am neither. I do believe you think all you say *of* me. I will be your sister; and by accepting of your adoption prove to you that I also believe what you say *to* me. I will indeed be your sister; but let me show the world, the envious world, I deserve to be so. I cannot reside at Anspach unless the Margravine consents, *approves* of it, and thinks, as you say, your sister's graces would gild with charms—would cheer, like the sun, the gloomy darkness of a German Court.'

Having given her own version of her relations with her husband, Lady Craven proceeds to retail a little of the Parisian gossip of the day. Her old admirer, the Duc de Guines, had just called upon her to inquire the names of all the English heiresses who were marriageable, because the Duchesse de Polignac thought of giving a rich English heiress to her son. Lady Craven says she gravely suggested that the Duchess should go to England, and choose which of the great heiresses then in society she would give to her son, 'and one of the most *fins persifleurs* I ever saw did not perceive that I was laughing at him.' The *Morning Post*, after its custom at that time, had been making free with Lady Craven's name; and she observes, *à propos* of its delinquencies, that the liberty of the press is but another word for the most profligate licentiousness, and utters a pious wish that her brother would cut off some newsmonger's nose. 'The vulgar English' in Paris had also been spreading tales about her manner of life, and she is both surprised and hurt that the Duchesse de Polignac does not invite her to her parties. Her faithful admirer, Lord Thurlow,

had lately paid a first visit to Paris, and, John Bull-like, had refused to see anything beautiful in the environs, declaring that the country round was nothing but a great stone quarry. She concludes with the expression of her belief that Providence had decreed that Lord Craven should part with her in order that she might cheer the setting sun of the Margrave's life [he was then forty-nine], the only man in whom she had not found an inclination to despise the other sex.

The first part of Lady Craven's travels over the well-beaten tracks of France and Italy contains little that is either novel or interesting. She travelled with her own chariot and saddle-horse, and at Genoa took the somewhat unusual course of hiring a felucca, with three shoulder-of-mutton sails and ten oars, to take her to Leghorn. But finding the boat alive with vermin, and getting bored with the singing of the sailors, who chanted the Hymn to the Virgin for hours at a stretch, she landed at Via Regio, and rode to Pisa, where she hired a house for a few weeks. Both horse and rider created wonder and admiration in the minds of the simple Italians. Not being accustomed to the sight of a lady riding on a side-saddle, the people used to exclaim, 'Poor thing! Only one leg!' as she passed. 'An English person in Italy,' says Lady Craven, 'meets with a homage little short of adoration. The very peasants look in my face and say, "Cara—cara Inglese."' For her fine Suffolk horse she was offered, over and over again, any price she liked to ask; but, as she said, more truly perhaps than she intended, 'A good woman's horse is so difficult to be had, that I can't think how anybody can part with one.'

From Pisa Lady Craven went on to Florence, where

her arrival had been heralded by a letter from Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, dated October 30, 1785, in which the lord of Strawberry Hill says: 'I did send you a line last week in the cover of a letter to Lady Craven, which I knew would sufficiently tell your quickness how much I shall be obliged to you for any attentions to her. I thought her at Paris, and was surprised to hear of her at Florence. She has been, I fear, *infinitamente* indiscreet; but what is that to you or me? She is very pretty, has parts, and is good-natured to the greatest degree; has not a grain of malice or mischief (almost always the associates, in women, of tender hearts), and has never been an enemy but to herself.'

Lady Craven was delighted with Florence, and more especially with the Tribune. She declares that she thinks and dreams of nothing but the pictures and statues; and if she had no children, would be tempted to spend the rest of her days in the Tribune, where the vulgar idle tales of real life never came to her mind. The Florentine ladies she thought very like the English, and found them more good-natured than the French, as they did not whisper or criticise their own sex. Sir Horace Mann, usually so civil to travellers who brought introductions from Walpole, does not seem to have impressed her very favourably. She says that he grumbles at the follies of the young Englishmen who passed through Florence on the Grand Tour, without making any effort to help or influence them. The Grand Duke, at this time, kept no court, but any person of suitable rank could be presented to him. Lady Craven, with unusual prudence, refrained from asking the Minister to introduce her into the royal circle, observing that 'if sovereigns hide their light in

corners, strangers are foolish to go and seek them out.'

Lord Berkeley failed to keep his promise to meet his sister in Florence. It was in this year that he began his connection with Miss Coles, whom he married in 1796. His assertion that he had gone through the ceremony with her in March 1785 led, after his death in 1810, to the Berkeley *cause célèbre*. The eldest son William, born in 1786, presented a petition to the Crown for a writ of summons as Earl Berkeley; but doubts having arisen as to the alleged first marriage, the petition was referred to the House of Lords, who decided that the petitioner had not substantiated his claims.

Lady Craven, being disappointed by her brother, decided to go further afield, and see courts and people that few women had ever seen. She set her face northward; and passing through Venice, travelled to Vienna, where, if we may trust her own account, she was made much of in Court circles. Of Sir Robert Keith, our English Minister, she writes: He is lively, sensible, and polite, and behaves like a friend and brother to all the thoughtless young Englishmen. As to me, a few hours after my arrival he came to me, and with a gay sort of delight, he rubbed his hands, saying, "At last I have an Englishwoman—a Peeress—they will see what an English Peeress is—ought to be," he added. "Nay, don't think I am flattering, you want no foil; but if you did, I have only had two countrywomen here; one good, to be sure, but silent and inanimate as a statue; the other a fury. Now, indeed——' Sir Robert's only anxiety was lest Lady Craven should appear at the big dinner he was about to give for her in the latest French fashion

—a chemise and hat! He was much relieved when she assured him that her gown would be pearl satin and lace, and that her head when *dressed* had no ornament but her own hair.

Lady Craven was granted a private audience of two hours by the Emperor Joseph, who ordered his Minister, Prince Kaunitz, to prepare one of his houses for her in the hope that she might pass the winter in Vienna. When the Prince delivered the message he told her that 'His Majesty says he never saw any woman with the modest, dignified deportment of Lady Craven.' The Emperor being unmarried at this time, Lady Craven professes to have been terrified at the high opinion that he expressed of her; and after a stay of only ten days in the Austrian capital, she fled, 'like a frightened bird,' to Warsaw. Here she was cordially received by the King, who, she says, 'was the second person I have seen whom I could have wished not to be a sovereign.' His Majesty, who spoke both French and German fluently, said that he had not been in England for thirty years, and asked if Mr. Walpole were still living. 'Not only living, sire, but in good spirits,' was her reply; 'and I have in my pocket a letter from him.' The King said (rather indiscreetly) that he should like a sight of it, as Mr. Walpole's style must be uncommon. After reading it, his Majesty said that he should translate it into French for the benefit of his sister, the Princess of Cracovia. Lady Craven told him of the little story she had written with the purpose of diverting Mr. Walpole's gout, and explained that she had begun by fearing him very much; 'but his partiality for me, and the protection he had given to my pen, had emboldened me to compose for his amusement.'

While at Warsaw Lady Craven visited her former friend, the Princess Czartoriski, who was living in the neighbourhood. 'When I told her what had made me resolve to quit England,' she writes, 'she desired I should never return there; and said that clubs, fox-hunting, and racing made the men, however well inclined by nature or education, unfit for the society of polished great ladies. I assured her I could add newspapers, port and claret, Parliamentary opposition, and want of taste, that would make me reside out of England whenever I could.'

The middle of winter was a curious time to choose for a journey through Poland and Russia, and the traveller found no little difficulty in getting to St. Petersburg. Her chariot was taken off its wheels and put upon a sledge; but the roads being very narrow, it was often hung up upon the trees, and on one occasion some peasants had to be requisitioned to cut down a tree before it could be disentangled. On arriving at St. Petersburg, Lady Craven was invited to L'Hermitage (where she saw the recently purchased Houghton pictures), and graciously received by the Empress Catherine. 'There is nothing,' she says, 'either grand or dignified in the Empress's person; and as to her face, it is not like any picture I have ever seen of her. She has a face like ten thousand others; small grey eyes, and a nose that does not lend any grandeur to a set of features that have none. She has the remains of a fine skin; and when she smiles, it is not the grin of gracious majesty that condescends to smile.'

Lady Craven was taken to see the old Princess Romanzof, the Empress's first maid-of-honour, who was ninety years old. 'I am so old,' she told her visitor, 'that

I have seen your great Duke of Marlborough and his Duchess at the Hague. He was so stingy, that when his black silk stockings had holes in them, they were darned with white thread. As to his beautiful Duchess, she used to get tipsy on rum punch.' Lady Craven was also invited to dine with Prince Potemkin in an immense palace that he was building. The only room finished was three hundred feet long, and she came home quite ill with the cold, and bored into the bargain; for she says that she never heard the sound of her host's voice except when he asked what she would take to eat. Lady Craven observes that Peter the Great made a huge mistake when he transferred his capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg; 'for although the Empress does all she can to invite politeness, science, and comforts to cheer this region of ice, until she can alter the climate I believe it is a fruitless attempt.'

Lady Craven does not allude to the fact of her having any travelling companion; but Horace Walpole, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, dated March 16, 1786, says: 'Lord and Lady Spencer are arrived—and now I suppose the adventures of a certain lady and *her cousin Vernon*, which I have kept profoundly secret, will be made public. I have lately received a letter from *the Lady* from *Petersburgh*; luckily, she gave me no direction to her, no more than from Venice; so, if necessary, I shall plead that I did not know whether I must direct next to Grand Cairo or Constantinople. Petersburgh I think a very congenial asylum; the Sovereign has already fostered the *Ducal Countess of Bristol* [Miss Chudleigh]—for in the family of Hervey double dignities couple with facility. Formerly our outlaws used to concentre at Boulogne; they are now spread over the face of the earth. *Mr.*

Vernon's cousin tells me she has also been at Warsaw; that she showed the King a letter of mine, who put it into his pocket, translated it into French (though returning the original), and would send it to his sister, the Princess of Cracovia, at Vienna; so I may see it in an Utrecht gazette! I know not what it contained; however, I comfort myself that I have never dealt with my heroine but in compliments or good advice; but this comes of corresponding with strolling Roxanes.'

In a letter from Paris, Lady Craven had told the Margrave that Mr. Vernon had heard an Englishman in a diligence talking scandal about her, and adds, 'You may imagine the rage of Vernon, whose wife on her deathbed bequeathed to him all her partiality for me.' The only mention of him during her travels is in a letter from Vienna, in which she describes how she shocked Mr. Vernon and the company generally by asserting that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had not written the letters that were attributed to her. 'Lady Mary,' she observes, 'was sensible and accomplished, and had a style of her own that would easily have been distinguishable from that of another woman who wrote well. Judge, then, if I can consent to acknowledge that I take the soft graceful hand of a lady when I feel the scratches of the cloven claw of a male scholar in every line. Lady Bute told me that Horace Walpole and two other wits joined to divert themselves at the expense of the credulity of the public by composing these letters.'

Lady Craven now decided to travel through the Crimea *en route* for Constantinople, though she had been solemnly warned by the Russians that she would find the air unwholesome, and the water poisonous. Nothing daunted, she hired a couple of the carriages of the

country called kibitkas, which were made in the form of cradles, so that the occupant could lie at full length. These were slung on sledges; but the snow tracks were so worn and rough that travelling was far from pleasant, and the carriage was twice upset on the way to Moscow. The horses, she says, were obedient to the least motion of their driver's hand, and were never touched with the whip on a journey, but their docility was the result of unmerciful beating in the stable. Lady Craven, who had the despotic temper of a beauty of the old *régime*, was favourably impressed with the serf system as practised in Russia, and evidently yearned to import some system of slavery into her own country, to say nothing of a vigorous censorship of the press.

The traveller reached Moscow in safety on February 29, and after a short stay proceeded to Cherson, where she arrived on March 12. Part of the journey was performed under the escort of a Cossack guard, who believed that they were escorting a corpse, because the carriage was closed. When it was opened in the morning, and the occupant looked out, they scattered in terror, fancying that the corpse had suddenly come to life. The way was enlivened by a sham fight performed by the Cossacks and a visit to a Tartar encampment, where her ladyship was introduced to the Grand Kham himself. At Sebastopol she found a French frigate of thirty-six guns, under disguise of a merchant-vessel, fitted out for her use. The voyage to Pera was only supposed to take two days, but on this occasion the ship was becalmed for three days, and it was not till the seventh that the Turkish coast came in sight. Then the startling discovery was made that the Greek pilot was dead drunk. The officers were greatly

alarmed, as none of them knew the coast, and their only guide was a small map of the Black Sea belonging to Lady Craven. She dressed herself in a riding habit, and taking a small box in one hand and an umbrella (!) in the other, told the captain that she should get into a boat and land somewhere on the Turkish shore rather than lose sight of the entrance to the harbour.

These extreme measures did not prove necessary, and on April 20 the frigate safely anchored in the bay, and the traveller was rowed to Pera. The Comte de Choiseul,[1] then French Ambassador at Constantinople, had received orders to show her hospitality, and she was luxuriously lodged in the Palais de France. The Count was then employing artists to draw for him all the finest ruins in Europe and Asia, which enlightened liberality resulted in the splendid collection now in the Louvre. Lady Craven spent hours looking over the drawings, and was also able to indulge her taste for music, the Count having routed out a piano and a harp for her use. When she went out she was carried in one of the Ambassador's chairs by six Turks, with two janissaries walking in front. 'I believe,' she writes, 'people think it so singular a thing for a lady to come here without being obliged, that they try to keep me as long as they can.'

Lady Craven was allowed to visit the harem of the 'Captain Pacha,' or Lord High Admiral, then in almost supreme power, who kept a pet lion which used to follow him to Cabinet meetings, and frighten the other ministers out of their wits. The women, she says, spoilt their beauty with white and red paint ill applied, teeth black with smoking, and shoulders rounded by their

[1] Author of the *Voyage pittoresque en Grèce.*

habit of sitting cross-legged. She makes the somewhat astonishing statement that the Turks set an example to the men of all other nations in their conduct towards their women, and declares that the Turkish ladies ought to be very happy, being kept in so much luxury, and allowed so much liberty! Another interesting sight was that of the Sultan going to prayers, with a green umbrella over his head, the ribs of which were set with diamonds. At this time the Porte had refused to provide new batteries, on the ground of shortness of money; yet the jewellers could not find jewels enough to supply his harem.

After a cruise among the Grecian islands, and a visit to Athens in a little frigate lent by the Comte de Choiseul, Lady Craven decided to travel back to Vienna through the untrodden ways of Wallachia and Hungary. The Porte, being asked by de Choiseul to allow a *Tchonadar*, or Vizier's servant, to escort the traveller as far as Bucharest, sent an official, not to inquire into the lady's rank, as might have been expected, but to see whether she was pretty enough to be worth the trouble. The man made so favourable a report, that the Sultan could not do enough for the lady's comfort and safety, and the only wonder is that he allowed her to leave his dominions. The *Tchonadar* proved an unmitigated nuisance on the journey, all the delays being made on his account, while his wants had to be attended to first, and he invariably tried to get the best rooms for himself.

However, in spite of many difficulties and annoyances, the long rough journey to Bucharest was safely accomplished. At night the party halted with the caravans for safety; and though by day the horses had to be

rested every ten minutes on account of the heat, the dews were so heavy that in the morning the travellers looked as though they had all been dragged through a river. On entering Wallachia, they progressed at a great rate, the Prince having given strict orders that Lady Craven was to travel with no delays and at no expense. If they met a peasant riding a good horse, he was ordered to dismount, and left with a tired animal, while his own was harnessed to the carriage.

At Bucharest our heroine was hospitably entertained by the Prince and Princess of Wallachia, who serenaded her with strange music, gave her a beautiful Arab horse, and urged her to stay with them a year. But she pressed on over almost impassable roads, her carriage being again overturned, to Hermannstadt, on the Austrian frontier. Here she was received by an old major, who said that in the twenty-three years he had been stationed there she was the first lady who had passed that way. The Emperor Joseph, who was reviewing his cavalry in the neighbourhood, paid her a visit, and sat for two hours looking over her maps and presents. The traveller reached Vienna on August 30, 1786, and from thence went to Anspach, to make the acquaintance of the Margravine, and arrange for taking up her residence at the Court the following winter. Meanwhile, she proposed to return to England for a few weeks in order to see her children and collect some of her belongings. The visit to Anspach seems to have been a success, for on October 1, 1786, she writes to the Margrave: 'I am now embarking for England. I carry with me, sir, the proud satisfaction of having pleased the Margravine. Your courtiers have assured me I am the only person

they ever saw her like; that she told them the sound of my voice did her good. . . . My mother will think I am quite right to have hovered in the air so long, when she knows where my resting-place is to be; and if she is angry with me now, will be excessively pleased. But my brother will say "Pourquoi" now and for ever, even when he knows I am your adopted sister; but if he said so to me, I should reply, "Because I esteem the Margrave enough to think being his adopted sister is an idea that will support me through every trouble and comfort me for every sorrow."'

Lady Craven's arrival in England, after an absence of nearly two years, appears to have fluttered the dovecotes of both Berkeley and Craven, as the family correspondence proves.[1] Her husband wrote to Lord Berkeley to ask what course he intended to take, to which his lordship replied in laconic fashion:—

'My dear Lord,—As to any part of my family, I cannot answer for. Sufficient for myself to say that I shall certainly give you every support you require in the business consistent with my regard for her as her brother—and as hitherto you have had it, not only on account of my near relationship to your children, but also your behaviour to her, no alterations will take place in the sentiments of your affectionate and obedient servant, Berkeley.'

Mr. Joseph Hill, Cowper's friend and correspondent, was Lord Craven's agent, and seems to have acted as mediator between him and his wife. In a letter to Lord Craven, dated October 1786, Mr. Hill says:

[1] Here first published.

'I return Lord Berkeley's letter. I hope it will turn out as he supposes. He cannot but wish it, and Lady Craven will certainly receive no countenance or support from any quarter of consequence in this country —so that for her own sake she will not stay long here. On every consideration I wish your lordship not to proceed to any acts of violence or litigation in the present state of things, lest you give her an advantage she cannot obtain by any other means. You will recollect, by the terms of your agreement, she is not obliged to live abroad, and she is at liberty to see her children in the presence of either of her brothers. I am persuaded they will not encourage her in seeing the young ladies —and as to the two Mr. Cravens, if Mr. Forster [their tutor] is present, it appears to be of very little importance. I think it will be much best to wait quietly, and see the bent of his lordship's inclinations. Those he will pursue; and if they square with yours, as I trust they will, he will take effectual measures to send Lady Craven out of the kingdom—much more so, I mean, than if he is urged to it strongly. Meanwhile, I wish your lordship and the young ladies to have as little alarm as possible; and if adverse proceedings are ultimately necessary (which I am satisfied they will not be), let them be taken with temper, upon good grounds, and wait for a proper occasion—although there is none that you can pursue with effect.'

In November, Mr. Hill wrote to inform Lord Craven that although her ladyship had desired to see her daughters, she had gone into Sussex, and meant to go from thence to France. 'I mention this for your private information,' he continues, 'for it will be much best for your lordship not to let it be understood you know it,

and perhaps it might be as well to answer her letter offering a time and place to see the young ladies. I find she has been at Windsor, and attempted to see Mr. Craven again, which Mr. Forster resisted. Whether the former interview had any effect on Mr. Craven I don't know. Mr. Forster will inform your lordship; but the account her ladyship was pleased to entertain him with of the reception she had met with from so many crowned Heads and Princes, I have no doubt had been said before to her son, and was well calculated to dazzle young minds.'

To this Lord Craven replied: 'I have had a letter from Mr. Forster, who has had a very long conversation with Lady Craven, and she expressed the same resolution of not *now* wishing to see her children, and has repeatedly said she should never see them again. . . . William [his eldest son] is so thoroughly sensible of the impropriety of her conduct, and is so warmly attached to me, that all her fine stories *of foreign Princes, Prelates, States, and Potentates*, will have no kind of effect upon him.' Lady Craven having requested Mr. Hill to obtain for her some of the articles that she had left in her former home, he communicated her wishes to Lord Craven, who replied in evident exasperation; 'I have just received yours; and though I shall do everything in my power strictly to follow your advice, yet you must allow it requires no small exertion of my patience to sit down quietly and be plundered by a woman who has behaved with so much ingratitude, and I will say insolence, towards me. What am I to expect from her brothers? One will not interfere because she has used him so ill, and the other seems totally devoted to her, and has folly enough to support her in her ill-conduct towards me.

At present I cannot send the things she desires, as they are chiefly in London. I find she wants them to furnish the cottage for her mother. Surely I am not quietly to sit down to be plundered and abused by Lady Craven. She ought to be acquainted that I know what she has taken away, and likewise the infamous and clandestine manner in which she took several things from Combe Abbey.' In a later letter to Mr. Hill, written in the beginning of December, Lord Craven says; 'I enclose you a letter from Lord Berkeley, from which I think you will say that Lady Craven is mad. I hope and trust she is now gone for ever. Before she returned she wrote Mr. Colleton the most extraordinary letter from Constantinople I ever read, giving some account of her travels, which I understand she means to publish. . . . [Dec. 14] Lady Craven is certainly gone to Paris, where, by a letter I saw yesterday, the people think her mad, so extraordinary is her conduct.'

During her stay in London, Lady Craven had written to Horace Walpole offering to call on him at his house in Berkeley Square; but as he was then at Strawberry Hill, the two did not meet. While at Constantinople she had sent him a drawing of the Castle of Otranto, which had been given her by Sir Richard Worsley, the British Minister. On November 27, 1786, Walpole wrote her the following letter of acknowledgment and thanks:—

'To my extreme surprise, madam, when I knew not in what quarter of the known or unknown world you was resident or existent, my maid in Berkeley Square sent me to Strawberry Hill a note from your ladyship offering to call on me for a moment—for a whirlwind, I suppose, was waiting at your door to carry you to Japan; and as balloons have not yet settled any post-

offices in the air, you could not, or at least did not, give me any direction where to address you, though you did kindly reproach me with my silence. I must enter into a little justification before I proceed. I heard from you from Venice, then from Poland, and then, having whisked through Tartary, from Petersburgh; but still with no directions. I said to myself, "I will write to Grand Cairo, which will probably be her next stage." Nor was I totally in the wrong, for there came a letter from Constantinople, with a design mentioned of going to the Greek Islands, and orders to write to you at Vienna, but with no banker or other address specified.

'For a great while I had even stronger reasons than these for silence. For several months I was disabled by the gout from holding a pen; and you must know, madam, that one can't write when one cannot write. Then how to communicate with *La Fiancée du Roi de Garbe*? You had been in the tent of the Cham of Tartary, and in the harem of the Captain Pasha, and during your navigation of the Ægean were possibly fallen into the terrible power of a Corsair. How could I suppose that so many despotic infidels would part with your charms? I never expected you again on Christian ground. I did not doubt your having a talisman to make people love you; but anti-talismans are quite a new specific.

'Well, while I was in this quandary, I received a delightful drawing of the Castle of Otranto; but still provokingly without any address. However, my gratitude for so very agreeable and obliging a present could not rest till I found you out. I wrote to the Duchess of Richmond to beg that she would ask your brother, Captain Berkeley, for a direction to you; and he has

this very day been so good as to send me one, and I do not lose a moment in making use of it.

'I give your ladyship a million thanks for the drawing, which was really a very valuable gift to me. I did not even know that there was a Castle of Otranto. When the story was finished, I looked into the map of the kingdom of Naples for a well-sounding name, and that of Otranto was very sonorous. Nay, but the drawing is so satisfactory, that there are two small windows, one over the other, and looking into the country, that suit exactly to the small chambers, from one of which Matilda heard the young peasant singing beneath her. Judge how welcome this must be to the author; and thence judge, madam, how much you have obliged him.

'When you take another flight towards the bounds of the Western Ocean, remember to leave a direction. One cannot always shoot flying. Lord Chesterfield directed a letter to the late Lord Pembroke, who was always swimming, "To the Earl of Pembroke in the Thames, over against Whitehall." That was sure of finding him within a certain number of fathoms; but your ladyship's longitude varies so rapidly, that one must be a good bowler indeed to take one's ground so judiciously that by casting wide of the mark one may come in near the jack.'

From Paris Lady Craven wrote to her husband, reproaching him with having broken his promise to allow her children to write to her once a fortnight, and declared her intention of breaking her own promise that she would give up Keppel as soon as he was eight years old. She further informed him that, with her mother's approval, she was going to pass some time at Anspach, where she was to be treated as the Margrave's sister.

If he attempted to get possession of Keppel by force, she was resolved to go to Benham, and throw herself for protection and redress upon the laws of her country. About the same time she wrote the following (unpublished) letter to the Marquis of Carnarvon, whom she had apparently consulted in her difficulties :—

'I have sent your lordship a very grave letter by Mr. Tate, a worthy and amiable man. The contents of it I hope will remain eternally buried between you and me; and if you can serve me in the matter, I shall never be thankful enough. If I am blackballed at Parnassus, I shall have courted the Muses on their own territory to little purpose indeed. I feel I am now out of favour with the God of Light, for I have not a ray of his divinity, not even a small sparkle at the end of my pen to make it trace a few lines to you in return for yours; for which I thank you very much, and wish your indisposition may be of no more serious nature than the new piece of scandal you threaten me with, though it does not surprise me. I certainly did go into the Temple of Jupiter and of Minerva at Athens—who knows but Apollo might have met me there; if he did, I assure you he was accompanied by the nine Muses, and surely there were ladies enough to match one mortal. Well, if they have said anything amiss of my doings there, I shall summon them to the Court of Conscience, and they will confess (nay, mortals will soon see) *what I did there* was by their commands, aided and assisted by them—and lest your curiosity should lead your ideas astray on this subject—know, my good lord, that I did compose while in Greece something for M. de Choiseul's press at Pera. You would be very surprised now if I were to tell you I am like *a cow*, because, having a

shocking cough, I mean to live upon milk chiefly—but I think you deserve this, for I am as like to a cow as you are to a calf, and depend on 't, whenever you *bray* I shall *bellow*.—So hoping a day may come when we may bray and bellow a duo together, I remain, in prose, your much obliged humble friend and servant,

'ELIZA. CRAVEN.'

It will be noted that her ladyship, in spite of her boasted clearness of ideas, was decidedly hazy on the subject of natural history, since calves do not usually bray, nor do cows live on milk.

During Lady Craven's stay in Paris on her way to Anspach, Horace Walpole wrote her a letter on the subject of her proposed publication of her *Travels*, which contrasts amusingly with his letters to Lady Ossory on the same subject when the book actually came out. 'Your ladyship tells me,' he writes under the date of January 2, 1787, 'that you have kept a journal of your travels; you know not when your friends at Paris will give you time to put it *au net*; that is, I conclude and hope, prepare it for the press. I do not wonder that those friends, whether talismanic or others, are so assiduous if you indulge them; but unless they are of the former description, they are unpardonable, if they know what they interrupt. . . . How proud I should be to register a noble authoress of my own country, who has travelled over more regions and farther than any female in print! Your ladyship has visited those islands and shore whence formerly issued those travelling sages and legislators who sought and imported wisdom, laws, and religion into Greece; and though we are so perfect as to want none of these commodities, the fame of those philosophers is certainly

diminished when a fair lady has gone as far in quest of knowledge. You have gone in an age when travels are brought to a juster standard, by narrations being limited to truth.

'Formerly the performers of the longest voyages destroyed half the merit of their expeditions by relating, not what they had, but had *not* seen; a sort of communication that they might have imparted without stirring a foot from home. Such exaggerations drew discredit on travels, till people would not believe that there existed, in other countries, anything very different from what they saw in their own; and because no Patagonians, or gentry seven or eight feet high, were really discovered, they would not believe that there were Laplanders or pigmies of three or four. Incredulity went so far that at last it was doubted whether China so much as existed; and our countryman, Sir John Mandeville, got an ill name because, though he gave an account of it, he had not brought back its right name. . . .

'I am sorry to hear, madam, that by your account Lady Mary Wortley was not so accurate and faithful as modern travellers. The invaluable art of inoculation, which she brought from Constantinople, so dear to all admirers of beauty, and to which we owe, perhaps, the preservation of yours, stamps her an universal benefactress; and as you rival her in poetic talents, I had rather you would employ them to celebrate her for her nostrum than detect her for romancing. However, genuine accounts of the interior of seraglios would be precious; and I was in hope would become the greater rarities, as I flattered myself that your friends, the Empress of Russia and the Emperor [of Germany], were

determined to level Ottoman tyranny. His Imperial Majesty, who has demolished the prison bars of so many nunneries, would perform a still more Christian act in setting free so many useless sultanas. . . . Your ladyship's indefatigable peregrinations should have such objects in view, when you have the ear of sovereigns. Peter the Hermit conjured up the first crusades against the infidels by running from monarch to monarch. Lady Craven should be as zealous and renowned; and every fair Circassian would acknowledge that one English lady had repaid their country for the secret which another had given to Europe from their practice.'

PART III

Christian Frederick, Margrave of Anspach, Brandenburgh, and Bareith, Duke of Prussia, and Count of Sayn, who henceforward played so important a part in Lady Craven's life, was born in 1736. His mother was an elder sister of Frederick the Great, under whom the Margrave studied war tactics and strategy in his youth. Caroline, Queen of George II., was an elder sister of the Margrave's father, and helped to superintend his education. When only fifteen, Christian Frederick was informed by his father that he was expected to marry his cousin, a Princess of Saxe-Coburg. On seeing his proposed bride, he refused the match, but was told that he would be kept in a State prison until he consented. The boy, who loved field sports and out-of-door life, could not long hold out against such a threat, and when he was eighteen the marriage took place. The Margravine was sickly in body, and dull and

indifferent in disposition; while, worst offence of all, she bore her husband no heir. When he succeeded to the Margraviate three years after his marriage, the ministers suggested that the Prince should divorce his wife and seek a younger bride; but he replied, 'I am her husband, and as long as she lives I am bound to protect her.' He allowed himself, however, considerable latitude in the direction of left-handed alliances, though he prided himself upon never having formed a *liaison* with a woman of his own nation. He early earned the reputation of an unusually eccentric sovereign, for his extravagances and caprices knew no bounds, and for some years Europe is said to have rung with his follies.

Lady Craven declares that the joy of the Margravine at seeing her was very great, though she was naturally cold and indifferent to those around her, more especially to her husband. Life at the little German Court was formal, monotonous, and deadly dull, but the Margrave's adopted sister claims to have cheered and brightened the hours of her 'kind and princely brother.' She persuaded him to turn an old *manège* into a theatre; and with the Court orchestra to play, and the young nobility to sing and dance, she managed to arrange representations that were not only lively, but magnificent. She was manager-in-chief, wrote most of the pieces for her company, and usually appropriated the leading *rôles*. Another of her innovations was the establishment of a society for the encouragement of science and art, the members of which met once a week, read papers, and discussed various learned subjects.

The Margrave proposed that Lady Craven should found a charitable school for girls, and gave a fine house and garden for the purpose, observing that females

of every class to whom she should prescribe the mode of education were certain to prove good wives and mothers. The Margravine threw cold water upon the plan, and in the result not a single person recommended a child to this miniature St. Cyr, the inhabitants of Anspach apparently not sharing their sovereign's faith in Lady Craven's ability to train good wives and mothers. The Englishwoman explains that there was much jealousy against her on the part of the entourage, who thought that she intended to fill the Court with her English friends. The Germans, she says, always imagine that you have a scheme if you reside among them; and she complains that she could never satisfy the suspicions of the people, who invariably opposed her plans.

Lady Craven's chief rival at Anspach was the once famous actress, Mademoiselle Clairon. In 1755, when she was only forty-two, Clairon had left the stage; and eight years later the Margrave, over whom she had obtained a strong influence, invited her to come and reside at Anspach. She was in the habit of asserting that she had come to Anspach at the request of the Margravine, and that her coming had prevented a divorce between the royal pair. She kept up an extravagant establishment at the expense of the Margrave, who called her *sa maman*, and treated her as a councillor and confidante. The elderly *maman* naturally became furiously jealous of the fascinating adopted sister. An amusing account of the relations between the rivals is given in the *Memoirs* of the Alsatian Baroness D'Oberkirk, *née* de Freundstein, who lived in the family of the Duke of Würtemberg at Montbeliard, near Strasburg. During her stay at Anspach, Lady Craven paid a visit

to Strasburg, bringing a letter of introduction from the Margrave to the family of Würtemberg.

'There are some persons,' writes the Baroness D'Oberkirk, *à propos* of this visitor, 'whom Providence allows to pass a great part of their lives without experiencing any obstacle to their bizarre and extraordinary conduct; and then, when perhaps it is least expected, they fall into irremediable misfortune. . . . Lady Craven only kept her place in the world by force of her boldness, spirit, and aplomb. Without being exactly pretty, she was piquant and agreeable, with fine eyes and superb chestnut hair. She was a charming companion, sweet, gay, *insouciante*, without the least pedantry; her timidity was delicious. Her dominant passion was for comedy, which she acted admirably, and she communicated this passion to the Margrave. Her conversation was very amusing—*elle racontait comme M. de Voltaire.*' The eccentricities of Lord Craven furnished many droll chapters; but what she related most successfully was her arrival at Anspach, her relations with Mademoiselle Clairon, and the jealousy and extravagance of the actress. At first she was cordially received by the ruling goddess, who made her the confidante of all her complaints against the Margrave. Lady Craven listened with a sympathetic ear, and lectured the Prince, who apologised and promised amendment. But Clairon was full of capricious humours, and went through life with a tragedy air, 'her very night-cap,' according to Lady Craven, 'having all the dignity of a gilt-paper crown.' After a time the Englishwoman began to laugh at the heroics of her friend, and made the Margrave laugh too, who was never able to treat his '*maman*' seriously again. Lady Craven continued

to laugh and to amuse the Margrave; she played comedy in the theatre and in the salon, while her pink cheeks, smiles, and good humour made the pretensions of Cleopatra insupportable. Clairon became jealous, and threatened to stab herself. The Margrave was alarmed, but Lady Craven asked scornfully, 'Do you forget that actresses' poignards only run into their sleeves?' Open war was now declared between the two rivals; but after three years' struggle Clairon fled, uttering imprecations against her supplanter. Lady Craven told the story in inimitable fashion. 'It was easy for me,' she said, 'to enter into the lists against an actress, for I know all Voltaire, Corneille, and Racine by heart. She could never find me at a loss; I always had a weapon ready.'

Writing in later years to her friend, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Lady Craven observes of her old rival: 'Mademoiselle Clairon was the greatest liar that ever existed. There is a printed book called *Mémoires de Mlle. Clairon*, in which there is scarcely anything but lies. Among them is the conversation she pretends to have had with the Margrave's first wife—a *tête-à-tête*. Now I was given an account by all the courtiers at Anspach *de ses faits et gestes* while she was there. She never was alone with the Margravine. Never saw her but before all the people invited to hear her declamation. She never did anything but act. Her brain was so completely turned by her favour with the Margrave that at one of the two audiences (she was with the Margravine only twice), when somebody said, "Est-ce que Mademoiselle parle l'Allemand?" she replied, "Comment peut-on parler une langue *non* articulée?" This before a German Princess as proud

of the German tongue as of her pedigree. Another time, one of the chamberlains told her she spoke to the Margrave with too much hauteur. "Que voulez-vous, mon cher Baron?" she returned. "J'ai joué tant d'impératrices sur le théâtre que je me crois impératrice même sur ma chaise." If she had had any virtues, she would have been a very dangerous person, for she always studied words and actions to produce some effect.'

Lady Craven seems to have kept up an intermittent correspondence with Strawberry Hill; for on December 11, 1788, we find Walpole writing to her: 'It is agreeable to your ladyship's usual goodness to honour me with another letter; and I may say to your equity too, after I had proved to M. Mercier, by the list of dates of my letters, that it was not mine, but the post's fault, that you did not receive one that I had the honour of writing to you above a year ago. Not, madam, that I could wonder if you had the prudence to drop a correspondence with an old superannuated man; who, conscious of his decay [he was then seventy-one], has had the decency of not troubling with his dotages persons of not near your ladyship's youth and vivacity. I have long been of opinion that few persons know *when* to die; I am not so English as to mean when to despatch themselves—no, but when to go out of the world. I have usually applied this opinion to those who have made a considerable figure; and consequently it was not adapted to myself. Yet even we cyphers ought not to fatigue the public scene when we become lumber. Thus, being quite out of the question, I will explain my maxim, which is the more wholesome the higher it is addressed. My opinion

then is, that when any person has shone as much as is possible in his or her best walk, he should take up his Strulbrugism, and be heard of no more. Instances will be still more explanatory. Voltaire ought to have pretended to die after *Alzire*, *Mahomet*, and *Semiramis*, and not have produced his wretched last pieces; Lord Chatham should have closed his political career with his immortal war; and how weak was Garrick, when he had quitted the stage, to limp after the tatters of fame by writing and reading pitiful poems; and even by *sitting* to read plays which he had acted with such fire and energy! . . .

'We have just received the works of an author [Frederick the Great], from whom I find I am to receive much less entertainment than I expected, because I shall have much less to read than I intended. His *Memoirs*, I am told, are almost wholly military; which, therefore, I shall not read; and his poetry I am sure I shall not look at, because I should not understand it. What I saw of it formerly convinced me that he would not have been a poet, even if he had written in his own language; and though I do not understand German, I am told it is a fine language; and I can easily believe that any tongue (not excepting our old barbarous Saxon, which, a bit of an antiquary as I am, I abhor) is more harmonious than French. It was curious absurdity, therefore, to pitch on the most unpoetic language in Europe, the most barren, and the most clogged with difficulties. I have heard Russian and Polish sung, and both sounded musical; but to abandon one's own tongue, and not adopt Italian, that is even sweeter, softer, and more copious than the Latin, was a want of taste that I should think could not be

applauded even by a Frenchman born in Provence. But what a language is the French, which measures verses by feet that never are to be pronounced; which is the case wherever the mute *e* is found! What poverty of various sounds for rhyme, when, lest similar cadences should too often occur, their mechanic bards are obliged to marry masculine and feminine terminations as alternately as the black-and-white squares of a chess-board? Nay, will you believe me, madam—yes, you will, for you may convince your own eyes—that a scene of *Zaïre* begins with three of the most nasal adverbs that ever snorted together in a breath? *Enfin*, *donc*, *désormais*, are the culprits in question. *Enfin donc*, need I tell your ladyship that the author I alluded to at the beginning of this long tirade is the late King of Prussia?

'I am conscious that I have taken a little liberty when I excommunicate a language in which your ladyship has condescended to write, but I only condemn it for verse and pieces of eloquence, of which I thought it alike incapable until I read Rousseau of Geneva. It is a most sociable language, and charming for narrative and epistles. Yet, write as well as you will in it, you must be liable to express yourself better in the speech that is natural to you; and your own country has a right to understand all your works, and is jealous of their not being as perfect as you could make them. Is it not more creditable to be translated into a foreign tongue than into your own? And will it not vex you to hear the translation taken for the original, and to find vulgarisms that you could not have committed yourself? But I have done, and will release you, madam, only observing that you flatter me with a vain hope when

you tell me that you shall return to England some time or other. Where will that time be for me? And when it arrives, shall I not be somewhere else?' . . .

Lady Craven's *Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople* does not appear to have reached England till 1789. In February of that year Walpole writes to Lady Ossory: 'Lady Craven's *Travels* I received from Robson two hours ago. Dodsley brought the manuscript to me before I came to town, but I positively refused to open it, though he told me my name was mentioned several times; but I was conscious how grievous it would be to her family and poor daughters, and therefore persisted in having nothing to do with it. I own I have now impatiently cut the leaves in search of my own name, and am delighted at finding it there but thrice, and only by the initial letter. When I have the honour of seeing your ladyship I can tell you many collateral circumstances, but I will not put them on paper. I fear she may come to wish, or should, that she had not been born with a propensity for writing.' In another letter to the same lady he observes: 'I am sorry my noble authoress's *Travels* do not please you, madam; in truth, I fear they will add more to her present celebrity than to her future renown. I even doubt whether she would have been turned into a laurel as soon by running away from Apollo (which was not her turn) as by running to him.'

Lady Craven made Anspach her headquarters for nearly five years. The winters were usually passed at Triesdorf, the royal hunting-lodge, about three leagues from the capital. Here she followed the staghounds with the Margrave in the morning, played cribbage with the Margravine in the evening, made an English

garden, and introduced the manufacture of Stilton cheese. 'The winter following my arrival,' says her ladyship, 'the Margrave wished me to go to Naples with him for a few months. I of course acceded to his proposition, and we set off with my son Keppel.' The party were warmly welcomed at Naples, where the Margrave was a favourite with the royal family. 'The Queen,' writes Lady Craven, 'took such a fancy to me, that she made me spend most of my evenings with her, while in the mornings I often accompanied the King [Ferdinand the Fourth] on his hunting or shooting parties. My adroitness in killing game, my skill in riding on horseback, and the indifference I showed about my person in rain or wind, endeared me much to the King. Sir William Hamilton, who early in life had experienced the kindness of my relations, returned that kindness in my person by saying such handsome things about me at Court that I soon became a general favourite. The Margrave was never so happy as during our stay at Naples. As he excelled in all manly exercises, he was not a little gratified to display me as one accustomed to these sports.'

Lady Craven speaks in high terms of the understanding, the versatility, and the youthful ardour of Sir William, who had then reached the age of threescore years and ten; but on the subject of Emma Harte she preserves a discreet silence. The reason for this reticence may be found in a letter of Walpole's to the Miss Berrys. 'What,' he asks, 'will the great Duke think of our Amazons if he has letters opened, as the Emperor was wont? One of our Camillas, but in a freer style, I hear he saw (I fancy just before your arrival); and he must have wondered at the familiarity

of the dame and the nincompoophood of her Prince. Sir William is arrived——, his Nymph of the Attitudes [Lady Hamilton] was too prudish to visit the rambling peeress.'[1]

The rambling peeress enjoyed herself mightily at Naples, where there were magnificent operas, continual masquerades, and every kind of pleasure and luxury. She and her Prince intended to stay in Italy until April or May, but one morning during Carnival time Lady Craven received a message that the Margrave desired to speak to her at once. She went to his room, and found him in great agitation. Sending away the servants, and kissing her hand, he said, 'You have conducted yourself like a sister indeed; but I have one request to make to you' (he held a letter in his hand, which shook with anger). 'I must go to Berlin *incognito*. Will you go with me? It is the only sacrifice of your time I shall ever require of you.' He explained that an infamous plot had been formed at Anspach to create discontent. The affair demanded his immediate presence at Berlin, but he wished to go without the knowledge of his ministers. Lady Craven, who guessed that the letter was about herself, as the Margrave never told her its contents, begged him to be calm, and promised to do all that he wished. The suite was sent home, and she and the Margrave paid a flying visit *incognito* to Berlin. On their return to Anspach, the Secretary of State was dismissed after his papers had been seized, and the other ministers took an early opportunity of assuring Lady Craven of their profound respect and esteem. 'The wretches!' exclaimed the Margrave,

[1] This refers to Lady Craven's *second* visit to Naples in 1791.

when he told her about the confiscated correspondence, in which she figured as 'the Ultramontane.' 'You, whose conduct proves that as a mother or a sister your whole time is occupied in creating delight here, where dulness and monotony have taken up their abode!' The unjust suspicions of his people against her determined the Margrave, says Lady Craven, to cede his dominions to Prussia, a resolution which she declares that she did her best to combat.

In an unpublished letter dated Triesdorf, September 12, 1789, and addressed to an English duke—possibly Portland—Lady Craven says: 'I have received your Grace's letter, which bespeaks the goodness and amiability of your heart, which I have long known; and I answer it, not to settle myself upon you as a correspondent, but to ease your shoulders of any burden whatever upon the subject I wrote to you upon. I have this very day received some intelligence from Berlin which makes me believe, by a channel quite different from yours and mine, that I shall have the satisfaction of seeing my worthy friend the Margrave *décored* when an opportunity offers. You are very civil about my talents, and I wish I had lived in England with people whose tempers had been as much pleased with them as the Margrave seems thankful to me for diffusing a little elegant gaiety in his Court. He is an honest, sensible man, and deserves the love and esteem of everybody who approaches him. And if, like his uncle, he does not incessantly court the Muses, he knows the value of those who have some intercourse with them. I wish your Grace may long be prevented from renewing your connection on Mount Parnassus by more solid and heartfelt employments, and be assured no laurels bestowed by

Apollo can give half the pleasure as wreaths of myrtle given from the fair hand of your Duchess.'

In 1790 the Margrave informed Lady Craven that he had been invited to go to Berlin for the Carnival, and that she was desired to accompany him as his adopted sister. As usual, the Margravine stayed at home, but she took an affectionate farewell of her pseudo sister-in-law, and exhorted her to dance a minuet at Berlin and show the Prussian royalties what dancing really was. Lady Craven found the Princess Amelia's palace prepared for her at Berlin; and the King of Prussia, calling on her the day after her arrival, said, 'This is yours. You are my adopted sister as well as the Margrave's.' His Majesty no doubt thought that the Englishwoman was worth conciliating, for the real object of the Margrave's visit to Berlin was to arrange for the sale of his principalities to Prussia; and to avoid arousing suspicion, the conferences were held in Lady Craven's apartment. During the three months she spent in Berlin she lived entirely with the royal family, the Duke of Brunswick-Oels being told off as her special cavalier. The Minister of Finance, Bernsprunger, was charged by the King to offer her lands and titles for herself and her boy; but she replied that she could not accept anything, because she was not legally parted from her husband.

Before leaving Berlin Lady Craven heard that her husband had been seized with a fit at Bath, and was in a critical condition; while on the journey home the Margrave was met at Bareith with the news of the Margravine's death. After three months' mourning the Margrave decided to go to England, whence he intended to announce his resignation of the Margraviate to his

subjects. It was supposed that he had some thoughts of marrying an English princess; but his minister, Seckendorf, wrote to Madame Schwellenberg, Miss Burney's old enemy, to say that a pair of fine eyes at the Court of Anspach would prevent the Margrave from marrying as long as their influence continued. The Prince was furious at reports being spread abroad of his re-marriage, and intercepted the correspondence between Seckendorf and Madame Schwellenberg, in which the minister represented Lady Craven in an odious light. As the letters were intended for the eye of the Queen, Lady Craven professes to attribute to their influence her Majesty's subsequent conduct towards her.

On arriving in London in the summer of 1791, her ladyship does not appear to have met with a very cordial reception from the members of her own family. In a letter to the Miss Berrys, dated August 23, 1791, Walpole says: 'You, who have had a fever with *fêtes*, had rather hear the history of the *soi-disant* Margravine. She has been in England with her foolish Prince, and not only notified their marriage to the Earl [of Berkeley], her brother, who did not receive it propitiously, but his Highness informed his lordship by a letter that they have a usage in his country of taking a wife with the left hand; that he had espoused his lordship's sister in that manner, and intends, as soon as she shall be a widow, to marry her with his right hand also. The Earl replied that he knew she was married to an English peer, a most respectable man, and can know nothing of her marrying any other man, and so they are gone to Lisbon.'

Lady Craven's account of the matter is that Lord Berkeley was so enraged with her for not wishing to live

with her husband again, that he vowed he would never forgive her. He had also advised Lord Craven when the time came for Keppel to be given up by his mother to stop the payment of her jointure; but Lord Craven had replied, 'God forbid I should ever do that! Whose fortune might she not have where she bestowed her society?' Fearing persecution, Lady Craven placed Keppel at Harrow under a feigned name, and then departed with the Margrave for Lisbon. They were detained at Calais for three days because (the reason is not obvious) Louis XVI. had fled from Paris, and it was not until he had been brought back from Varennes that they were allowed to hire a packet and proceed on their voyage. At Lisbon all the foreign ministers visited Lady Craven except the representative of England, Mr. Edward Walpole. The Queen of Portugal was kind to the 'rambling peeress,' declaring, 'I will protect her, and the Queen of England as a mother should protect and not persecute her.' Lady Craven observes, 'There were two distinct parties at Lisbon. All the good and spiritual people, with the party attached to the Queen, were for me; while the base and corrupted levelled the shafts of their malice against me.'

On September 26, 1791, Lord Craven died at Lausanne, and on October 30 Lady Craven was married to the Margrave. 'I felt myself at liberty,' she writes, 'to act as I thought proper, and accepted the hand of the Margrave without fear or remorse. We were married in the presence of a hundred persons, and attended by all the naval officers, who were quite delighted to assist as witnesses.' Walpole announces the news to Lady Ossory in a letter dated November 23. 'Oh, I this moment recollect to tell your ladyship,' he writes, 'that

Lady Craven received the news of her husband's death on a Friday, went into weeds on Saturday, and into white satin and many diamonds on Sunday, and in that vestal trim was married to the Margrave of Anspach by my cousin's chaplain, though he and Mrs. Walpole excused themselves from being present. The bride excused herself for having *so few* diamonds; they had been the late Margravine's, but she is to have many more, and will soon set out for England, where they shall astonish the public by living in a style of magnificence unusual, as they are richer than anybody in this country. The Dukes of Bedford, Marlborough, and Northumberland may hide their diminished rays.'

The newly married couple, after a short visit to Madrid, travelled to England, passing as quickly as possible through France, where the Revolution was then raging, many of Lady Craven's old friends being in a piteous case. On her arrival in London the new Margravine received a letter from her daughters to the effect that, 'With due deference to the Margravine of Anspach, the Miss Cravens inform her that out of respect to their father they cannot wait upon her.' Her eldest son neglected her, and Lord Berkeley wrote her 'an absurd letter,' full of reproaches on account of her marrying the Margrave so soon after the death of her husband. Worst of all, Queen Charlotte refused to receive her at Court as Margravine of Anspach. The Margrave was much hurt at this decision, and asked his wife what possible reason there could be for such an affront, but she confessed herself wholly unable to account for it. She had intended to be presented at Court as a Princess of the German Empire, having been created Princess Berkeley by the Emperor Joseph, and

went so far as to draw up an address to the House of Lords, setting forth her rights and dignities, but was persuaded to abandon her intention of sending it in.

The Margrave bought the large villa on the Thames at Hammersmith, which was formerly the property of Bubb Dodington, and was called by him La Trappe. It was now renamed Brandenburgh House, and a theatre was added to it. The Margrave also bought Benham from his stepson, which had been in the property of the Craven family since the time of the first Earl, and gave it to his wife. The Hon. Grantley Berkeley, Lady Craven's nephew, describes in his *Recollections* the magnificent masquerade which was given as a house-warming at Brandenburgh House. To this the most distinguished of the English and foreign nobility were invited; but, sad to say, the guests behaved very badly, breaking plate-glass mirrors, and stealing or damaging portions of the costly hangings and chair-covers. Mr. Berkeley tells us that his aunt still wrote plays of a tenderly sentimental kind, and never failed, though past her first youth, to play the young and interesting heroines, keeping her assistants as much as possible in the background.[1]

Her most intimate friends, according to her nephew, were those eccentric people whose peculiarities of manner and dress were caricatured by Gillray and Rowlandson. Her *corps dramatique* consisted, besides her son Keppel, of Lords Barrymore, Blessington, and Cholmondeley, of Lady Albinia Cholmondeley and Lady Buckinghamshire, but professional aid was sometimes called in in the persons of Mrs. Abington and M.

[1] A curious account of the theatricals at Brandenburgh House is given in the *Reminiscences* of Henry Angelo.

Le Tescier. On one occasion Mrs. Abington played with Lady Craven in *The Provoked Wife*, when the actress's speeches were 'cut' in order to give more prominence to the *rôle* of the heroine, taken of course by the hostess. As might be expected, there was a row royal, and Mrs. Abington's lines were restored to her. In the *Lady's Monthly Museum* for June 1798 there is a paragraph to the effect that 'the celebrated tragedy of *The Robbers*, translated from the German, with considerable emendations by the Hon. Keppel Craven, was performed at this theatre (Brandenburgh House). A most brilliant and crowded audience attended, and expressed the greatest satisfaction at the merit of the piece and the performers. Amelia was performed with all that taste, pathos, and classical propriety which so eminently distinguishes the sensibility and accomplished mind of the Margravine. . . . The Margravine spoke a most pointed and brilliant epilogue with a charming excellence that was irresistibly impressive on the feelings of the audience.'

In 1806 the Margrave died of a pulmonary complaint, being then seventy years of age. His wife, who was the only person mentioned in his will, says of him: 'A better man never existed. Nothing could divert him from what was right, none could more easily forgive. . . . He was so perfectly genteel and princely in his air, that even with his great-coat and round hat the sovereign was perceived.' In Lady Craven's *Autobiography* there is an engraving of a profile of the Margrave in bas-relief, modelled by herself when at Naples, which represents a grotesquely ugly man, with a nose of immense length, and a foolish expression. This, which certainly cannot have been an idealised portrait, is described by the artist

as an excellent likeness. The Margrave's chief passion throughout his life was for horses. He kept a magnificent stud at Brandenburgh House, and his last request to his wife on his deathbed was that a favourite grey horse which was in training for the Derby might run whether its master were alive or dead. Christian Frederick was buried at Benham in a splendid mausoleum, the marble for which was brought from Italy, and cost five thousand pounds.

Unlike most ladies of her type, the Margravine did not turn *dévote* in her declining years, nor occupy her time in good works. She was fortunate enough to possess several hobbies, which her great wealth and unshakable self-complacency enabled her to ride with triumphant ease and enjoyment. The best methods of fruit-cultivation and the desirability of filling up canals were her chief fads, but she felt herself perfectly competent to regulate any other matters that came under her notice, from the assessment of the poor-rates to the paving of the streets. From her published correspondence with Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, and some unpublished letters to Dr. Taylor, secretary of the Society of Arts and Sciences, we are enabled to gain occasional glimpses into the latter portion of her life.

Of her children, with the exception of Keppel, who seems to have been an affectionate and dutiful son, she saw little or nothing. Her eldest son William, created Viscount Uffington and Earl of Craven in 1801, offended the Margravine deeply (in spite of her dramatic tastes) by marrying Miss Louisa Brunton, the popular actress. The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, who was reconciled to her mother soon after the return of the latter to England, married a Mr. Maddocks, and died in 1799.

Maria, the second daughter, married the Earl of Sefton, and died in 1851; while the youngest, Arabella, married General the Hon. Frederick St. John, and died in 1819.

The Margravine seems to have divided her time between Benham and Brandenburgh House, with occasional flights to the Continent. She had various grievances on the subject of her fortune, the income which, she asserted, was due to her from the King of Prussia, not being forthcoming. In an unpublished letter, dated August 11, 1806, and addressed to Mr. Jackson, then English Minister at the Court of Berlin, she writes: 'I did not expect or care about the Palace at Berlin, but there were things of much more consequence to me which the King of Prussia ought to do; though positively the late King gave the Palace to me for my life, as well as to the Margrave. I have at last been very ill these two days, which I have expected this great while, as I have never had a moment's rest since the Margrave's death—everybody around me, instead of considering my situation, have not given me time to breathe—demands of every sort, fancies of all kinds. If you can give me any hopes of a Peace, you will do me good. I hear Prussia has or will make a separate Peace with France, of which I never doubted whenever it suited her. I confess I am astonished that any man could take Pitt's place on his shoulders without first pointing out the *absolute ignorance* he was master of as to foreign affairs—deprecating the system—and then boldly proceeding on quite a new plan. For me, who am not a man, but wish my country not to be totally ruined, I shall keep my eyes off all it does, that I may not lament more than I have for years the best of Princes' partiality

for it. . . . I don't know at all in the general confusion who your ministerial friends are, but this I can tell you that the ministry is all divided, and will not hold together long.'

In this year 1806 the Margravine appears to have made the acquaintance of Dr. Taylor, secretary to the Society of Arts and Sciences, for which body she wrote a treatise on the art of pruning fruit-trees. In November 1806 she writes to the secretary from Benham :[1] 'I hope you do not forget my patriotic scheme of introducing, or rather reviving, the art of pruning trees. The season is now come for peach and pear trees, and I am very busy here. I have a young *élève* whom I wish you to provide for, as making an Ambulating Pruner such as they have in France. Pray let me know if you have done anything towards this—a thing I think of the greatest consequence to the comforts as well as pockets of all people who have fruit-trees.' Apparently the idea did not 'catch on,' for in a later letter the Margravine complains : 'I despair of ever seeing anybody think of *fruit*. There seems to be a sort of apathy about people that precludes any hope of preventing the English from gradually sinking into profound ignorance about many useful things. . . . I have spoken to many, who seem to think that a man, because he is called a *gardener*, is not to be affronted or put out of humour by having his trees pruned.'

The Margravine could certainly not be accused of apathy in the propagation of her pet theories. Having made up her mind that Burgundy could be manufactured from English-grown grapes, she planted vines at Hammersmith, and in May 1808 writes to Dr. Taylor : 'Would it be satisfactory to you and the other members

[1] This and the following letters to Dr. Taylor are now first published.

of the Society that I should bring a sample of the Burgundy I made last autumn, for though it is not yet fit to drink, the colour and flavour might be seen; and if you had any French person from Burgundy present, he might give his opinion.' In an undated letter, probably written a few weeks later, she says: 'I have the greatest satisfaction in assuring you that the Burgundy I made *here* from my own grapes has succeeded perfectly. I have just drawn it out of the cask, and I beg you will make this fact be known to the Society, and if you choose it I will write down an account of the time and manner it was made in (last autumn) and every circumstance relative to it. I made two sorts—one of the most indifferent grapes, and one of those good branches I could save from the all-devouring sparrows. . . . I claim some token of reward from the Society for having persevered in planting the Burgundy grape, having it pruned, and making two sorts of Burgundy wine, which I have bottled off. By two sorts I mean that the indifferent grapes have made an inferior sort, which I confess I imagined I should have found vinegar, but which is a very palatable Burgundy of a lighter colour than the other, which is of as bright a colour and good a flavour as French Burgundy. . . . I shall thank you to have it inserted in all the newspapers that good Burgundy has been made here. The ignorance and obstinacy I have had to overcome from the moment I planted vines have given me so much trouble that I deserve to reap the only reward I wish—that my country should know it.'

Dr. Taylor apparently thought that the Margravine's treatise on the Art of Pruning deserved a medal, for in May 1809 she writes to him: 'I am much obliged to

you for your politeness in having thought my *observations* worthy of a medal, but I take the part of those who have thwarted your gallantry. I have *invented* nothing. I have humbly reverted back to that method of managing fruit-trees which much study and experience have proved to be the best in France, where such study and such experience could only be acquired by experiments which could only be made in the Jardin du Roi and the rich abbeys. If Providence had made me a man instead of a woman, I believe I should have pruned many *glutton* branches (*branches gourmandes*), which end in the ruin or premature decay of things of more consequence than a fruit-tree. However, as I am destined by nature to submit to the Law of Moses and the manners of Englishmen, which makes me an ox or an ass or *any other thing* subject to the dangers of being *coveted* or persecuted, I shall with all the constancy and gaiety of mind Heaven has blessed me with, *go on* in communicating through your hands my observations on fruit.

'I must beg of you to assemble a Committee of your best chemists and profound scholars in the effects of evaporation, stagnation, and putrefaction, to resolve this question: I much suspect the multiplied navigable cuts so wantonly encouraged for many years in this country, which, being an island, had already inconveniences from damp and cold atmosphere, have caused the very dismal change I have gradually perceived in the climate within these few years. One material reason I have for so thinking is the observation I have made that near a river that ebbs and flows as my beloved Thames does, the air is dry and wholesome; and the nearer everything is placed to such a river, the less it is affected by damp. I have other reasons for supposing that our

ugly ditches called navigations have injured that which, unless it is as good as we can have it, my pruning will be of little service—I mean the *air*. I would wish much reflection and calculation should precede any answer I may get on this subject—a very serious one to this country, I assure you, where those native plants called *men* to be wise must be healthy, and to be good must be happy, and there is no happiness without health.'

The Margravine not only took the climate and the orchards of her country under her protection, but gave an enthusiastic welcome to any eccentric novelty that might be brought to her notice. Writing to Dr. Taylor from Southampton, where she had a small house, she tells him: 'I have just come from Petworth, where I saw Mr. Biddulph, a neighbour of Lord Egremont's, who wishes to belong to our Society, as he believed most credulously in the extinction of all Golden Pippins, in the loss of the mother plant (what nonsense!). I am very desirous he should return to common sense, and believe that though Mother Eve is dead, I am alive. I could not do better than recommend him to get acquainted with you, when he will return to truth, and eat good apples. I find Lord Egremont belongs to us. I raved about the woollen sacks to him. I have some thoughts of having harness made of woollen ropes dyed black, and by my example introducing them for posting all over this kingdom; for in this last journey of mine, as in many others, I have been much delayed by leather breaking. You may think me in jest; I never was more *serious* in my life; but my nature is so cheerful, that I cannot talk of anything that pleases me much very gravely. Therefore, I beg you will mention my idea to the gentleman who, in my opinion, deserves

to have his statue cast in gold for what he has already done with fleeces. Give my compliments to him, and say if anything I could use of his manufactory could hold up to my country the advantages I see in his discovery, I would not disdain to wear one of his sacks as a shawl, and recommend the hanging with some of his ropes all those who do not venerate him as I do.'

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe seems to have made the acquaintance of the Margravine in 1809, through her son Keppel, who was one of his most intimate friends. 'Everybody knows,' he writes on the fly-leaf of a volume of her autograph letters, 'that she was the daughter of Lord Berkeley, and afterwards married to Lord Craven. When I was acquainted with her she had the remains of much beauty, which she disfigured with an immense quantity of rouge and burnt cork, as, I think, on her eyebrows. She was very graceful, and could assume, when she pleased, the manners of the best times; she composed music prettily, but spoilt her songs by singing them with a cracked voice; she danced well, and was an excellent shot. I am told that she never was a tolerable actress, though fond of exhibiting herself on the stage. . . . Her beauty, her talents, her good fortune, and her bad temper created her numerous enemies. She makes a figure in many scandalous works, such as *The Memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun*, *The Female Jockey Club*, etc.' Sharpe made a charming drawing of the Margravine, which represents her as a very pretty and picturesque woman, apparently of not more than four- or five-and-thirty.

In December 1809 the Margravine writes to Sharpe: 'Keppel tells me you mean positively to come here, which I am very glad of, as I cannot help auguring well

of a person who, in such times as these, could, *de son propre chef*, chuse the time and the people and the manners in Louis XIV.'s reign to make them his recreation; for I am quite of La Rochefoucalt's or La Bruyère's opinion—'qu'une bonne éducation est la vraie religion mondaine'—to believe in which, and more, to practise, would prevent those eternal dissensions in families, and those quarrels in society, which render it impossible to find *society* in this country—and Keppel tells me I shall delight you by telling you stories about my great-aunt, Lady Albemarle, who saw the Duchess of Portsmouth, and other great-aunts and uncles who have seen those who were their models.'

In February 1810 she writes again: 'I wonder what he [Keppel] will say to the *Morning Herald*, that has begun a series of impertinent falsehoods against me which, I trust, will amount at last to give me an opportunity of punishing them. If I wrote like my ancestors, I should pass unnoticed perhaps. I think the liberty of the press very oppressing; and as everything in the political world tends to put England out of Europe, I believe I must go out of England to find civilisation. . . . All who wish me well are delighted at my having escaped from a Prussian robbery, for such was Prince Ferdinand's claim to deprive me of what the Margrave left me at Anspach. I am told London is very dull; everything is carried on in a dark lanthorn way; everything is a mystery, a secret! You meet people, but they turn the blind against your eyes. I have some idea there will be a regency or something.'

In the spring of 1811 the Margravine, who had little toleration for her sister scribes, writes to assure Mr. Sharpe that 'the Berrys' letters of Mrs. du Deffand are

a great catchpenny. The notes which give information relative to the French families and people are most of them *false*. Nothing can be so absurd too as an English preface to a French book. . . . The Duke of Clarence wants to marry the gentle, elegant, and truth-telling widow ycleped the Countess of Berkeley. The whole world is gone mad; and I have more reason than ever for congratulating the Margravine of Anspach, your friend and admirer, that she had a governess who formed her mind of peaceful and humble materials, for I think virtues are corks that make one swim while others sink. Now I must intreat you to order Lord Worcester never to express any admiration of her—to any female. If he conceives that idea of her which your partiality more than her merit may encourage, let it lie, like a violet in the shade, to be of any use to him in the future.'

In August of the same year the Margravine sent her correspondent a little 'sonnet,' or more properly, ballad, called *The Holiday of Life*, which she had written and set to music. This artificial trifle may be quoted as a fair specimen of her poetical powers:—

'Colin met Sylvia on the green
  Once, 'twas the charming first of May,
And shepherds ne'er tell false, I ween—
  By chance they met, as shepherds say.

Colin he blushed and bowed, then said,
  "Will you, sweet maid, this first of May,
Begin the dance, by Colin led,
  To make this quite his holiday?"

Sylvia replied, "I ne'er from home
  Yet ventured till this first of May;
Say, is it fit for maids to roam,
  And make a shepherd's holiday?"

"It is most fit," replied the youth,
"That Sylvia should, this first of May,
By me be taught that love and truth
Can make of life a holiday."'

'Take care,' writes the author, 'that if any of your Scotch nightingales sing it, they don't hurry, for the time that it is sung in will make or mar the air. . . . I know nobody will sing it as well as I can, because nobody could ever sing any music I ever composed to please my feelings. But that is no matter; 'tis not the first of my brats that have been murdered after I produced them. I have made up my mind to death and destruction. And now I must inform you that I am going to restore to Lady Craven's *Tour to Constantinople* all the fine things which were very wisely left out.' The Margravine asks her correspondent for a drawing for this new edition of her book. 'I would have,' she says, 'the dedication to the Margrave's ashes in an urn, my figure (the face hid in drapery) holding it, and standing on a cloud—having left the world—which might have the globe in the bottom of the drawing, if you like to do it.'

In another letter, dated September 1811, the Margravine announces her intention of letting Benham and retiring to Brandenburgh House to arrange about the publication of her letters, in order, as she says, that she may save her memory from the mischief done to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's. 'Nobody shall write my travels and letters after I am dead. Grimm and Meister were the correspondents of the Margrave, the Empress of Russia, and many other northern princes. I have *recueils* of twenty-five volumes in manuscript; it would

be foolish to myself and a wrong to posterity if I had not them published.'

Like most elderly ladies (and gentlemen), the Margravine was firmly convinced that the times were out of joint, and that the country was going to the dogs. It must be confessed that in the early years of the nineteenth century there were some grounds for gloomy prophecies. 'We are in a pretty scrape,' she writes in October 1811; 'Government has sent out orders for sailing and counter-sailing, marching and counter-marching, and Jersey, Guernsey, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Sussex coast, and Kentish marshes are all to be guarded together. I have no idea of a Government making itself so ridiculous. How Buonaparte must laugh! We want nothing to stamp our eternal folly but to do as we did in the time of the Danes—bribe them with our money to retire from our coasts, which with that money they attacked again with fresh vigour.' But the climate was, in her opinion, an even worse offender than the Government. Writing from Weymouth in August 1812, she complains: 'We have seen the sun three times in one month. Everybody feels the influence of the eternal fogs and vapours by growling, grumbling, hanging, murdering, or dying suddenly; but nobody suggests the only remedy, which is filling up the navigable cuts. I began Lord Byron's *Childe Harold.* Could not get through it—*à quoy remait-il?* . . . I did not tell you that I went to Drapers' Hall in the city to see a picture of Mary Queen of Scots. 'Tis a very fine one, and in that I can see what the Scotch mean by my likeness, though I am too humble to think I deserve the compliment. . . . I wish all the wars were ended. I was obliged to tell my coachmaker the other day that black and white mixed

ad vol. makes grey. Ignorance in all the arts keeps pace with the increase of armies. I shall shut myself up in my library at my return, and let seas of ink flow over paper plains until my conscience is satisfied, and then recreate myself with composing some melody so gay and original as you can hear massacred by others after I have played it to you unmassacred.'

Kirkpatrick Sharpe took the greatest delight in listening to the Margravine anecdotes about old times, and the distinguished people she had known in her eventful youth. It was he who suggested to her that she should write down her recollections, 'as French ladies who remember anything (and nothing) always do, and English ladies now and then.' The Margravine was flattered at the idea, but unfortunately her *Autobiography* (which was dedicated to the Duke of York) is not so much a record of her personal recollections as a *réchauffé* of her various but undigested reading. In describing the famous persons with whom she was brought in contact, she seems to have drawn upon biographies and encyclopædias instead of trusting to her own memories, and has given her readers threadbare facts instead of traits of character such as only a woman would have noticed. Hence, a large portion of the two bulky volumes consists of downright unadulterated padding.

Keppel Craven, an exquisite of the first water (judging by Sharpe's portrait of him), and an intimate friend of Sir William Gell, was offered the post of Chamberlain to the Princess of Wales. His mother says that she could not ask him to reject the offer; but she only consented to his accepting it on condition that he received no salary, and was not regarded as one of the house-

hold. The Princess ordered her Chamberlain to attend her to Naples, whither, after the Battle of Waterloo, the Margravine followed her son. The King of Naples gave her two acres of land, on which she built a villa, and laid out a beautiful garden. Here, except for an occasional visit to England, she passed the remainder of her life. Brandenburgh House, which was usually inhabited by notorious tenants, was occupied by Queen Caroline in 1820-21. The Margravine, in spite of her son's connection with Caroline, somewhat unaccountably took the part of George IV., and concludes her *Autobiography* with the following panegyric on his virtues: 'He has been universally admired for his urbanity, high accomplishments, and goodness of heart. His conduct to our sex has been unexampled; and those who have had the happiness of knowing him, as I did, will not hesitate to do justice to his feelings where female delicacy was concerned. . . . His liberality never failed, even to his wife. He took her enormous debts upon himself, and made sacrifices which no other husband in the world would have made, had he been brought before Parliament, and placed in a similar position.'

Our heroine, whose splendid constitution and high spirits never deserted her, amused herself up to the last by working in her garden, and corresponding with her friends in England on the shortcomings of her native land. In February 1816 she writes to Dr. Taylor, enclosing a little sketch of two methods of paving streets. 'I have drawn,' she says, 'the manners of paving the streets *à l'Italienne* with that *à l'Anglaise*, in hopes you will observe that the wheels of carriages must eternally shake and disarrange the one and consolidate the other; and

I hope you will get all the streets of London paved *à l'Italienne.* I lament that our Society has lost the Duke of Norfolk. I do not think we shall ever find a President who will distribute prizes and make speeches with so much grace as our much lamented Duke of Norfolk. Pray let me know who is chosen in his place, and if you have tempted by a large reward some atmospherical and physical calculator to propose doing away with the navigable cuts, Paddington canals, and junction canals that poison the atmosphere of England and rob her of her best productions. I know *money* will be held up as a barrier to the crime of spoiling land and creating noxious vapours; but money is useless dirt, and ought to be trodden under foot when it not only cannot purchase health and wholesome food, but is used as a vehicle to convey sickness and the first of human miseries all over our island. . . .

'*May* 30, 1816.—I write to you now on account of what I saw of Mr. Curwen's anxiety about the relief of the poor, and the little knowledge some of the members of the House of Commons seem to possess of the mischief arising from having *Poor Rates* at all in *any* parish. When I first settled at Brandenburgh House, I was at some pains to find out the *use* made of the many legacies given in annual payments to the poor of different parishes — charitable institutions, gifts of land, etc. Upon a very small circle round and near the metropolis I found the poor *ought* to be rich. Why were they not so? Because independent noblemen and gentlemen have left off investigating the use of monies for the poor. Villainous tradesmen of every description are left to handle and disburse and make what use they please of the money allotted to the poor by legacies, subscriptions,

or annual rates, and near me they made no scruple to pay their score of three shillings a head for their dinners at a tavern out of *the money collected* that day for the poor, which so shocked a person present that he threw his three shillings on the table, and refused to belong to the overseers. The money of the turnpikes on the Bath Road is perverted in the same way. Till Government sends agents to examine into all this, people as charitably inclined as I am must grieve in silence. A partial examination will not do—it must be all over the kingdom at once, and I aver that it will be found that legacies, gifts, foundations, etc., make all poor-rates unnecessary. That the lower orders are wretched, and the higher deprived of half the luxuries they enjoyed thirty years ago, I am certain, but it is owing to a want of police. Here [in England] half their butter and all their eggs come from France. Butchers and farmers are too rich and monopolising, and only an investigation into causes will cure their dismal results.'

The last glimpse we get of the Margravine is given us by Madden in his *Life of Lady Blessington.* Madden was at Naples with the Blessingtons in 1822, and there he saw the 'beautiful, gay, and fascinating Lady Craven' of Boswell, transformed into a withered and wrinkled old woman, who might have sat for one of the witches in Macbeth. She still retained her sprightliness and vivacity, which contrasted very painfully with the wreck of her former beauty. Lord Charles Murray, who was in Naples at the same time, and who had only just recovered from a fit of temporary insanity, persuaded Madden to take him to call upon the Margravine, whom he had apparently known in former days. The two found the lady digging in her garden, dressed, as was her custom,

in coarse and singular attire, 'a desiccated, antiquated piece of mortality.' Lord Charles, excited by her extraordinary appearance, presently lost his self-control, and burst into a torrent of reprehension, calling up reminiscences of a disagreeable nature, and rumours of strange occurrences in various parts of the globe. While the Margravine stood listening in mingled consternation and amazement, Madden tried to hurry his friend away. But Lord Charles insisted that he must show his hostess a new way of entering a carriage, and, taking a flying leap, he dived head foremost through the window of the carriage, where he stuck fast, while his long legs waved wildly outside. With much difficulty Madden and a servant managed, by dint of breaking a window, to get the whole of his lordship inside, and the two drove off, leaving the Margravine more startled than impressed.

In 1828 the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, then staying in Naples, notes in his *Memoirs* the death of the Margravine of Anspach, to whose imposing funeral he was invited. 'Elizabeth' (as she was accustomed to sign herself in royal fashion) left the bulk of her property to her favourite Keppel, who died at Naples in 1851.

It cannot be affirmed that there is any very striking moral to be drawn from the *faits et gestes* of the Margravine. Though she always lived as seemed best in her own eyes, she was loved and admired in her youth, attained exalted rank and wealth (if not respect) in middle life, and found interests and occupations for her old age. Even had her career been less successful than it actually was, she would have been happy, by reason of the abnormally-developed self-esteem that would have carried her triumphantly through a multitude of failures.

To the end of her days it is evident that she regarded herself not only as a genius and a beauty, but as a pattern for wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, friends. What better gift need any mortal ask of the gods than an equally unpuncturable power of self-delusion?

JAMES LACKINGTON

BOOTMAKER AND BOOKSELLER

JAMES LACKINGTON

(1746-1815)

In reading the biographical literature of the eighteenth century, memoirs, letters, and journals, we cannot but be struck by the almost total absence of documents dealing at first hand with the trading or labouring classes of the period. The populace seems to have been separated from its betters by a great gulf, not of hatred, but rather of indifference. Occasionally, in the letters of coffee-room wit or fashionable lady, there is an allusion to the uproarious doings of the 'mob,' while more rarely the citizen and his pretentious wife come in for a polite sarcasm. In country villages ruled over by a beneficent squire, the gulf was bridged to some extent by a charitable interest in the 'deserving poor' or 'industrious cottagers,' which usually showed itself in some form of amiable tyranny. The net of the philanthropist was not widespread in those days, and it was only the 'deserving' who were patronised and assisted, the word 'deserving' being applied to those who bent the knee to the squire's liveries, and showed no desire to raise themselves above that state of life to which Providence had called them. If we have some faint notion of the manner in which the great lady regarded the mob that broke her windows,

or the wit regarded the tradesmen who dunned him, we know practically nothing of the manner in which mob or tradesmen regarded wits and fashionable ladies. The labouring men who shouted for 'Wilkes and liberty,' the butcher who sold his vote for a kiss from Devonshire's Duchess—these are mere puppets who danced to the piping of political agitators, and, when the dance was over, were dropped back into their box, and the lid closed upon them.

One record we possess, however, which tells at first hand of the privations of working men and women, and of the struggles of small tradesmen, in the days when George III. was king. This is James Lackington's *Memoirs of the First Forty-five Years of his Life*, published in 1792. Lackington deserves to be commemorated if only because he accomplished the almost superhuman feat, considering the period at which he lived, of rising unaided save by sheer strength of will and force of character from the humble obscurity of a shoemaker's apprentice to the proud eminence of a wealthy bookseller. Having only learned the art of writing after he came to manhood, it was hardly to be expected that his *Memoirs* should prove to be a work of much literary value; but when the vulgarities, crudities, and irrelevancies are cut away, we have a simple, straightforward narrative which is valuable for the strong light it throws upon a subject that otherwise would remain wrapped in almost impenetrable mystery.

The author of the *Memoirs* certainly did not begin life with any external advantages, since he was one of the eleven children of a drunken shoemaker. Like most remarkable men, however, he had a remarkable mother, who, to support her family, worked at her spinning-wheel

for nineteen hours out of the twenty-four, living meanwhile upon broth and vegetables. At the time of James's birth in August 1746, the family was living at Wellington in Somersetshire, where its nominal head had been set up in a shop by his father, a yeoman farmer. The future bookseller was sent to a dame school for two or three years; but his mother being unable to keep up the payment of twopence a week, his education came to an abrupt conclusion, and he speedily forgot the little he had learned. But he was not idle; for at the age of ten years he invented a new method of crying apple-pies, which commended itself to a local baker, who employed him in this office for about a year with extraordinary financial results. But at the end of this time James, having accidentally upset his employer's child out of a wheel-barrow, prudently decided to leave his situation, and, returning home, worked under his father at boot-making for the next two or three years.

At fourteen James was formally apprenticed for seven years to a worthy couple at Taunton, Bowden by name, who worked at their shoemaking on six days in the week, and attended an Anabaptist chapel on the seventh. There were two sons of the house, aged seventeen and fourteen, good lads who had learned to read, write, cast up accounts, and do as they were bid. The family possessed but one book, a Bible, and their ideas were as circumscribed as their library. Their only relaxations consisted of a Sunday walk and an evening reading of the Scriptures, and all went early to bed, 'no one doubting but he should go to heaven when he died, and every one hoping it would be a good while first.' The master had a curious custom of rising every morning all the year round at three o'clock, when he took a walk by

the river, stopped at an alehouse to drink half a pint, called up his people to work at six, and went to bed again at seven.

But the peace of the family was destined to be rudely broken. When James had been apprentice about a year, the elder boy, George, heard a sermon by one of Mr. Wesley's preachers, which convinced him that the innocent life he had hitherto led would only take him deeper into hell; in short, he discovered that he had never been converted, but was in a state of damnation. He presently persuaded himself that he had passed through the New Birth, and was quite certain that his name was registered in the Book of Life. Having assured his own safety, he began to be concerned for his family and friends, who, he feared, were in a parlous state. In the long winter evenings, as they sat at work, he proved to his own satisfaction that every man had enough original sin to damn a thousand souls, that morality was of no avail, good works being only splendid sins, and that by faith alone could man be saved. No one, however, could feel a proper amount of faith till he was justified, justification being a sudden operation on the soul, by means of which the most execrable wretch might be assured in one instant of all his sins being forgiven. This zealous young disciple of Wesley found his doctrine opposed by his own mother, who, honest woman, would sit with her Bible on her lap, from which she would read such passages as proved the necessity of good works, and refuted the tenets of original sin, imputed righteousness, and the like. The youthful theologian generally had the best of the argument, and his success induced his brother John to go and hear the new lights, from which expedition he returned in

great agony of mind, declaring that he was eternally damned.

The first effect of all these agitations upon the mind of the young apprentice was to arouse in him a desire for more knowledge, in order that he might judge which of the controversialists was in the right. Having an allowance of a halfpenny a week, he handed this over to John, who in return taught him to spell, the lessons taking place at night after the boys had been sent to bed, and being delivered in the oral method, since no candles were allowed. As soon as he had made a little progress James went to the Methodist meetings in his turn, caught the prevailing infection, and was horribly frightened by sermons about hell. However, after a month devoted to singing hymns and repeating texts, his imagination was worked up to the required pitch, and he was born again, becoming, to use his own words, a great favourite with heaven, and as familiar with the Trinity as any old woman in Mr. Wesley's connexion.

A more practical result of James's conversion was his ever-increasing desire to learn to read. His working hours in the winter months lasted from six in the morning till ten at night, but in the summer he was only obliged to work as long as he could see without candles. It is difficult to imagine how he found time, as he assures us that he did, to read ten chapters in the Bible every day, besides portions of Mr. Wesley's sermons and tracts. His sight was so excellent, for one thing, that he often read by the light of the moon after going to bed. He had the courage to give his master and mistress broad hints about the perilous state of their souls, but they, worthy folk, relied for argument upon a good thick stick. For some time James attended his

meetings without the knowledge or consent of his employers; but as his zeal increased, he often ran away, against orders, to hear Methodist sermons. One Sunday his mistress locked him into his room, whereupon he opened his Bible for direction, and read, 'He has given his angels charge concerning thee, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.' Without hesitation, having received, as he fancied, heavenly direction, he ran up two pair of stairs and leaped out of the window. His feet and ankles were so terribly bruised that he had to be carried back into the house, and it was more than a month before he recovered the use of his limbs. 'I was ignorant enough to think,' he says, 'that the Lord had not used me very well, and resolved not to put so much trust in Him in future.'

James had been apprenticed about four years when his master died; and although Mr. Bowden had been a good husband, a good father, and a good master, yet, as he had not held the Methodist faith, his apprentice piously feared that he had gone straight to hell. The widow was of opinion that his death had been hastened by the conduct of his sons, who were dutiful lads before their conversion, but after they 'became saints' acted as though they expected to be fed and clothed by miracles. James was bound to his mistress for the remainder of his term; but he obtained more liberty of conscience than before, was admitted a member of the Methodist sect, and for several years attended all the sermons and private meetings in the community. The various classes and bands were visited from time to time by Wesley in person, who gave advice and exhortations to his followers, seldom failing to speak in praise of celibacy to the maids and bachelors under his charge. James was a sincere

enthusiast from the time that he was converted at sixteen until he reached the age of one-and-twenty, insomuch that he stood forward as the champion of Methodism wherever he went.

This strict mode of life came to an end with an election at Taunton, when, as young Lackington possessed a vote (it does not appear how he got the qualification), the few months he had still to serve were bought off by the friends of the candidates, and he was set free in the midst of a scene of riot and dissipation. For a time his religion was forgotten, though at the bottom of his heart he confesses that he was always uneasy, and felt certain that he should be damned for his backsliding. When the election was over he began to reconsider his position, which was rather a serious one, even from a temporal point of view. He had been dismissed from a new situation on account of a love-affair with a milkmaid; not that his employer objected to the intrigue on moral grounds, but because the lover refused to buy milk from another milkwoman who was one of his master's customers. The young journeyman now determined to go and seek work at Bristol, and was accompanied as far as Exbridge by his sweetheart. Here scruples of conscience made him resolve to break off the connection; and although his capital only amounted to three shillings and a penny, he bestowed half a crown upon her, and continued his journey alone.

On the evening of his arrival at Bristol, James obtained what was called 'a seat of work,' and took a lodging in the house of a fellow-craftsman. It may here be noted, as illustrative of the conditions of working life at that period, that our hero, in the course of many peregrinations from one place to another, only on one occasion

failed to obtain employment for the asking. The journeyman seems to have carried his skill in his craft as a sort of circular note or letter of credit, which was honoured to the extent of a living wage wheresoever it might be presented. In his new home James became acquainted with a young man named John Jones, who was employed in making women's stuff shoes for warehouses. The two youths became infected with a genuine literary enthusiasm, and were anxious to buy books; but so great was their ignorance, that they knew not what to ask for in the shops, having scarcely heard the titles of any but religious works; and there were then, we are assured, thousands of persons in the same situation.

One day, when the friends were on a visit to the annual fair, they perceived a stall of second-hand books, and among its contents found Hobbes's translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. James happened to have heard that Homer was a great poet, but he had never heard of Pope's translation, so he eagerly bought that of Hobbes, together with Walker's *Poetical Paraphrase of Epictetus*, and the young men went home delighted with their bargain. They were, as might be expected, disappointed with Homer as rendered by Hobbes, both on account of the obscurity of the translation and its lack of poetical merit. But *Epictetus* was easily read and understood, and James was so charmed by the principles of the Stoics that he carried the book with him wherever he went.

In Bristol Lackington fell once more under the influence of Wesley, who was preaching at Broadmead; and being weary of his present mode of life, his former fanatical notions returned hot upon him. His friend John soon perceived with grief and indignation that the once gay,

volatile young fellow was transformed into a dull, moping, psalm-singing Methodist, continually reprehending all about him for their harmless mirth and gaiety. After a while Lackington succeeded in converting his friend's younger brother and sister, and finally, after a sharp struggle, the great Mr. John Jones himself. The four, being all convinced that they were the favourites of heaven, now made a holy community, and worked harder than ever in order to buy religious books. Soon they had acquired a varied collection, which included all Bunyan's works, Hervey's *Meditations*, Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, and many sensationally-entitled tracts. So anxious were these remarkable people to read a great deal, that they only allowed themselves three hours' sleep out of the twenty-four, and each took it in turns to read aloud to the rest. This plan of living they continued until they had made considerable progress in spiritual knowledge, and mastered the various arguments used by polemical divines. In order to guard his companions from false doctrines, James, who was their recognised leader, used to engage them in controversies in which he took different sides, becoming in turn a Calvinist, an Arian, a Socinian, a Deist, and even an Atheist.

In the course of his reading Lackington discovered that there had been sects of philosophers among the Greeks and Romans. In order to extend his knowledge he bought the works of Plato, Plutarch, Seneca, and Epicurus, and soon came to the conclusion that he derived more real moral benefit from them than from any of his other books. Thanks to his new-found philosophy, he grew to despise material pleasures, and for some time confined himself to bread and tea, in order that he might have more money to spare for books.

This mode of life he continued until he left Bristol in 1769, having persuaded his friend Jones of the advantages of travel. The friends started together; but John obtaining work at Bridgewater, James journeyed on alone till he found employment at Kingsbridge, and settled down in that city. Here he was fortunate in having a master who treated him as a friend rather than as a workman. This good man, noticing that his assistant was obliged to employ friends to write his letters for him, observed that it was a pity he did not learn to write for himself.

'The idea pleased me so much,' observes James, 'that I set about it without any delay, by taking up pieces of paper that had writing upon them, and imitating them as well as I could. I employed my leisure in this way for nearly two months, after which I wrote my own letters, in a bad hand you may be sure, but it was plain and easy to read, which was all I cared for.' After staying about a year at Kingsbridge, where wages were low, he decided to return to Bristol; but stopped at Bridgewater on the way, where he renewed his acquaintance with a charming dairy-maid named Nancy Smith, not the partner of his early escapade, but a respectable young woman whom he had courted in his 'prentice' days, when he had mingled lovemaking with spiritual advice and consolation. The pair had scarcely met for seven years, but at the sight of his old sweetheart James felt his passion revive. With his usual directness he informed his Nancy that his attachment to books had prevented his saving any money, and that until he married he was never likely to accumulate anything. This was not exactly a tempting preface to an offer of marriage; but Nancy being an unworldly maiden, agreed to take pity on him, and the pair proceeded to Bristol

to get married. A furnished lodging was taken at a rental of two-and-sixpence a week; and the expenses of the wedding-day so completely exhausted the young couple's resources, that on turning out their pockets next morning they found that they possessed but one halfpenny between them. Fortunately, they had laid in provisions enough to last a day or two; and as they knew that they could easily earn enough for their wants, they very cheerfully set to work, singing, as they stitched, Dr. Cotton's verses:—

> 'Our portion is not large indeed,
> But then how little do we need?
> For nature's calls are few—
> In this the art of living lies,
> To want no more than may suffice,
> And make that little do.'

The young husband now obtained a 'seat of stuff' (*i.e.* stuff shoes) at Bristol, but he could not at first earn more than nine shillings a week, and his wife could make but little, as she was learning to bind shoes. A debt of forty shillings having been claimed by the once friendly Jones, the couple paid it off in the space of two months, during the whole of which period they made four-and-sixpence a week suffice for their board. 'Strong beer we had none,' writes James, 'and instead of tea or coffee we toasted a piece of bread; at other times we fried wheat which, when boiled in water, made a tolerable substitute for coffee. As to animal food, we had very little, and that little we made broth of. During the whole of this time we never once wished for anything we had not got, but were quite contented, and with a good grace in reality made a virtue of necessity.'

It is not surprising that after the debt was paid, both husband and wife were taken so ill as to be confined

to bed. They had two-and-ninepence locked up as a resource in an emergency, and this supported them until Lackington recovered. His wife now suffered from a long series of illnesses caused by the sudden change of air and work, she having always been accustomed to a healthy out-of-door life. During the first six months of her indisposition, James lived entirely on water and gruel, his wages being required for medicines and more dainty food for the invalid. At last, thinking that her native air would do her good, he threw up his work and removed to Taunton. Here wages were so low that the pair only stayed until Nancy's health was restored, when they returned to Bristol. In the course of the next two years and a half the move to Taunton on account of health, and back to Bristol on account of wages, was made no less than five times.

With the view of improving his position, Lackington decided at length to go to London; but not having sufficient money in hand to pay for the double coach-fare, he went to town alone, arranging to send for his wife as soon as he had saved enough to pay for her journey. On arriving in London with the proverbial half-crown in his pocket, he found a lodging with a fellow-Methodist, and had no difficulty in obtaining work. His first inquiry was for one of Mr. Wesley's 'Gospel shops,' where, on producing his band and class tickets, he was admitted to the same religious privileges that he had enjoyed in the country. 'At this time,' he writes, 'I was as visionary and superstitious as ever; for although I had read some sensible books, and acquired a few rational ideas, yet having had a Methodist wife for three years, and keeping Methodist company, the few liberal ideas I had treasured up were in a dormant

state, or borne down by a torrent of enthusiastic notions and fanatical chimeras. . . . It was several weeks before I could firmly resolve to continue in London, as I really was struck with horror for the fate of it, more particularly on Sundays, finding that so few people went to church, and that the lower class spent the day in getting drunk, quarrelling, buying, selling, etc. I seriously trembled for fear that the measure of iniquity was quite full, and that every hour would be its last.'

Consoling himself with the notion that if London was a second Sodom he was a second Lot, Lackington settled down to his work, and at the end of a month had saved enough money to pay for his wife's fare to town. Having now plenty of work and higher wages, the couple were more easy in their circumstances, and were able to buy some new clothes. 'My wife,' says James, 'had done very well all her life with a superfine broadcloth cloak, but now I persuaded her to have one of silk. Until this winter I had never found that I wanted a great coat, but now I made that important discovery.' About this time came the news that Lackington's grandfather, the yeoman farmer, was dead, and had left each of his grandchildren ten pounds. This particular heir being unable to think of any practicable method of having such a prodigious sum sent up to London, was obliged to spend a considerable portion of his legacy in going to fetch it. On the way back he was nearly frozen to death outside the coach, and lost sixteen shillings through a hole in his pocket. However, he reached home with the remnant of his guineas sewn up in his clothes, and his wife piously thanked Providence for such a splendid fortune, only hoping that the Lord would enable them to make a good use of it.

With this capital the pair furnished a room, and work continuing plentiful, James was able occasionally to add an old book to his collection. He tells the following story against himself in this connection, which sounds as though it might have happened to a humble cousin of the immortal Vicar:—

'At the time we were purchasing household goods we kept ourselves short of money, and on Christmas Eve had but half a crown wherewith to buy a dinner. My wife desired I would go to Market and purchase this feast, but in the way I saw an old book-shop, and could not resist going in, intending to expend sixpence or ninepence out of my half-crown. But I stumbled on Young's *Night Thoughts*—down went my half-crown, and I hastened home, vastly delighted with my acquisition. When my wife asked where was our Christmas dinner, I told her that it was in my pocket. "In your pocket," said she. "That is a strange place. How could you think of stuffing a piece of meat into your pocket?" I assured her that it would take no harm, and began to harangue on the superiority of intellectual pleasures over sensual gratifications. I was proceeding in this strain. "And so," said she, "instead of buying a dinner, I suppose you have been buying books with the money?" I then confessed that I had bought Young's *Night Thoughts*. "And I think," said I, "that I have acted wisely; for had I bought a dinner, we should have eaten it to-morrow, and the pleasure would have been soon over; but should we live fifty years longer, we shall have the *Night Thoughts* to feast upon." This was too powerful an argument to admit of any further debate, in short, my wife was convinced.' It must be allowed that if the hero of this anecdote was a

remarkable man, he possessed an even more extraordinary wife. A Mrs. Primrose would hardly have been so complaisant.

In June 1774 it was suggested to Lackington that if he were to take a little shop which was to let in Featherston Street, he might obtain work as a master shoemaker. He was attracted by the idea, and observed that he might sell books as well as boots, since if he could but be a bookseller he would always have plenty to read, which was the strongest motive that he could conceive for making the attempt. His private library consisted of a few old religious works; and he bought for one guinea a bagful of books, the property of a deceased Methodist. With this modest stock, and some scraps of leather, worth in all about five pounds, he opened his little shop on Midsummer Day, and was highly delighted with his promotion. 'My good wife,' he tells us, 'perceiving the pleasure I had in my shop, piously cautioned me against setting my mind on the riches of this world, and assured me that it was all but vanity. "You are right, my dear," I replied. "And to keep our minds as spiritual as we can, we will always attend our class and band-meetings, hear as many sermons at the Foundry on week-days as possible, and on the Sabbath we will mind nothing but the good of our souls. Our small beer shall be fetched on Saturday nights, and we will not dress even a potato on the Sabbath. We will still attend the preaching at five in the morning; at eight go to the prayer-meeting; at ten to the public worship at the Foundry;[1] hear Mr. Perry

[1] The Foundry was a disused Government building for the casting of brass ordnance, situated on Windmill Hill, now Tabernacle Street, Finsbury Square. Wesley began to preach here in 1739.

at the Cripplegate at two; be at the preaching at the Foundry at five; meet with the general society at six; meet in the united bands at seven; again be at the prayer-meeting at eight; and then come home and read and pray by ourselves.' One would have thought that only a Scotsman could draw up such a programme of religious exercises for the day of rest.

As soon as the first lot of old books was sold, Lackington borrowed five pounds from a fund established by Wesley for the assistance of deserving members, and increased his little stock; but he and his wife continued to live in the most frugal fashion, chiefly on potatoes and water. By the end of six months the value of the stock had increased from five to twenty-five pounds. This immense property its owner thought too valuable to be buried in Featherston Street, so he moved to a shop in Chiswell Street, where he bade a final adieu to the 'gentle craft,' and converted all his leather into old books. There was one class of literature that he refused to sell, namely, free-thinking works, which he conscientiously destroyed when they fell into his hands. All went well with the business until September 1775, when Lackington fell ill of a violent fever. Ten days later his wife was seized with the same disorder, of which she died 'in enthusiastic rant on November the 9th, surrounded by Methodist preachers.'

Her husband observes that 'she was in reality one of the best of women; and although for about four years she was ill the greater part of the time, which involved me in the very depth of poverty and distress, yet I never once repented having married her. 'Tis true she was enthusiastical to an extreme, and of course very superstitious and visionary; but as I was pretty far gone myself,

I did not think that a fault in her. Indeed, she much excelled me, and most others that ever fell under my observation, as she totally disregarded every kind of pleasure whatever but that of a spiritual nature. Methinks, I see you smile, but I assure you she made *no* exception, but was a complete devotee, and what is more remarkable, without pride or ill-nature.'

After lying ill for many weeks, Lackington recovered, contrary to all expectation. Some eighteenth-century prototypes of Mrs. Gamp had kept themselves in liquor at his expense, and stolen all his linen; but fortunately some friends had locked up his shop, which contained all his little savings, or probably they too would have disappeared. As soon as he was about again he learned that the lady who kept the house, and from whom he rented his shop, had also caught the fever, and was lying dangerously ill. He was aware that she had supported her father, now dead, by keeping a school and doing plain needlework, and he felt convinced that so good a daughter would make a good wife. He also knew that she was immoderately fond of books, and frequently read till morning; and 'this turn of mind was,' he writes, 'the greatest of all recommendations to me who, having acquired a few ideas, was restless to increase them; so that I was in raptures at the thought of having a woman to read with and to read to me. I embraced the first opportunity after her recovery to make her acquainted with my mind; and as we were not strangers to each other, there was no need of a long formal courtship. So I prevailed on her not to defer our union longer than January 30th, 1776, when for the second time I entered into the holy estate of matrimony.' It will be observed that the widower remained faithful to the memory of

the best woman in the world for something less than three months.

Lackington declares that his mind now began to expand, and he learned for the first time to enjoy innocent pleasures without the fear of being eternally damned for a laugh, a joke, or a sociable visit. He also set himself to read the works of rational and moderate divines, and even to wander in the mazes of metaphysics, so that it is hardly surprising he did not remain much longer in Wesley's society. Indeed, Wesley himself was accustomed to say that he could never keep a bookseller in his fold for more than six months. Our hero's desertion of Methodism seems to have been hastened by his discovery that the preachers, who were continually reproving employers for keeping their servants at home on Sundays to dress hot dinners, themselves refused even to sup without roast fowls and other luxuries. At the same time that he condemns this hypocrisy, Lackington refused to admit that the Methodists were in general the vile sect of hypocrites for which they were commonly denounced. He was convinced that great numbers of them were sincere, honest, friendly people, though there were others who took advantage of the Methodist phrases and customs to advertise their own honesty and sobriety. Thus one pious brother printed on a board, 'Tripe and cow heels sold here as usual, except on the Lord's Day, *which the Lord help me to keep*'; while another, a village worthy, proclaimed, 'Roger Tuttel, *by God's grace and mercy*, kills rats, moles, and all sorts of vermin.'

The new Mrs. Lackington helped forward her husband in his business, her knowledge of books enabling her to act as an unpaid assistant. The proprietor of the little shop soon found that he might sell double and treble

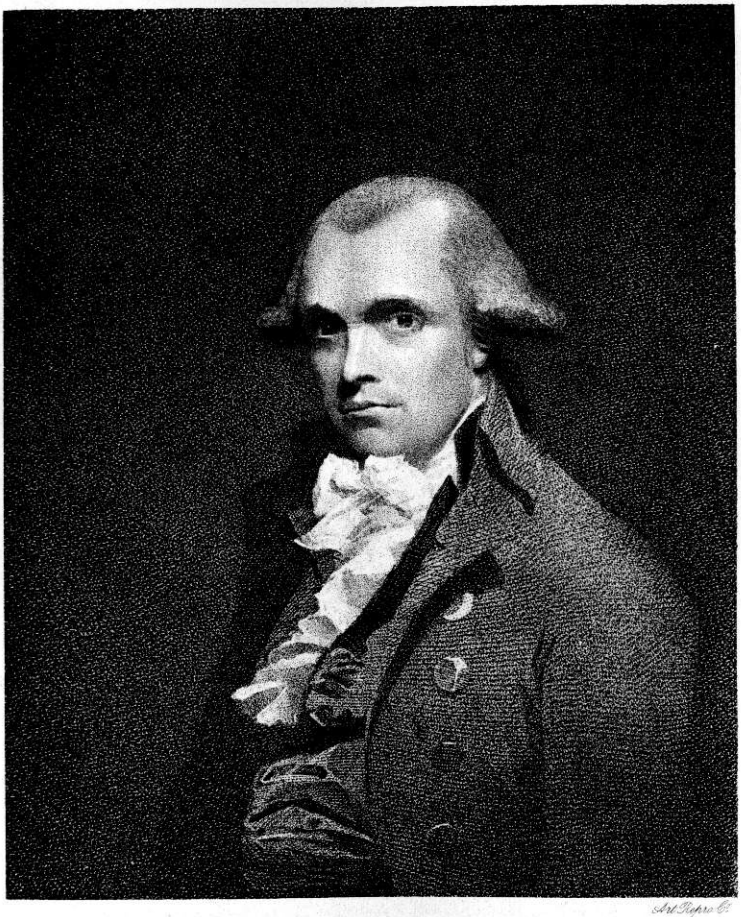
the number of volumes if only he had the capital wherewith to buy a bigger stock. But being almost a stranger in London, he was without credit, and often was obliged to pawn his watch and clothes in order to purchase parcels of desirable books. At length a neighbouring oilman showed his faith in the bookseller's capacity by offering to advance him the money necessary to increase his stock, about two hundred pounds. The offer was accepted, and in 1778 the first catalogue was printed, which contained the titles of no less than twelve thousand volumes. The business continued to prosper, and in 1780 Lackington decided to try a new experiment. In future he would give no more credit, but would run his business strictly upon ready-money lines. His notion was scoffed at by most of his fellow-tradesmen, but he paid no heed, and marked every book at the lowest possible price for ready money, which, being much lower than the ordinary market-price, soon brought a great influx of customers.

To modern writers the views of this eighteenth-century bookseller on the thorny question of publishing should be interesting, though they would certainly be condemned by the Society of Authors. Nothing, he declares, is more common than to hear authors complaining against publishers for want of liberality in purchasing their manuscripts; but this complaint he held to be groundless, and claimed that publishers showed even more liberality than other business men. 'It ought to be considered,' he continues, 'that the money that is paid for the copy is frequently but trifling compared with the expense of printing, paper, and advertising; and that many publishers have sustained great losses through their liberality in buying manuscripts, though on the other hand it must be acknowledged that a small number of

publishers have made great fortunes by their copyrights.' As an instance of the folly of authors he tells an anecdote of a gentleman who, when publishing a book at his own expense, wished to print as many copies as there were families in Great Britain. As a concession to his publisher's views he consented to print a first edition of only 60,000 copies. Finally, the number was reduced to 1250; but though the work was well advertised, not a hundred copies were sold. Lackington, as might be expected, did not approve of authors keeping their copyrights, and declared that publishers seldom do their best under such an agreement.

Even after unexpected prosperity had blessed his basket and his store, Mr. Lackington continued for some years his careful and frugal mode of life, taking down his own shutters, pricing his own books, and writing his own catalogues. At first, to use his own words, 'I welcomed a friend with a shake of the hand, but a year later I beckoned across the way for a pot of good porter. A few years after that I sometimes invited my friends to dinner, and provided them with a roasted fillet of veal; in a progressive course the ham was introduced, and a pudding made the next addition to the feast. For some time a glass of brandy and water was a luxury; raisin wine succeeded; and as soon as two-thirds of my profits allowed me to afford good, red port, it appeared on my table, nor was sherry long behind.' In the same gradual fashion a stage-coach was transformed into a chariot, and a suburban lodging into a country house.

'For four years Holloway was to me an Elysium; then Surrey appeared the most beautiful county in England, and Merton the most rural village; so now Merton was selected as the seat of philosophical retirement.' The



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James Lackington.
From a Portrait by Heinan.

neighbours all prophesied bankruptcy, especially when Mr. and Mrs. Lackington took to horse exercise; but when the expected catastrophe failed to arrive, it was generally believed that the lucky man must have won a big prize in a lottery, or found a bundle of banknotes between the leaves of some old book.

If ever there was the right man in the right place, it must have been James Lackington in a bookseller's shop. His early passion for literature seems never to have grown blunted, even when he had the most abundant opportunities of satisfying it. He read everything: philosophy, poetry, history, travels, translations of the classics, novels, plays, and latterly even free-thinking works. For the study of human nature he believed that there was no place like a book-shop, especially if the master happened to be of an inquisitive and communicative turn of mind. To him would come Simple Simon for the *Art of Writing Love Letters*, a doubting Christian for *Crumbs of Comfort*, an atheist for Hammond's *Letter to Dr. Priestly*, a beau for *The Toilet of Flora*, a courtier for Macchiavelli's *Prince*, a republican for Paine's *Rights of Man*, and, in short, every man for his literary fancy. Lackington's talent for observation was useful to him in his business, and he assures us that he was generally able to foretell to his friends at the beginning of a year how much money he would make in the course of it, basing his calculations upon the state of Europe and his own stock-in-trade. 'If there is anything of consequence in the newspapers,' he observes, 'it draws men to the coffee-house, where they chat away the evenings instead of visiting booksellers' shops, or reading at home. The best time for book-selling is when there is nothing stirring, for then many of those who for

months have done nothing but talk of war and peace, revolutions or counter-revolutions, will have recourse to reading.' These remarks have been indorsed almost word for word by booksellers during the recent war.

The sale of books quadrupled itself between 1770 and 1790, many of the small farmers and country labourers having taken to reading, who before had spent their winter evenings in telling stories of goblins and witches round the fire. A number of circulating libraries had also been started in all parts of the country, a proceeding that at first much alarmed the booksellers, who fancied that the sale of their wares would be greatly diminished. Experience proved, however, that the taste for reading having become more general, the sale of books rapidly increased. The opening of Sunday-schools also hastened the diffusion of knowledge, and indirectly benefited the bookseller.

Lackington's own purchases had now become very large. He prides himself upon buying a thousand or more copies of a single work, and of having at one time no less than ten thousand copies of Dr. Watts's *Hymns* in stock. He astonished his contemporaries by his custom of keeping his books quite openly, and informing his *employées* at the beginning of each week how much the takings of the previous week amounted to. In the year in which he wrote his *Memoirs*, 1791, his profits amounted to £4000, and seemed likely to increase. Having several poor relations, he decided, though his health was failing, not to retire from business. He maintained his mother, his first wife's parents, three more aged people, and four children. About this time he paid a visit to his native village in Somersetshire, amusing himself on the journey by calling upon some of his

former employers in his smart chariot, attended by liveried servants, and asking, 'Pray, sir, have you got any occasion?' a term then used by journeymen seeking work. The bells rang out for his arrival at Wellington, and many of the most respectable persons visited him, giving as their reason for this condescension the fact that Mr. Lackington did not forget himself like so many upstarts, nor neglect his poor relations.

In this blaze of glory the *Memoirs* come to an end, but the numerous editions published during the next few years, some of them with alterations and additions, enable us to get a glimpse at our hero in his later life. It is to be feared that unexampled prosperity proved too much for the little bookseller's good sense, and almost threw him off his balance. In a later edition of his *Memoirs* we learn that the second Mrs. Lackington died in 1795. Her husband wrote her epitaph, and observed that he had been married to two of the best of women with the worst of constitutions, but that he hoped Providence had another good wife in store for him. He did his best to assist Providence, if we may believe a contemporary, by advertising in the *Morning Chronicle* for a wife; and after setting forth his excellent parts, and the inimitable graces of his person, his distinguished situation, his country-house and his chariot, he gave it to be understood that no lady with less than £20,000 need have the presumption to answer his advertisement. He obtained a wife, though history does not say whether she had the desired fortune. But fate continued to smile upon him. His profits increased, and when Finsbury Square was built he erected at one corner an immense new shop which he called 'The Temple of the Muses.'

So successful a man was bound to have enemies as well as admirers. Scandalous chroniclers have recorded some of the antics that Lackington indulged in when his good fortune had affected his brain. On his arrival at his town-house from Merton, a flag used to be hoisted on the roof, which flaunted in the breeze during his stay, but was struck on his departure. On one occasion, when he was on a visit to Cambridge with the famous chariot, an ostler charged sixpence to the townspeople who were desirous of seeing the splendid equipage. Lackington, hearing of this charge, ordered that the chariot should be brought round and exhibited for some hours gratis. At one time a project was in agitation of a statue to be put up in the newly-built Finsbury Square. Lackington offered his own figure, and promised that if his fellow-citizens would erect a statue to him the whole expense should come out of his pocket. This noble offer was somewhat curtly refused. A plan for issuing a quantity of halfpence with his own image and superscription met with no better success.

These and other eccentricities, together with the publication of his autobiography, which was naturally regarded as a stupendous puff, marked him out as a prey to the caricaturist and lampooner. One of the numerous family of Pindar, Peregrine by name, addressed in 1795 an Ode to the Hero of Finsbury Square, congratulating him on his third marriage, and on his genius as his own biographer. This poem, which was issued by a rival bookseller, was accompanied by a clever cartoon representing Mr. Lackington in the act of stepping into his chariot off a pile of books, while a crowd of ragamuffins watch him with awe and admiration. He carries a volume of his *Memoirs* under his arm, and upon the

hammer-cloth of the chariot is his family motto, 'Small profits do great things,' while in the background is the Temple of the Muses, with the flag flying. In mock-heroic stanzas, illustrated by notes, the poet makes cruel fun of the hero, his autobiography, his three marriages, his temple, his proffered statue, and the rest of his vagaries. One verse may be quoted as a specimen of Peregrine Pindar's' satiric vein. 'Behold,' he exclaims—

> 'Behold the flag with streamer gay unfurled!
> Behold the multitude with staring brow!
> The Hero comes—the Wonder of the World,
> Merton is left, and Moorfields has him now.
> Approach, ye Shopmen, and with bows profound,
> Greet your great Lord with bodies to the ground.'

Lackington, who had taken a partner named Allen in his later years, retired from business altogether in 1798, making over his share in the Temple of the Muses to his cousin George Lackington. A characteristic letter addressed by the retiring partner to the new firm is here printed for the first time. It is dated 'Two o'clock, February 14, 1799,' and runs as follows:—

'GENTLEMEN,—Although you are now in the sole possession of a prosperous trade by which you are each likely to make a fortune, and in case a Peace should soon take place, a large one, and although some of you are already possessed of a great deal of property, and the rest of you have a very handsome sum to begin with, add to this my good opinion of your industry and caution, etc., yet on a serious consideration I believe you will not blame me for doing all in my power to preserve from risk the moderate fortune which by much difficulty and industry I am now possessed of. By this time I suppose you have easely gest [guessed] that I am going

to point out the necessity of my advertising the public of the dissolution of the partnership. It is possible (though unlikely) that the dissoluters of Europe may have the plundering of London (for you will know that in London are many traiters to this country). A fire may consume your stock, and by some misrepresentation or failure in punctillis, you may not be able to recover. You, like others, may neglect to insure, servants may ruin you, many of you live at a distance; as others marry the shop is likely to be nearly deserted. Your own good sense will suggest to you other cases that will justify me in taking every precaution, and I hope and believe that each of you are so cautious that you would (were you in my situation) do the very same as I propose to do. Indeed, it would be the highest degree of imprudence in any one to risk his all even although the chance in his favour was five hundred to one.

'On the other side you have a copy of the advertisement. It would perhaps have been enough had I only said, J. Lackington informs the public that he is no longer a partner in the Bookselling trade carried on in the Temple of the Muses. But though I am informed that the *Gazette* charges dear for every line, I could not be satisfied with the common laconic style, as I think the manner in which I have drawn it up may be of great service to you. Should you wish to make any alteration in the advertisement, be pleased to make it, and return it to me that I may form my own judgment upon it. I am, gentlemen, Your humble servant,

'J. LACKINGTON.

P.S.—If any of you gentlemen will get it inserted in the *Gazette*, and order the *Gazette* in which it shall be

inserted to be sent to my address, I shall be obliged to him that will take that trouble. But if disagreeable, I must get one of my old acquaintance among the trade to oblige me, as I have no friend that understands the nature of such things but among the trade. I must have the receipt for the money paid for the advertisement as paid by me.

2nd *P.S.*—Perhaps it may not be useless to say that if you have any substantial friends that will give me a bond of indemnity for twenty thousand pounds, I at present think that will do, and prevent my advertisement. I sopose you will be able to give me an answer in two or three posts.'

On his retirement Lackington seems to have given up his house at Merton, for he bought two small estates at Alveston, where he built a Methodist chapel, and became an amateur preacher. This may create some surprise, but the fact is that after his third marriage he had become reconverted to Methodism, which change of heart he had made known to the world in his *Confessions*, published in 1803. In his preface to this little book, which is very inferior to the *Memoirs*, he formally announces his return to his old faith, and recants his former errors, in the hope that his case may serve as a warning to others, and 'an alarm to some of those who are fallen into that dreadful state of infidelity from which, by the great mercy of God, I am happily escaped.' He further expresses his abhorrence of those parts of his autobiography in which, through the side of Methodism, he had even attacked the Church of England, and his regret that his late firm had recently published a new edition of the work.

Adam-like, Lackington attributes his falling away from grace to the influence of his second wife, who was passionately fond of novel-reading, with which taste she so infected her husband that at last he neglected both his religion and his business in order to indulge it. By degrees he gave up reading his Bible, ceased to attend public worship, associated with sceptics, and no longer observed the Lord's Day. He imagined that faith had no effect upon morals; but when his own morals became so relaxed that he played cards on Sunday, he owns to feeling some uneasiness. He took to reading books on divinity again, and, having recovered some of his former taste for that kind of literature, desired to impart it to others, and began the good work upon his third wife. He describes her as being in moral conduct the most perfect being he had ever seen, but her only motive for this superlative excellence was that 'she thought she ought to be as good as she could,' and apart from this she had not the slightest knowledge of religion, nor did she see any use in going to church. Her husband began operations by reading to her Secker's and Gilpin's discourses, at first only one every Sunday, then two or three in the week, until at last 'Mrs. L.' said that she preferred divinity to fiction.

When Lackington, after many struggles, was completely reconverted, he began to feel distressed at the ignorant and irreligious state of the poor people in his neighbourhood, most of whom could not read, and never went to church. He started a Sunday-school in the village, and invited a Methodist preacher to come and hold open-air meetings. Later, as has been said, he built a chapel, and occasionally preached himself, besides distributing tracts and visiting the sick. In 1806 he

removed to Taunton, where he spent £3000 upon another chapel, over the door of which was the inscription—

'This Temple is erected as a monument of God's mercy in convincing an Infidel of the important Truths of Christianity. Man, consult thy whole existence and be safe.'

A quaint little note addressed to his old firm, and dated August 9, 1806, may here be quoted as illustrative of Lackington's orthography, and also of his two chief interests, his sermons and his banking account:—

'GENTLEMEN [it runs],—In a few days I Purpose to remove to Taunton, and request you to direct the first three papers to me at Mr. John Smith's, Hoisor [hosier], North Street, after the first three then to me in Canon Street, Taunton. The three copies of Mr. Wesley's Sermons please to put by at 5s., as you mentioned; should an appertunity offer of puting them into any parcel for Taunton please to send them, otherwise put them bye. If you will just set down in figures the Ballance which I have in my Banker's hand you will further oblige, gentlemen, yours, etc.,

'J. LACKINGTON.'

Having quarrelled with the Wesleyan preachers at Taunton, Lackington removed to Budleigh Salterton, where he built and endowed a third chapel, and spent the remainder of his life. He died of apoplexy in 1815, being then in his seventieth year. A long notice on his remarkable career appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and he also received mention in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*. His *Memoirs* went through thirteen editions, and received the unusual honour of being translated into German. For some years longer the Temple of the Muses

continued to flourish in Finsbury Square. Knight the publisher, in his *Shadows of the Old Booksellers*, relates that when he was about ten years old (in 1801) his father took him, as a great treat, to see this famous Temple. Over the principal entrance was the inscription, 'Cheapest Booksellers in the World.' In the interior was an immense circular counter, while a broad staircase led up to the 'lounging-rooms' and a series of galleries round which books were displayed, growing gradually cheaper and shabbier in appearance as they neared the roof. If there was any chaffering or haggling about the cost of a work, the shopman merely pointed to a placard on which was printed, 'The Lowest Price is marked on every book, and no abatement is made on any article.' George Lackington, who succeeded his cousin James, continued to sell cheaply for cash, but was more inclined towards publishing speculations, and it was he who offered five hundred pounds for the autobiography of Richard Cumberland. The business was still being carried on in Finsbury Square in 1822, but a little later it was removed to Piccadilly, and the name of Lackington disappeared from the firm. Many of the best-known booksellers of the nineteenth-century are said to have received their training in the famous house that had been founded by the illiterate little West Country shoemaker.

MRS. GRANT OF LAGGAN

MRS. GRANT OF LAGGAN

(1755-1838)

PART I. GIRLHOOD

It may be remembered that Robert Louis Stevenson, in a letter to Mr. Sidney Colvin dated Christmas, 1880, announces his intention of writing a History of the Highlands (an interesting catalogue might be compiled of the unwritten books of the best authors), and dilates upon the vast number of delightful writers with whom he shall have to deal in the section devoted to literature—Johnson, Boswell, 'Ossian' Macpherson, Mrs. Grant of Laggan, and Scott. Again, in the charming *Memoirs of a Highland Lady* published a few years ago, the heroine alludes more than once to 'the celebrated Mrs. Grant of Laggan'; while references to the same lady occur in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*. Whatever may be the case with Scottish readers, it is probable that few Southrons could answer off-hand the question, 'Who is Mrs. Grant of Laggan?' or claim any familiarity with her works. Yet in the opening years of this century Mrs. Grant was one of the idols of literary society both in London and Edinburgh, while her *Letters from the Mountains* achieved a popularity that has only been rivalled by the productions of our modern Kailyard School. Her

vogue beyond doubt was genuine, and the enthusiasm she aroused spontaneous, for she was the pet of no special clique, and the critics, both northern and southern, were either cold or neglectful. It was the public of the two kingdoms that took her to its heart, wrote to assure her of its admiration, sent her substantial presents, and carried her triumphantly through many editions.

In the course of time the fickle public forgot the Lady of Laggan even more completely than it forgets most of its favourites; and now she only lives in the memories of a few lovers of Highland literature, who find a charm like that which lingers about a tuft of sun-dried heather in her once famous *Letters from the Mountains.* Stevenson, as we have seen, describes her as a delightful writer; but even had all the glamour faded out of her work, she deserves to be remembered for the good service she rendered to her countrymen by singing the praises of Highland character and Highland scenery at a time when it was the fashion in this country to despise everything north of the Tweed, to say nothing of the Tay. In the eighteenth century Southrons had been taught by such authorities as Burt, Johnson, and Pennant that the Highlands were barren deserts, the men frightful savages, and the women mere beasts of burden. Burt, writing of the scenery, observes: 'There is not much variety in it, but gloomy spaces, different rocks, and heather high and low. They appear one above the other, the whole of a dismal brown, drawing upon a dirty purple, and most of all disagreeable when the heather is in bloom.' Even Goldsmith declared that in Highland scenery 'hills and rocks intercept every prospect.' Mrs. Grant may perhaps be accused of having idealised the character and manners of her countrymen, but then she was a lady who looked upon

life through rose-coloured glasses, and asked little of her surroundings beyond nature and simplicity. It is probable that she did more than any other writer except Sir Walter to dissipate our national prejudice against the Scots, and to open English eyes to the beauty of the 'land of brown heath and shaggy wood.'

The future chronicler of the little village on the Spey had a far more eventful childhood than fell to the lot of most of her feminine contemporaries. In a fragment of autobiography written by herself in old age, she tells us that she was born in 1755, at Glasgow, being the only child of Duncan Macvicar, 'a plain, brave, pious soldier,' and of his wife, a Miss Stewart of Invernahayle. In 1757 Macvicar, who held a commission in the 77th Foot, sailed with his regiment for America, where the Seven Years' War was then raging. In 1758 Mrs. Grant and her little daughter Anne went out to join the head of the family, but on arriving at Charleston found that he was absent on the Pittsburg expedition. For some time they drifted about, now in Pennsylvania, now in New York, till in 1760 they accompanied the regiment from Albany to Oswego, making the long romantic voyage up the Mohawk river in large boats, sometimes sleeping in the woods, sometimes in the forts, which formed a chain of posts in the then trackless wilderness. On the way, Anne, who delighted in the freedom and adventure of the life, and cared nothing for the wolves that howled from the surrounding hills, was presented to Hendish, King of the Mohawks, who gave her a little basket of dried berries, and for whose sake she liked kings the better all her life after. 'We had no books,' she writes in later years, 'but the Bible and some military treatises; but I grew familiar with the Old Testament, and a Scotch

sergeant brought me Blind Harry's *Wallace*, which by the aid of the said sergeant I conned so diligently that I not only understood the broad Scotch, but caught an admiration for heroism, and an enthusiasm for Scotland that has ever since been like a principle of life.' A copy of Milton was studied on the return journey, a year later, and not only became one of the principal factors in the child's education, but was also the means of obtaining for her the friendship of one of the most distinguished American women of that period, Madame Schuyler, who lived in Albany, where Captain Macvicar was stationed for the next three or four years with a detachment of his regiment.

Colonel and Madame Schuyler had won well-deserved renown for the manner in which they dispensed hospitality to respectable strangers, protected the new settlers, helped to alleviate the hardships suffered by the British troops, and acted as the guardian angels of the poor Indians of the district. 'Some time after our arrival at Albany,' continues the autobiography, 'I accompanied my parents to visit Madame Schuyler, whom I regarded as the Minerva of my imagination. The conversation fell upon dreams and forewarnings. I rarely spoke till spoken to at any time, but of a sudden the spirit moved me to say that bad angels sometimes whispered dreams to the soul. When asked for my authority, I surprised every one, but myself most of all, by a long quotation from Eve's fatal dream[1] (in *Paradise Lost*) which infused into her mind the ambition that led to guilt. After this happy quotation I became a great favourite with Madame

[1] 'When nature rests,
Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes
To imitate her,' etc.

Schuyler, who never failed to tell any one who had read Milton the origin of her partiality. While we remained in America I enjoyed much of Madame Schuyler's society, and after my father removed from Albany I spent two winters with her in that city. Indeed, if my parents would have parted with me, she would have kept me entirely with herself: whatever culture my mind received I owe to her.'

When peace was concluded the British Government granted allotments of land to retired officers, two thousand acres to each. Captain Macvicar not only took up his own allotment, but bought at a low price the rights of other officers who were returning to England, and soon became the owner of a large amount of property in New Vermont, where he intended to settle down. His health giving way, however, he decided to return to his native land, leaving his affairs in charge of a friend. This estate, which he regarded as a comfortable provision for his family, was 'swallowed up,' to use his daughter's expression, in the American Rebellion; in other words, it was seized during those troubled times by disbanded soldiers and lawless characters who, when peace was restored, had the nine points of the law in their favour, and refused to accede to the federation of the other states, if their rights were called in question. The Macvicars arrived at Glasgow in May, 1768, after encountering one continued storm in a small ill-found vessel. Anne, then in her fourteenth year, was at first sought after as something curious and anomalous, possessing none of the fashionable feminine accomplishments, yet unusually familiar with books and all that regarded the face of nature. In spite of her unlikeness to other girls of her age, she made one or two friendships at this period

which neither time nor absence interrupted, and which only death had power to break.

Captain Macvicar had a share in a commercial business, but in 1773 he was offered the post of barrack-master of Fort Augustus, and could not resist the temptation of a military employment. Anne, then not quite eighteen, by no means disliked the idea of a life in the solitary Highland station, though it was not without a wrench that she parted from her Glasgow friends. The famous *Letters from the Mountains* begin abruptly with an account of the leisurely journey to Fort Augustus by way of Inveraray, Oban, and Fort William. There is a touch of youthful pedantry in her frequent allusions to the *Odyssey* which she carries with her in the chaise, and in her complaint, 'I can always get people to laugh with me; but the difficult thing is to get one "soft, modest, melancholy female fair" that will be grave with me, and enter into my serious and sober reflections.' Again, while riding over the lonely moors she is supported by a benevolent project for the reformation of certain female friends. 'I mean,' she writes, 'such of them as say or do no great harm, but who bewilder their brains and waste their time among endless mazes of ribbon and lace and tattle and tales. I am convinced some solitary pilgrimages over the brown moors might wean them from this trifling, and teach them to think, and then "on reason build resolve," which might be found a column of true dignity, even in women. The general result of my meditations was that we should be oftener alone.'

There is many a romantic description of the beauties of Loch Lomond, Glen Falloch, and Glencoe which no doubt charmed the equally romantic friend to whom they

were addressed, but which would certainly be skipped by the modern reader. A more original note is struck in a letter from Oban, dated May 3, 1773, the note of admiration for the Highland character which set the key to so much of Mrs. Grant's published work. 'Do you know,' she remarks, 'the Highlanders resemble the French in being poor with a better grace than other people. If they want certain luxuries or conveniences they do not look embarrassed and make you feel awkward by petty apologies, which you don't know how to answer; they rather dismiss any sentiment of that kind by a playful raillery for which they have a talent. People hereabouts, when they have good ancestry, education, and manners, are so supported by the consciousness of those advantages, that they seem not the least disconcerted by the deficiencies of fortune. Is it not a blessed thing that there is a place where poverty is respectable and deprived of its sting?'

At Oban the travellers stayed for some time at the house of an elderly gentleman, alluded to as 'The Collector,' with whom Anne declares that she has fallen deeply, hopelessly in love, though he is seventy and has been thrice married. But then he is so lively, well bred, and intelligent. 'If his are the manners of the old court, I wish I had lived a little earlier. . . . He delights to talk of his "last friend," who I believe was an amiable woman, and lived happily with him for the short time their union lasted, though the difference of age amounted to little less than fifty years!' It was here that Anne had her first experience of a Highland service, being taken by her friends to church at Kilmore, some four miles off. 'It is by no means a Jewish Sabbath that is kept here,' she observes. 'It would be bold to call it

strictly a Christian one; be that as it may, it is a very cheerful one. We set out on horseback in a shower of snow which people here mind no more than hair-powder. . . . This was an odd old church, almost ruinous, but when the preacher came in he roused all my attention. I never beheld a countenance so keenly expressive, nor such dark piercing eyes. When I began to look about, the dresses and countenances of the people presented new matter of speculation. This is certainly a fine country to grow old in; I could not spare a look to the young people, so much was I engrossed in contemplating their grandmothers. They preserve the form of dress worn some hundred years ago. Stately, erect, and self-satisfied, without a trace of the languor or coldness of age, they march up the area with gaudy-coloured plaids fastened about their breasts with a silver brooch like the full moon in size and shape. They have a peculiar lively blue eye, and a fair fresh complexion. Round their heads is tied a plain kerchief, and on each cheek is a silver lock which is always cherished, and considered as a kind of decoration. . . .

'I was trying to account for the expression in the countenance of those cheerful ancients, while the pastor was holding forth in the native tongue. Now here is the result:—People who are for ever consecrating the memory of the departed, and hold the virtues, nay, the faults of their ancestors in such blind veneration, see much to love and revere in their parents that others never think of. The old people, treated with unvaried tenderness and veneration, feel no diminution of their consequence, no chill in their affections. . . . Observe, moreover, that they serve for song-books and circulating libraries, so faithfully do they preserve, and so accurately detail, the

tales of the times of old and the song of the bards. All this makes them the delight of the very young in the happy period of wonder and simplicity, and finding themselves so prevents their being peevish or querulous. . . . I was waked out of a pleasing reverie by the beadle coming to ask if I had any Gaelic, because if I had not there was to be an English discourse. Judge of my importance in having a sermon preached for my very self. . . . A new and very amusing scene opened when service was over. We were ushered into a kind of public-house where it seems all the genteel part of the congregation usually meet, converse, and take refreshments while their horses are preparing. The Kirk here is literally accounted a public place, and frequented from very different motives. People *not singularly pious* cross ferries and ride great distances in bad weather, not solely, I fear, to hear the glad tidings in church, but to meet friends in this good-humoured kindly way, after sermon, who can tell them all about their eighteenth cousins in India and America.'

The cynosure of the assembly was an old major, with tartan coat, large silver buttons worn in Montrose's wars by his grandfather, and abundant silver locks adorning a countenance the picture of health and benignity. With him were his three thin upright sisters and his nine cousins, who amidst all their oddity were mountain gentlewomen. There was little scandal talked; for the dead being the principal subject of conversation, the living escaped calumny. 'I am resolved for my part,' declares Anne, 'to die in the Highlands, that I may avoid the sudden oblivion which swallows up the departed among polished people who disguise selfishness under the pretence of not being able to endure to have their fine feelings disturbed with the mention of the dead.'

Like most young women of marked character who have early learned to think for themselves, Anne found it difficult to adapt herself to ordinary female society, or to make allowance for the follies and frivolities of girls of a different calibre from herself. In one of the letters written during her stay at Oban in a family which, with the exception of its head, was not particularly congenial to her, she writes:—

'I cannot fatigue myself or you with the description of this day; you will find it in Thomson, "Deceitful, vain, and void passes the day." Why should I speak peevishly of good-humoured people who show a wish to please me? Why am I not pleased with trifles when the best of us are doomed to pass a great part of our lives in a manner which our own reflections must call trifling? But then I should like to trifle my own way. I could play half a day with sweet little Anne, or even with a sportive kitten or puppy. I could gather shells and sea-weed on the shore, or venture my neck for nests that I would not plunder after finding them; nay, I could talk nonsense as we used to do, and laugh heartily at vagaries of our own contriving; but their nonsense I can't for my life relish; they think it wit, and I can't accredit it as such. Then they think cunning wisdom, and mistake simplicity for folly. Do not think that I indulge myself in the conceit of not caring for anybody unless they have the taste for reading which great leisure and solitude in a manner forced upon me, but I would have people love truth and nature, I would have them look a little into the great book which their Maker has left open to everybody.'

With her host, the Collector, Anne had already struck up a warm friendship. He lent her books, and encouraged

her to write down her reflections and impressions on the subjects of her reading. But on the whole she was not sorry to depart on his Majesty's wherry for Fort William, where the party arrived about May the 12th. The wherry had a very stormy passage, and the captain was forced to put in for shelter opposite Port Appin, the passengers taking refuge in the house of an unknown lady. 'We were received,' says Anne, 'with a kind of stately civility by a tall, thin person, a widow—pale, wan, and woe-begone. She never asked who we were until a good fire and most comfortable tea-drinking put us in humour to make replies. She then asked my mother if we were connected with the country. Now we had just left my father's country, and entered my mother's. She told the good lady her whole genealogy, by no means omitting the Invernahayle family, on which the old lady rose with great solemnity, crying, 'All the water in the sea cannot wash your blood from mine,' and a tender embrace was followed by a long dissertation on the Invernahayle family.'

Fort William, where another stay was made, found no favour in the girl's critical eyes. 'It is,' she declared, 'a seaport without being animated; it is a village without the air of peace and simplicity; it is military without being gay and bold-looking; it is country without being rural; it is Highland without being picturesque and romantic; it has plains without verdure, hills without woods, mountains without majesty, and a sky without a sun.' Even the river she describes as looking gloomy and stupid, while the far-famed Ben Nevis is a great clumsy mountain, which, as far as a mountain can resemble a man, resembles the person Smollett has marked out by the name of Captain Gawky. At this time the

young traveller is full of the tragedy of Glencoe, and relates the familiar story in picturesque and impassioned style. An anecdote of another dismal period is told in the same letter, and will probably be new to most readers.

'There was an English major,' so it runs, 'who in the absence of the governor commanded the garrison of Fort William in the year 1746. At that time, after much previous *severity*, a free pardon was offered to all the lower class who would deliver up their arms; those found with weapons in their possession had no mercy to expect. After supper one night, when the commandant and his officers were enjoying their bowl in this house, the sergeant of the guard came in, and said there were three men brought in with their arms,—what should be done with them? "What but hang them?" said the major, impatient of disturbance. Now this was owing to the sergeant's inaccuracy of expression. The poor men, in fact, were coming in with their arms to deliver them up, and meeting one of the outposts by the way, accompanied them to the garrison. When the giant awoke from his wine, the first thing he did was to look out of the window, and the first object he saw was the bodies of these unhappy men hung over a mill opposite. He was filled with horror, not recollecting his last night's order. When it was explained to him that the poor creatures came to receive the proffered mercy, the intelligence threw him into a deep and lasting melancholy. My father, though of all Whigs the bluest, speaks with horror of this transaction, and says he saw a very pretty young widow come to that mill the following winter, whose father, brother, and husband had been the sufferers.'

It was in those days a long and fatiguing journey on

horseback over the brown moors to Fort Augustus. The letters give a vivid description of Glenmore, the great valley that opens across Scotland from sea to sea, and of its fast-following lakes linked by filial streams, which, as the writer says, 'invite art to the aid of nature in forming a canal that should divide Scotland; but that will be the business of a wiser and a richer century.' Just thirty years later, in 1803, the Caledonian Canal was begun, but it was not completed until 1847. On passing the ruins of Achnacarry, the home of the Camerons, Anne relates with pride how 'when Lochiel's estate was forfeited, the tenants paid the usual rent to the Crown, and also paid voluntarily a rent to support Lochiel's family abroad. When the demesne was taken by some friends for their behoof, the tenants stocked it with cattle of all kinds. This too was pure benevolence; and to this my grandfather, one of that faithful band, amply contributed.'

For General Wade's famous military roads our heroine had no great appreciation, and refused to take it for granted that they would civilise the people as speedily and effectually as was expected. 'The people,' she asserts, 'were very *civil* when they were well treated; they were so agile and familiar with their own bye-paths, and so accustomed to go

> "Over moor, over mire,
> Thoro' bush and thoro' briar,"

that I am not clear they will always forsake their old short cuts for the pleasure of going ten miles round on hard gravel. These roads will afford access to strangers who dislike and despise, because they do not understand

them; and to luxuries they cannot afford to pay for, and would be happier without. Early accustomed to savage life, I have not the horror at it that wiser people have. As far as regards this world, I am not sure how much my old Mohawk friends have to gain by being civilised, nor are my expectations very sanguine of the felicity which more knowledge of good and evil will produce here.'

Fort Augustus is described as a miniature New York as to situation, the fort itself being the prettiest little thing imaginable. 'You would suppose some old veteran had built himself a house with a ditch and drawbridge to remind him of his past exploits.' The society was almost exclusively military, and naturally limited in its ideas and conversation. 'Nobody will care for me,' writes Anne, luxuriating after youthful fashion in the prospect of undeserved loneliness and neglect, 'because nobody will understand me. I cannot blame them. I am too rustic, too simple at least, for people of the world, with whom manner is everything; and though myself uneducated, I painfully feel that I have too much refinement, too much delicacy, for uninformed people with whom I have no point of union but simplicity. . . . Our garrisonians are diverting originals, but their restlessness and discontent provoke me. Military people always speak with pleasure of the place where they have been, or are going, but are never satisfied where they are. They are generally well bred and entertaining, but often hard and heartless at bottom, and always arbitrary in their families when they have them. They rail constantly at this place, yet perhaps they will never be so happy when they leave it. I would rather be a beetle under a stone than a dragon-fly blown with every blast.'

Quite an ordeal was the first visit to the commandant's wife, for the lady was London-bred, had a great fortune, and was what the men called very *smart*. 'She was a terrification to me,' writes the stranger. 'I put on my lilac, as you may well believe, but neither that nor my new bonnet inspired me with confidence. I was much worse when I went to the Governor's. The young lady, from whom I would fain have looked for a little companionship, interested but overawed me. She was polite, and that is all one expects at first; but I am sure she could not like me if she wished it—I was so awkward, and so sensible of being awkward, and so afraid of being laughed at. I envy those people whose spirits are kept up by the hope of admiration; mine are always kept down by the fear of ridicule.'

The girl found her chief resources in her books, her rambles over the moors, and her correspondence with her friends. To the Collector she writes long letters containing critical analyses of the books that he has lent her, mostly biographies of celebrated men, such as Cromwell, Charles XII., and Peter the Great. On June 20, 1773, however, she tells him that her attention has been completely engrossed by a 'new' novel called *The Vicar of Wakefield*,[1] which he must certainly read. 'Goldsmith,' she observes, 'puts me in mind of Shakespeare; his narrative is improbable and absurd in many instances, yet all his characters do and say so exactly what might be supposed of them, if so circumstanced, that you willingly resign your mind to the sway of this pleasing enchanter, laugh heartily at improbable incidents, and weep bitterly for impossible distresses. . . 'Tis a thousand pities that Goldsmith had not patience or art to

[1] Published in 1766.

conclude suitably a story so happily conducted; but the closing scenes rush on so precipitately, are managed with so little skill, and wound up in such a hurried and really bungling manner, that you seem hastily awakened from an affecting dream. Then miseries are heaped on the poor Vicar with such barbarous profusion, that the imagination, weary of such cruel tyranny, ends it by breaking the illusion.'

Not a bad piece of criticism for a self-educated girl of eighteen! The Collector was not unnaturally impressed, and inquired the source whence so much premature information and reflection had been derived. In reply, Anne gives a little sketch of Madame Schuyler; and declares that whatever culture her mind had received she owed to this friend of her childhood, whose house was an academy for morals, for manners, and for solid knowledge. 'Many particulars relative to this excellent person's life and manners,' she remarks, 'would be well worth preserving; and if I outlive her, I think I will, some time or other, endeavour to please myself at least by preserving a memoir of a life so valuable and important.' This project, conceived in early girlhood, was carried out thirty years later, when in her *Memoirs of an American Lady* the writer succeeded in producing a book that pleased the public on both sides of the Atlantic.

In June, 1774, Anne journeyed with a friend to Inverness, intending to stay only a few days, but between kindness and contrary winds the visitors were detained three weeks. The town at that time had, according to our chronicler, 'a very genteel society, and one meets with many well-bred, agreeable people. They have assemblies every fortnight, gayer than the Glasgow ones, which may be accounted for by their being attended by

the neighbouring gentry, who are numerous and polite. Nothing took my fancy so much as the ladies. They are really showy, handsome women, excellent dancers, and have the best complexions I ever saw. Indeed, you can seldom meet with a young lady who does not remind you of the beauties in old romances.' Another visit to some cousins at Perth was not productive of unmixed pleasure; and there is a Jane-Austen-like touch about the complaint that the hostesses were 'too civil to let us alone, too desirous of entertaining to hold their tongues a moment, too observant to let us look serious without asking why we were so dull, or out of the window without taxing us with being wearied of them. In short, we did not *get our elbows on the tea-table* while we stayed. Then we had continual invitations from agreeable people in the town, which we accepted the readier as we were not quite the thing at home, and that was misprision of treason.'

The five or six years spent at Fort Augustus passed peacefully, if somewhat monotonously, for the barrack-master's daughter. The life and the society of the place are summed up neatly enough in a letter dated March, 1777. 'You have no idea how townified folks are in these little garrisons, and how these small circles ape the manners of the great world they have reluctantly left behind them. We too have our visits and our scandals brought from thirty miles distant. When any one marries, we all sit in judgment, and are sure to find some fault with either party, as if it were our own cousin; and when any one dies within twenty miles, we are all very busy sounding their praises, and contrive to rake a good many virtues from among their ashes that we never gave them credit for till they were out of the reach of envy.

When Madame La Commandante receives any new article of dress, we all fly to admire it, and then hurry away to wash gauzes, or in some other imperfect manner to contrive a humble imitation of it. Believe that our antiquated beaux and belles do everything in the country that yours do in the town, only with more languor and ill humour. When they walk 'tis on the hard gravel road to get an appetite; when they read 'tis some periodical matter, to doze away time till the card-party begins. . . . They are ever pining for want of company they could ill afford to keep, and public places which it would ruin them to frequent. They strive to exalt our idea of their former consequence by regretting that there are no noblemen's seats at a visiting distance, and that tumblers and rope-dancers never come this way.'

PART II. MARRIAGE

In May, 1779, Anne Macvicar was married to a member of the numerous Grant clan, a young clergyman who had formerly been chaplain to the garrison, but who for the past three years had ministered to the spiritual needs of the parish of Laggan, a remote and solitary village on the spurs of the Grampians between Kingussie and Fort William. Even in these days it lies outside the beaten track of tourists, since no railway has yet invaded those mountain fastnesses. In a letter to a friend written a couple of months after the marriage, Mrs. Grant explains that the man for whom she has made 'the greatest of all sacrifices' is an old acquaintance of her correspondent's, and continues:—

'After staying two months at the Fort, and wandering

many days through our old delightful haunts, we have at length taken up our residence in the pastor's cottage, which is literally pastoral. Here we have since continued, not enjoying the ideal felicity of romances, but that rational and obtainable degree of happiness which is derived from a sincere mutual esteem, health, tranquillity, and a humble, grateful consciousness of being placed in a situation equally remote from the cares of poverty and the snares of wealth. You know of old my notions of matrimony, and how meanly I thought of the usual state of happiness enjoyed by those who enter into willing subjection. This has proved an advantage to me, as I had no sanguine expectations to be disappointed, and find more of the attention and complacency of a lover in the husband than I expected. We were indeed mistaken in the character of our friend; he has neither the indifference nor the tranquillity we gave him credit for. Wrapped up in his natural reserve, he baffled our penetration. Would you think it? He is generous, impetuous, and acute in all his feelings. His delicacy is extreme, and he has as nice and jealous a sense of honour as any Spaniard.'

The life of a Highland village was evidently far more to Mrs. Grant's taste than that of town or garrison. In the *Letters from the Mountains* there is not a single word of complaint of the loneliness, the hardships, or the inconveniences of such an existence. She nearly always writes of Laggan in sunshine, with the flowers blooming and the stream singing over the stones. In the autobiographical fragment she explains that 'Mr. Grant having been placed in the parish of Laggan three years before, his popularity was secured by his manners and conduct; mine was of more difficult attainment,

because I was not a native of the country, and Highlanders dislike the intrusion of a stranger. However, I had both pride and pleasure in overcoming difficulties. Thus, by adopting their customs, studying the Gaelic language, and, above all, not wondering at anything local or peculiar, I acquired that share of the goodwill of my new connections, and the regard of the poor, without which, even with the fond affection of a fellow mind, such a residence would scarcely have been supportable. . . . I acquired a taste for farming, led a life of fervid activity, and had a large family of children, all promising, and the greater number of them beautiful.'

It is evident that Mrs. Grant took a pride in her multifarious duties, and fully returned the affection of the people. Her husband held a farm on very easy terms from the Duke of Gordon, which supported a dozen cows and a couple of hundred sheep; while there was a range of summer pasture on the mountains for the young stock. 'This farm,' she writes, 'supplies us with everything absolutely necessary; even the wool and flax that our handmaidens manufacture to clothe the children are our own growth. I am very fond of the lower class of the people; they have sentiment, serious habits, and a kind of natural courtesy; in short, they are not *mob*. . . . There is a plentiful lack of wealth and an abundant scarcity of knowledge; but our common people have not often low, sordid notions, cant phraseology, nor the callous hardness that marks that class of mind in whatever situation. Our people, though they lose their native character when they learn languages, or mingle with the *canaille* of other countries, retain here a good deal of the Fingalian liberality and courtesy, of that tenderness of sentiment, that elevated

generosity that casts a lustre over the brown deserts of Morven.'

The Grant children, twelve in number, all learned to lisp Gaelic in their infancy, and their mother often dwelt upon the pleasure that her acquaintance with that original and emphatic language had afforded her. 'I am determined,' she says, 'that my children shall drink from the pure wells of Celtic undefiled. They shall taste the animated and energetic conversation of the natives, and an early acquaintance with the poetry of nature shall guard them against false taste or affectation. I never desire to hear an English word out of their mouths till they are four or five years old. How I should delight in grafting elegant sentiments and just notions on simple manners and primitive ideas. That is just the Forte-piano character that we always wish for and seldom meet.'

Mrs. Grant soon became an adept at farming, an occupation which in the Highlands was left chiefly to the female members of a family. 'You Londoners,' she says in one letter, 'have no idea of the complicated nature of Highland farming, nor of the odd customs that prevail here. Formerly, from the wild and warlike nature of the men, they thought no rural employments compatible with their dignity. Fighting, hunting, lounging in the sun, music and poetry, were their occupations. This naturally extended the women's province both of management and labour, the care of the cattle being peculiarly their own.' This custom roused indignation in the breasts of the few English travellers who penetrated into the remoter Highlands. Pennant declares that the women trudged to the fields in droves, like beasts of burden, and were so loaded with harvest labours

that it was small wonder they became withered and wrinkled hags at an age when the more fortunate of their sex were still in their prime. Happily for themselves, the Highland matrons saw no cause for self-pity in their hard-working lives. The Lady of Laggan certainly regarded the matter from an optimistic point of view. 'Though the men are now civilised to what they were,' she observes, 'yet the custom of leaving the weight of all cares on the more helpless sex still continues, and has produced this one good effect, that they are from this habit less helpless and dependent. The men think they preserve dignity by this mode of management; the women find a degree of power and consequence that they would not exchange for inglorious ease.'

In the summer the cattle, most of the farm-servants, and some of the children were sent up to the mountain pastures, at which time the commissariat required most careful organisation, the lines of communication being very long, though fortunately there was no enemy to harass them. In one of her letters Mrs. Grant attempts to give an outline of her occupations during a typical Monday in June. 'I mention Monday,' she says, 'because it is the day on which all dwellers in the glens come down for supplies. Item, at four o'clock Donald arrives with a horse loaded with butter, cheese, and milk. The former I must weigh instantly. He only asks an additional blanket for the children, a covering for himself, two milk-tubs, a cog, two stone of meal, a quart of salt, and two pounds of flax for the spinners. He brings the intelligence that the old sow has become the joyful mother of a dozen pigs, and requests something to feed her with. All this must be ready in an hour, before the conclusion of which comes young Ronald from the high hills where our

sheep and horses are all summer, and desires meat, salt, and women with shears to clip the lambs. He informs me that the black mare has a foal, but is very low, and I must send some one to bring her to the meadows before he departs. Then the tenants who do us services come; they are going to stay two days in the oak-wood cutting timber for our new byre, and must have a provision of bread, cheese, and ale. Then I have Caro's breakfast to get, Janet's hank to reel, Kate's lesson to hear, and her sampler to rectify, and all must be over by eleven o'clock. Meanwhile his reverence, calm and regardless of all this bustle, wonders what detains me, urging me out to walk, while the soaring larks and smiling meadows second the invitation. . . . Now I will not plague you with a detail of the whole day. Yet spare your pity; for this day is succeeded by an evening so sweetly serene, our walk by the river is so calmly pleasing, our conversation in the long-wished-for hour of rest so interesting, and then our children!—say you wish me more leisure, but do not pity me.'

The picture is idyllic enough, but the modern reader feels inclined to ask why 'his reverence' should not have lent a helping hand with the affairs of his farm instead of wondering what all the bustle was about. But life was not all work at Laggan, though one marvels how the mistress of the house found time for anything beyond her domestic duties, which included the bearing and rearing of twelve children. There are visits to the numerous Grant relations, and an occasional journey to Fort George, where Captain Macvicar had now settled, and where the people were 'incredibly polished, powdered, townified and Englified, the ladies being as great adepts in the modish chitchat and the modish games as any

of their sisters in Grosvenor Square.' Many of the 'genteeler' class, retired officers, old Indian civil servants, and the like, lived in the neighbourhood of Laggan, whither, in spite of its remoteness and obscurity, Mrs. Grant declared that her sworn foe, the *ton*, pursued, overtook, and surrounded her.

The rustic gaieties of the people she could always enter into and enjoy. In one letter there is a detailed account of the wedding of two trusty retainers, the bride having served the family eight years, and the bridegroom seven. Four fat sheep and abundance of poultry were slain for the supper and the following breakfast, which latter was served in Chinese fashion to the superior class. 'At the feast above one hundred persons assisted, the music and dancing being superior to anything you can imagine. Mr. Grant took a fancy to be very wise and serious, and reproved our host for killing so many sheep and collecting so many people, and wondered at me for being pleased. I never saw him so ungracious before, but he was not well. Every one was quiet, orderly, and happy in the extreme. I considered it was hard to grudge this one day of *glorious* felicity to those who, though doomed to struggle through a life of hardship and penury, have all the love of society, the taste for conviviality, and even the sentiment that animates social intercourse, and constitutes the most enviable part of enjoyment in higher circles. It would be cruel to deprive such of the single opportunity their life affords of being splendidly hospitable, and seeing all those to whom nature allied them rejoice together at a table of their own providing; and of seeing that table graced by such of their superiors as they have been used to regard with a mixed sentiment of love and veneration. This scene is such as cannot take place

but in these regions; here only you may condescend without degradation, for here only is the bond between the superior and inferior classes a kindly one. I cannot exactly say where the fault lies; but cold disdain on the one side, and a gloomy and rancorous envy on the other, fix an icy barrier between the classes with you.'

We make acquaintance with several of the Laggan notabilities, chief among these being a venerable sibyl who knits garters, sings her native airs, and bids fair to rival Old Parr. 'In her,' says Mrs. Grant, 'I have all the pleasure of an old woman's conversation without the plague of gossiping; for if she has any scandal, King William is the subject of it. She is full of anecdote, but scorns to talk of anything that happened within the last thirty years. Madame de Maintenon is the heroine of her imagination; she talks of her as if she were still living, and constantly quotes the ivory wheel with which she spun Lewis into subjection to our girls; for she considers spinning one of the cardinal virtues, and is at this hour spinning fine wool on the distaff, of which she proposes making garters for the Marquis [of Huntley].'

The humours and superstitions of the country-side were regarded with a kindly eye by the pastoress of Laggan, who considered even the darkest superstition infinitely preferable to the cynicism and scepticism imported from France. It is in an appreciative spirit that she records an anecdote related to her by one of her dairymaids, who was a perfect treasury of local legend.

'Yesterday fortnight,' so runs the tale in the maid's own words, 'the Minister of M—— in Athol, you know—well, his dairymaid went into the byre and put out all the cows but one, who lay down and would not move. "Get

up," says the maid. "I won't get up," says the cow. "But you shall," says the girl, a little startled. "Go to your master and bid him come here," says the cow. So the girl went, and her master came into the byre. "Get up." said he to the cow. "No, I won't," said she; "I want to speak to you." "Say on," said the Master, "since you are permitted." The cow began: "Expect a summer of famine, a harvest of blood, and a winter of tears." Then the cow got up and went about her business.' This fine story, comments the mistress, gains ample credit, and it would be thought impiety to doubt it.

Books and news travelled but slowly into those mountain regions, but both were eagerly appreciated when at last they arrived. In the autumn of 1788 we hear that the bard of bards, James Macpherson, 'who has reached the mouldy harp of Ossian from the withered oak of Selma, is now moving like a meteor over his native hills. . . . This bard is as great a favourite of fortune as of fame, and has got more by the old harp of Ossian than most of his predecessors could draw out of the silver strings of Apollo's. He has bought three small estates in this country, given a ball to the ladies, and now keeps a hall of hospitality at Belleville, his newly purchased seat [near Kingussie].' Mrs. Grant was to the last a firm believer in the genuineness of 'Ossian' Macpherson's finds, and not all the incredulity of all the Edinburgh Reviewers could shake her faith.

The *Sorrows of Werther*,[1] read in 1789, greatly excited the dwellers in the quiet parsonage. 'I execrate the plan,' writes our heroine, 'detest the example, reprobate the reasoning, shudder at the catastrophe, and am most perniciously charmed with that vivid colouring, that

[1] Published in 1774.

fervid glow of sentiment, that energy of thought, and that simple unadorned pathos which, without a pomp of sounds, penetrates and melts the very soul.' Mary Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Women*[1] shocked the Lagganites without charming them. Mrs. Grant expresses her disbelief in the desirability of creating hotbeds for feminine genius, and candidly admits that 'innovation disconcerts us and new light blinds us; we detest the Rights of Man and abominate those of Woman.' Perhaps her disapproval of female culture was partly due to the theory, which she attributes variously to Swift and Bolingbroke, that superior powers of intellect are seldom joined to amiable qualities in a woman without a balance of bad health to set to the opposite side of the account.

A visit to Glasgow in 1797, the first probably since she had left it in 1773, surprised Mrs. Grant by the luxuries she beheld, more especially those of the intellect —lectures, circulating libraries, and the like. A late Professor had founded a Chemistry lecture that was expected prodigiously to exalt and illuminate the citizens, both male and female. 'It might be a very harmless lounge,' comments the lady from the mountains, 'for the female auditory, if the idea of being greatly the wiser for hearing a man talk an hour about carbon and chemistry would not tend to conceit and affectation. The having an additional place of public resort, too, encourages that insatiable love of change, that restlessness, which is, I think, the great and growing evil of the age. I always thought a moderate knowledge of geography and history a very desirable acquisition for a woman, because it qualifies her for mingling in solid and rational conversation, and makes her more a companion for her husband

[1] Published in 1792.

or brother. The more pleasing and attainable branches of *belles lettres* lie within her own province—that of the imagination and the heart. What business women have with any science but that which serves to improve and adorn conversation I cannot comprehend. For my part, I cannot conceive a woman devoting her whole time and faculties to the study of any particular art or science. . . . That knowledge which neither improves the heart nor meliorates the temper, which makes us neither more useful nor more pleasing, I cannot consider as a desirable acquisition.'

This is a little vague, since only experience can prove what branches of knowledge tend to improve the heart, or 'meliorate' the temper. Moreover, for a lady who had read Homer in her youth, and scribbled a good deal of poetry in later years, she was perhaps rather hard upon such of her sisters as indulged their tastes in other intellectual exercises. But then she prided herself on never publishing her compositions, which were lost or given away as soon as written. Although not an advocate of the rights of women, Mrs. Grant had no very exalted opinion of the other sex, and positively despised old bachelors. 'I love to hear of people marrying,' she writes, 'but chiefly for the sake of the men concerned; for old maids I have known both happy and respectable, but old bachelors hardly ever. I have no patience with them, and would have them all learn to knit. . . . Tavern company and bachelor circles make men gross, callous, and awkward; in short, disqualify them for superior female society. The more heart old bachelors of this kind have, the more absurd and insignificant they grow in the long-run; for when infirmity comes on, and fame and business lose their attractions, they must needs have somebody to love

and trust, and become the dupes of wretched toad-eaters and the slaves of designing housekeepers.'

The only sorrows of the twenty years spent at Laggan were caused by the deaths of four out of the twelve Grant children, one of whom, a promising boy, had lived to the age of sixteen when he fell a victim to consumption. In 1801 Mr. Grant, whose health had been gradually declining for some time, died after only a few days of actual illness, leaving his widow with eight children, and a very small income. For a couple of years the Duke of Gordon permitted her to keep on the farm at Laggan while she looked about her and made plans for the future. It was suggested that she should publish a selection of the verses that she had been accustomed to scribble so freely. 'I had been often urged,' she explains, 'to write for the booksellers; but, in the first place, I had more dread of censure than hope of applause; and besides, I could not find leisure, devoted as I was to a tenderly affectionate husband, whose delicacy of constitution and still greater delicacy of mind made my society and attendance essential to him. It is gratifying to me to think of my steadiness in this refusal. . . . Before I had ever heard of the project for my advantage—indeed, before the materials were collected—proposals were dispersed all over Scotland for publishing a volume of my poems. To these proposals a specimen was annexed in what my friends thought my best manner. . . . Being very much attached to my humble neighbours, I had at one time written as part of a letter a page or two of poetical regret at the hard necessity that forced so many to emigrate. The friend who had preserved this effusion sent it home, and advised me to enlarge and complete the sketch. I

did so, and thus was finished "The Highlanders," the principal poem in the published collection; the rest I did not see again until I saw them in print.'

The Duchess of Gordon, who had a house at Kinrara, near Laggan, and who posed as a literary patron, interested herself in the book, and finally no less than three thousand subscribers were obtained. The unusual numbers were probably in great measure due to the clannish feeling of the Highlands. The name of the Grants was legion, and the Gordons no doubt followed the lead of their chieftainess. Highland poets were plentiful enough; but Highland poets who attained the dignity of print, or even of manuscript, were rare, and it has already been seen what a substantial harvest 'Ossian' Macpherson had reaped. The subject of Mrs. Grant's principal poem appealed to southerners by reason of its freshness and novelty, while the prosaic trot of her rhymed couplets fell pleasantly enough upon the ear of that period. For modern readers, however, it is to be feared that the charm has irrevocably fled. The opening lines will give a sufficient idea of the method in which she has treated her picturesque theme:—

> 'Come, then, explore with me each winding glen,
> Far from the noisy haunts of busy men;
> Let us with steadfast eye attentive trace
> The local habits of the Celtic race.'

Mrs. Grant prided herself upon having 'let herself alone,' and studied neither 'the quaint simplicity of the new school (*i.e.* the Lake Poets), nor the uniform laboured splendour of Darwin and his imitators.' Among her most admired productions were the Gaelic songs which she learned from the lips of the mountain bards, and translated into, it must be owned, commonplace English

verse. However, her book served its purpose, bringing substantial help to the little household, and giving pleasure to a large number of the less critical readers of the day.

PART III. WIDOWHOOD

Although Mrs. Grant found helping hands stretched out in her time of need, trouble of one kind or another was seldom far from her door. Shortly after Mr. Grant's death, a Mrs. Protheroe, the wife of the member for Bristol, having heard excellent accounts of the conduct and manners of Mary Grant, the eldest daughter, invited the girl to come and live with her as a friend, and offered to make her a suitable allowance. The offer was accepted; but soon after Mary's arrival at Bristol, news was received of her dangerous illness, and her mother was summoned to her side. Leaving the household at Laggan in the care of her second daughter Isabella, then just eighteen, Mrs. Grant set out in mid-winter on her long and fatiguing journey to the south. She was hardly in a frame of mind to appreciate the scenes through which she passed; and in a letter to a friend she expresses her disappointment with the aspect of Cumberland and Lancashire, which she considers flat, bleak, and unvaried, having neither the romantic variety of Scotland nor the rich culture which she expected in England. The farmhouses struck her as gross and unrural, with ugly tiled roofs, and gardens formal and suburban-like. The windmills and sluggish clay-coloured streams made her recollect with painful pleasure the pure streams that poured like melted crystal from her Alpine hills.

On arriving at Bristol, Mrs. Grant was informed that

her daughter's only chance of life was to drink the waters of the hot wells of Clifton. Here, therefore, they established themselves for a couple of months, at the end of which time, the invalid's health being restored, they returned to Scotland, paying a visit to an old friend in Devonshire on the way.

Mrs. Grant describes the rapturous feelings with which she rode across the wild moorland that lay between more civilised regions and her beloved Laggan, where her children and devoted servants eagerly awaited her; but her days there were numbered. In June, 1803, the farm was given up, and the whole family removed to a house near Stirling, where they were joined by the now widowed Mrs. Macvicar. Here Mrs. Grant found one or two good friends; and having a few acres of ground and some cows, she managed to create many little rural occupations for herself. 'The love of farming,' she observes, 'is first cousin to the love of nature; no person that has ever tasted the sweets of weeding turnips and pulling lint, not to mention the transports of marking the first bloom nodding on potatoes, can give up these pursuits without a pang like that of a defeated general or a neglected beauty.'

In her Lowland home she sadly missed the fellowship of the gentle and courteous peasants of Laggan. 'Here I am grieved with the altered manners of a gross and sordid peasantry,' she writes on one occasion, 'who retain only the form they have inherited from a pious ancestry, while the spirit is quite evaporated; who regard their superiors with envious ill-will, and their equals with cold selfishness; who neither look back to their ancestors, nor forward to their successors, but live and labour merely for the individual.' Among the neighbours of the upper classes there were not many who were actually congenial

to the lady of Laggan, who, however, adapted herself with cheerful good sense to her environment, observing: 'I carefully banish from my mind the absurd and silly fastidiousness of working myself up to relish no conversation but that of wits and savants; it would be a *régime* of pickles and marmalade without bread and water. Common sense and common integrity, with some degree of heart, I insist on in my companions. Knaves and fools I will positively have nothing to do with. Some one mind that thinks and feels as I do myself is indispensable. 'Tis like my morning tea, the only luxury I care for, which habit has made necessary.'

The clouds soon began to gather again on the horizon of the little household. The eldest son, Duncan, was about this time at Marlow, preparing for the army. A disturbance arose among the students, in which he was concerned as the depository of their secret, a circumstance that involved his mother in much anxiety and expense. Through the influence of a kinsman, Sir Charles Grant, of the India Office, the affair was hushed up, and Duncan received a commission in the service of the East India Company. The necessary equipment cost a considerable sum, and in this emergency her friends urged Mrs. Grant to publish a selection of her letters, a course from which she was, for many reasons, much averse. She considered it 'indelicate' to publish letters in the lifetime of the author; and she saw that it would be necessary to exclude the most amusing and interesting passages, as well as much harmless badinage and veritable narrative. However, there seemed to be no other method of raising money, and in January, 1805, she went to London by sea, a twelve days' voyage, in order to arrange her son's affairs and interview publishers.

Armed with an introduction, Mrs. Grant went to Messrs. Longman and Rees, feeling as much ashamed of her defective and ill-arranged manuscript as ever Falstaff was of his ragged recruits. In a few days, more fortunate than the ordinary literary aspirant, she was informed that her manuscript was considered suitable for publication, and would appear in three or four months' time. The author was to receive half the profits, the booksellers bearing the risk of printing. A stay of six weeks with a friend at Richmond enabled Mrs. Grant to complete her business, and also to see something of the amusements of town. She was taken to a performance of the infant Roscius, where she marvelled at the folly of spoiling so fine a child by anticipating his capabilities and ruining his constitution. She also paid a visit to the Opera, but she confesses that the music was Greek to her, and that she fell asleep in the middle of the evening. More to her taste was an introduction to a little literary society, a dinner with Mrs. 'Epictetus' Carter, and a chat with Joanna Baillie.

Nothing more was heard of the *Letters from the Mountains* during the remainder of that year, which passed quietly at Stirling. Books were more easily obtainable now, and Mrs. Grant records the pleasure she received from Campbell's *Poems* and Hayley's *Life of Cowper*.

'I wish you would tell me,' she writes to an old friend, 'whether you admire Campbell's "words that glow and thoughts that burn" as much as I do; and whether you are tempted to have a little Teraphim image of Cowper in your chamber for your private devotions; and whether you are very proud that so many women distinguished for intellect and elegance, as well as virtue and piety, gave up the pleasures of this vain world for a time to

extract the thorns from his heart, and pour in the wine and oil of consolation. I am always glad when I can warrantably boast of my own sex. We are better than men upon the whole. Indeed, the few amiable men I have known had many femalities in their tastes and opinions, but then I must allow the most respectable women have some masculine traits too. Nature does nothing wrong. It is women who affect and assume the masculine character that are insufferable.' 'Are you not charmed with the *Lay of the Last Minstrel?*' she asks in another letter, dated November 1805; and after bidding her friend read the poem on her knees, continues: 'Woe be to you if you ever apostatise from your love and duty to the land of cakes, which is indeed the land of social life and social love, and lies in a happy medium between the dissipated gaiety and improvident thoughtlessness of the Irish, and the cold and close attention to petty comforts and conveniences that absorbs the English mind.'

In the spring of 1806 Mrs. Grant received a sudden request that she would write a preface for her *Letters from the Mountains*, which she had begun to despair of seeing published. The preface was dashed off, and in the course of the summer she was astonished to hear a casual remark that a book of that name divided with one or two other new works the attention of readers in town. In October of the same year she mentions the warm interest that the book has excited even in strangers, and the considerable pecuniary benefit that she has already reaped. Longman and Rees sent her their account, in which they allowed her a handsome sum in addition to her half-profits; while three merchants of London sent her a bill for three hundred pounds as a tribute of

their sincere admiration. Her daughter Charlotte, who was staying with friends in town, received many visits from fashionable ladies who were anxious to know all particulars about the author, even to her height and complexion!

Chief among the admirers of the *Letters* were Dr. Porteous, Bishop of London; Sir James Grant, Master of the Rolls; and Mr. Hatsell, Clerk of the House of Commons. A second edition of the work being called for, Dr. Porteous offered to edit it himself, compressing the *Letters* into two volumes, and marking those which were to be omitted. The Bishop, as might perhaps have been expected, expelled many of the chitchat letters, whereat Mrs. Grant declared that she was in nowise mortified, although she still thought (and a modern generation will certainly agree with her) that characteristic traits of Highland life and manners might be obvious in domestic insignificant letters, which, 'like straws in a thatched roof, are nothing singly, yet in a connected form give the appearance of warmth and comfort.'

Mrs. Grant was now a recognised celebrity, though the reviews had paid scant attention to her work, the *Edinburgh* ignoring it, and the *Critical* treating it with scorn. She explains the neglect of the *Edinburgh* by the fact that the literati of the time were divided into two camps—philosophers and enthusiasts; Jeffrey and his reviewers belonging to the first, Walter Scott and herself to the second. The reviews in general treated feminine productions with unqualified scorn, never mentioning anything of the kind but with a sneer. Of late they had clubbed together their whole stock of talent to attack the Highlanders in general, and Fingal in particular. 'Judge, then,' she continues, 'what favour I, an illiterate

female, loyalist and Highlander, am to find at the hands of such a tribunal. . . . Walter Scott, the charming minstrel of the Border, is lately enlisted in the critical corps; such a loyalist as he appears like Abdiel among fallen angels.'

The *Letters* more than held their own in spite of the reviewers, and the second edition brought the author the welcome sum of three hundred pounds. Mrs. Hook, wife of the Dean of Worcester, and sister-in-law of Theodore Hook, though unknown to Mrs. Grant, wrote to offer herself as a friend and correspondent. A kinswoman, Mrs. Peter Grant, whose husband was minister of Duthill and Rothiemurchus, at once turned blue-stocking, and thenceforward had but one aim in life—to rival the fame of Mrs. Grant of Laggan. Mrs. Peter wrote two volumes full of heather and sunsets, grey clouds and mists, which had no success, although the clan loyally bought up half the edition. The original Mrs. Grant's head does not appear to have been turned by all this adulation. She was aware that her success was partly to be attributed to the novelty of her subject, and partly to the taste for nature and simplicity which had been revived by Rousseau in the preceding century, and was now being fostered by the Lake poets. But indeed the fortunate author had enough to keep her sober. Her children all seem to have inherited their father's delicacy of constitution, and in 1807 her daughters Charlotte and Catherine both fell ill, probably with some form of consumption, the first dying in April, the second in August of the same year. So that the period of literary triumph was in reality a period of the deepest domestic woe.

It was probably to distract her mind from her private sorrows that Mrs. Grant began her sketch of Madame Schuyler, and of life in Albany before the Revolution,

which she called *The Memoirs of an American Lady.* In January 1808 she went to town, probably to arrange about its publication with Longman, whom she described as the prince of booksellers, the delicacy and liberality with which he had treated her being such as to do honour to all Paternoster Row. On this occasion she stayed at Windsor with a Grant cousin, who was a friend of Mrs. Carter and Lady Hesketh, and also with Sir Charles and Lady Legard at Sunbury. A fellow-guest at the latter house was Catherine Fanshawe, amateur artist and poet, now best known by her charade on the letter 'H,' beginning, 'Twas whispered in heaven, 'twas muttered in hell,' at one time attributed to Byron. Of this lady Mrs. Grant writes to one of her daughters:—

'I have known very few persons possessed of talents so great and various. While here she received a letter from Hayley to announce the marriage of "Johnny of Norfolk" [Cowper's young cousin and protector] with a lady young, lovely, and truly amiable; she is an orphan of independent fortune, well educated in the country, where she lived with her relations. She is elegant, musical, and pious, and has studied Cowper with ever more delight. Charmed with the playful innocence and disinterested kindness that appear in Cowper's sketches of Johnny's character, she sighed, and wished that "Heaven had made her such a man." Her relations, notwithstanding Johnny's confined circumstances and unprepossessing appearance—for he is little and diffident in manner—told his people that Johnny might try. He did, and succeeded; for when you know him he is charming, innocent, sweet-tempered, and a delightful letter-writer.'

The *American Lady* sold well, going through several editions, though perhaps in England it did not enjoy the

same vogue as the *Letters from the Mountains.* About this time Mrs. Grant, having been asked by Lady Glasgow and one or two other ladies to take charge of their young daughters, contemplated removing to London, and there setting up a very 'select' establishment for young ladies. But her girls were so averse from leaving their native land, that it was decided the move should be no further than to Edinburgh. In the spring of 1809 Mrs. Grant paid a visit to the Scottish capital, probably to look for a house, and here she received a welcome befitting a distinguished literary character. The Duchess of Gordon happened to be in Edinburgh, and invited the Highland author to her house, her Grace's ruling passion at that time being literature, and her chief desire to be an arbitress of literary taste and the patron of genius; a distinction for which her want of early culture and the flutter of a life devoted to very different pursuits had rather disqualified her. In a letter to Catherine Fanshawe, Mrs. Grant says:—

'I called on the Duchess of Gordon, and was much gratified to see Sir Brooke Boothby,[1] though he looked so feeble and so dismal that one would have thought him just come from writing those sorrows sacred to Penelope. The Duchess said that on Sunday she never saw company, nor played cards, nor went out; in England indeed she did so, because every one else did the same, but she would not introduce those manners into this country. I stared at these gradations of piety, growing warmer as it came northwards, but was wise enough to stare silently. She said I must come that evening, as she would be alone. I found Walter Scott, whom I had never met before, Lady Keith—Johnson's Queenie—and an English lady, witty

[1] A poetaster of the Lichfield set.

and fashionable-looking, who came and went with Mr. Scott. I think Mr. Scott's appearance very unpromising and commonplace; yet though no gleam of genius animates his countenance, much of it appears in his conversation, which is rich, varied, easy, and animated, without any of the petulance with which the "Faculty" are not unjustly reproached.'

In an unpublished letter to a friend, Mrs. Baker, dated December 14, 1809, Mrs. Grant explains her motives for the move to Edinburgh, and also gives some details about the family circumstances. 'I have now to thank you [she writes] for a very kind letter delivered by your frequent and grateful guest, Mary, and to congratulate you on Miss Charlotte's having borne her journey to London so well, of which I was informed by our mutual friend Mrs. Hook. I was very much gratified by receiving from Mary the most agreeable accounts of your future prospects in regard to the son and daughter for whom you have prepared a retreat so simply elegant and every way comfortable. I hope the years to come will in some measure recompense you for the sad privations and anxieties by which the latter period has been clouded. I was quite mortified to hear Mr. Robert had been so near us without seeing us, and particularly without seeing Stirling. This ancient city is not only interesting as the scene of many singular events, and as containing within itself several curious antiquities, but as distinguished for its lofty and romantic situation, and for the extensive and varied views of high cultivation and wild sublimity that it commands. But of this you would hear enough from Mary, who is quite alive to all the beauties and advantages of the situation.

'Indeed, that is much the same case with the whole

family; and they are so attached to the spot, and so sensible of the kindness of the neighbours, that they seem to consider the approaching removal to Edinburgh as a great misfortune. It is very singular to find creatures so young as they are so little dazzled with the thoughts of living in a gay capital where they have many friends and relations. I am not sorry for it, however, for I think strong local attachments and a love of rural scenery are proofs of that simplicity of taste and goodness of heart which in young people are most desirable. I should not leave the kind, affectionate neighbours who seem so concerned at my departure if my stay here were compatible with my views and pursuits. But the Countess of Glasgow's children, and one or two more whom I may possibly receive, require French and Italian teachers, besides those for music, better than they can find here. This is a great advantage which I derive from going to Edinburgh. I never professed to derive support for my family from the emoluments of the few young people I proposed to keep. But along with what I already possess, I expected by that means to have a little more room. I shall have in Edinburgh the advantage of attaining my purpose with a smaller number from the greater cheapness of everything there. . . .

'I have now, Madam, a piece of information to communicate which I know gives you satisfaction, tho' it relates to one whom you never did, and probably never will, see. An expedition has been sent out from Bombay (a small one, as you may suppose) to take possession of the Isle Rodriguez, a small island belonging to Portugal, which, lying near the Mauritius, is considered as a proper shelter for our trade, or something of that nature. My

son, it seems, has been appointed commissary and paymaster to this expedition. So serious a trust should, I think, scarcely have been reposed on a youth of twenty, unless his conduct and his application to his military duties gave them to suppose he was in some degree qualified for it. I perfectly remember, being near the same age with the late lamented Sir John Moore, that he was when but eighteen years old appointed paymaster to the Duke of Hamilton's, and that he discharged the difficult duties of that office to the general satisfaction. But this was a rare instance. When I was in Edinburgh, where I went to meet Mary and regulate my future plans, I found so many people there in grief and consternation about the missing ships in India that one would imagine the whole town had a concern in them. This and many other [things] prevents my being thrown off my balance by this gleam of prosperity. Of those who return with wealth from that pernicious climate, we all hear; but of thousands who sink beneath its influence, none retain any long recollection but those who weep in secret their peculiar loss. . . .'

A house was taken at Edinburgh in Heriot Row, where Henry Mackenzie, the author of *The Man of Feeling* and many other novels, was a near neighbour. Scott and Jeffrey were among the earliest callers upon the Grants, who established themselves in their new home in March 1810. 'You would think,' observes Mrs. Grant, in describing her two distinguished visitors, 'that the body of each was formed to lodge the soul of the other. Jeffrey looks the poet all over; the ardent eye, the nervous agitation, the visibly quick perceptions keep one's attention awake in expectation of flashes of genius; nor is that expectation disappointed, for his conversation is

in a high degree fluent and animated. Walter Scott has not a gleam of poetic fire in his countenance, which merely suggests the idea of plain good sense; his conceptions do not strike you as so rapid or brilliant as those of his critic; yet there is much amusement and variety in his good-humoured, easy, and unaffected conversation.'

The Grants were made much of in the Scottish capital, the mother's championship of her countrymen, her resolute and cheerful endurance of the many blows that Fate had dealt, to say nothing of her unusual conversational powers, ensuring her the admiration and sympathy of her new friends. Her later correspondence forms a record of literary life and society in Edinburgh between the years 1810 and 1838; for not only was she well acquainted with all the principal writers in the town, but few distinguished strangers, whether English or American, passed through the capital without paying their respects to 'the celebrated Mrs. Grant of Laggan.' She kept up, after her wont, with the new publications of the day, though she wrote little else except an essay on the Superstitions of the Highlands (1811) and some unimportant verses. We are enabled to follow the course of her reading through the pages of her correspondence with her English friends, more especially with Mrs. Hook and Miss Fanshawe. Now she writes in enthusiastic terms of her delight in Gray's *Letters*, then of her more chastened pleasure in the correspondence of Mrs. Carter and Miss Seward. The publication of *Rokeby* is a source of patriotic triumph; for she points out how much richer the notes of Scott's former poems are in allusions, traditions, and quotations from local poetry. 'But where is the local poetry of England? Granville

and Pope in very recent years have celebrated Windsor and the Thames, and our own countrymen Thomson hung a wreath on Richmond Hill. But what other place in England can be mentioned that wakes one poetical recollection?'

Henry Mackenzie soon became an intimate friend of the family, though Mrs. Grant regrets his total lack of humour. She confesses that she is unable to refrain from liking 'the arch-critic' (Jeffrey), in spite of his manifold literary offences. Jeffrey, indeed, though he was inhospitable in his *Review*, made some amends by undertaking a tour to Glenroy and Loch Laggan, and coming back absolutely enchanted with his experiences. Another new friend, made some years later, was Professor Wilson, better known as 'Christopher North.' 'Did I ever tell you,' writes Mrs. Grant, *à propos* of an allusion to the Lake poets, 'of one of the said poets we have in our town here—indeed, one of our intimates—the most provoking creature imaginable? He is young, handsome, wealthy, witty, has great learning, excellent spirits, a wife and children that he dotes on, and no vice that I know of, but virtuous principles and feelings. Yet his wonderful eccentricity would send any one but his wife mad.' This eccentric poet was, of course, Christopher, then distinguished as the author of *The Isle of Palms*. One of the most striking proofs of his unconventionality, in Mrs. Grant's eyes, was his undertaking a walking tour with his wife through the remoter Highlands. 'I shall be charmed to see them come back alive,' she observes. 'Meantime, it has cost me not a little pains to explain to my less romantic friends in their track that they are genuine gentlefolks in masquerade.' Happily the adventurous poet and his mate returned 'in the highest

health and spirits, having walked several hundred miles in the Highlands, seen much beauty, received much courtesy, and slept in the humblest cottages, always getting clean beds; in short, never did anything turn out so well that was looked upon as so ridiculous at the outset.'

From the first appearance of Scott as a poet he remained Mrs. Grant's literary hero-in-chief. Even his less successful works she preferred to the masterpieces of other writers, on the ground that 'the king's chaff is better than other folks' corn.' At the time when the extraordinary popularity of *Marmion* had, as Scott confessed, almost thrown him off his balance, 'a shrewd and sly observer, Mrs. Grant of Laggan,' to quote Lockhart's *Life*, 'said wittily enough on leaving an assembly where the poet had been surrounded by all the glare and buzz of fashionable ecstasy, "Mr. Scott always seems to me like a glass through which the rays of admiration pass without sensibly affecting it; but the bit of paper that lies beside it will presently be in a blaze, and no wonder."' By the 'bit of paper' Mrs. Scott was meant, who was far more elated at her husband's popularity, and far more cast down by critical attacks upon him, than he was himself. Mrs. Grant was persuaded of the identity of the author of *Waverley* from the first appearance of that novel. 'I am satisfied,' she writes, 'that Walter Scott, and no other, is the author of that true and chaste delineation of Scottish manners. He is not, however, just to the Highlanders; and the specimens of Highland manners that he gives are not fair ones.'

Mrs. Grant herself was one of the numerous writers who were held responsible for the authorship of the

Waverley novels. In disclaiming any share in their production to an American admirer, she spoke of the real author in terms of such perfect assurance that her correspondent believed Scott must have confided his secret to her. This having been mentioned to Scott by Miss Edgeworth in 1824, he replies with some asperity: 'As for honest Mrs. Grant, I cannot conceive why the deuce I should have selected her for a mother-confessor; if it had been yourself or Joanna, there might have been some probability in the report; but good Mrs. Grant is so very cerulean, and surrounded by so many fetch-and-carry mistresses and misses, and the maintainer of such an unmerciful correspondence, that though I would do her any kindness in my power, yet I should be afraid to be very intimate with a woman whose tongue and pen are rather overpowering. She is an excellent person notwithstanding.'

In 1814 death was again busy in Mrs. Grant's family. Her daughter Anne died in August, and in the same month—though of course the news did not reach Edinburgh till much later—her elder son, Duncan, died in Surat. Duncan had already distinguished himself in his profession, and a brilliant career seemed to lie open before him. When it had been arranged that Mrs. Grant should receive three or four young ladies into her family, with a view to making some provision for her daughters, Duncan had written to his mother to remonstrate with her for rendering his sisters independent of him. Her answer deserves to be quoted, if only to show how much wider and more tolerant were her views than those of the average 'good woman' of the period, who was apt to regard her less fortunate sisters as quite beyond the pale of humanity.

'I must now tell you,' runs this remarkable letter, 'of a very strong motive that I have for keeping your sisters independent of you. I regard with very great compassion most men who are obliged to pass their lives in India. Far from home, and burdened perhaps with relations that keep them back, they seek a resource in forming temporary connections with the natives. These, I am told, are often innocent and amiable creatures, who are not aware of doing anything reprehensible in thus attaching themselves. The poor woman who has devoted herself to her protector secures his affection by being the mother of his children. Time runs on; the unfortunate mother, whom he must tear from his heart and throw back into misery and oblivion, is daily forming new ties to him. The children, born heirs to shame and sorrow, are for a time fondly cherished, till the wish of their father's heart is fulfilled, and he is able to return to his native country, and to make the appearance in it to which his ambition has long been directed. Then begin his secret but deep vexations; and the more honourable his mind, the more affectionate his heart, the deeper are those sorrows which he dare not own, and cannot conquer. The poor rejected one, perhaps faithful and fondly attached, must be thrown off; the whole habits of his life must be broken; he must pay the debt he owes to his progenitors, and seek to renew the comforts of the domestic circle by soliciting some lady glad to give youth and beauty for wealth and consequence. The forsaken children, once the objects of his paternal tenderness, must be banished and have the sins of their father sorely visited upon them.

'I will spare myself and you the pain of finishing this picture, which you must know to be a likeness, not of an individual only, but of a whole tribe of expatriated

Scotchmen who return home exactly in this manner. This is what I dread in your case, and would fain avoid. All that remains to me is, in the first place, not to burden you with encumbrances that may check the freedom of your will; and in the next, to assure you that if any person whom it would be decent or proper for you to connect yourself with by honourable ties should gain your affections, your mother and sisters will be ready to adopt her to theirs. Difference of nation, even of religion, would not alienate us from any wife whom you might choose. Doubtless we should much prefer that you were married to one we knew and esteemed; but we should far rather make room for a stranger who was modest and well-principled than see you in the predicament I have described.'

It would be well if more mothers had the courage and humanity to address their sons in such a strain. It may also be pointed out how fully justified Mrs. Grant was in her then rather unusual action of trying to render her daughters self-supporting instead of allowing them to remain dependent upon the precarious life and goodwill of a male relation.

In 1815 the now diminished family moved to a house in Princes Street. About this time a quaint little incident happened at a party at the house of Lady Charlotte Campbell [1] (afterwards Bury), which shows the enthusiasm that Mrs. Grant's work had aroused in one at least of her many readers. 'Judge of my astonishment,' she writes, 'when a very handsome and fashionable young man asked if I was Mrs. Grant of Laggan. Hearing I was, he flew across the room, said I was one of the persons in Scotland he most wished to see, and kissed my hand rapturously.

[1] Author of *Flirtation* and other novels.

. . . He then descanted on the poem of "The Highlanders" as awaking his feeling and enthusiasm for Scotland at a very early age. I resolved to stay him out and learn who he was. Lady Charlotte told me, to my still greater surprise, that he was of royal lineage—in short, he is the Duke of Sussex's son[1] by Lady Augusta Murray.' Mrs. Grant compares this little scene with the action of a young English lady, who nearly swooned on being presented to Walter Scott, and kissed the hand of Henry Mackenzie. Scott's comment was, 'Did you ever hear the like of that English lass, to faint at the sight of a cripple Clerk of Session, and kiss the dry wrinkled hand of an old tax-gatherer?'

Among Mrs. Grant's literary guests in 1817 were Southey, the Poet Laureate, and Joanna Baillie, the latter then in the height of her fame, her works being approved even by the arch-critic Jeffrey. 'The Laureate,'[2] says our chronicler, 'has the finest poetical countenance, features unusually high and somewhat strong though regular, and a quantity of bushy black hair. I have heard Southey called silent and constrained; I did not find him so. He talked easily and much, without seeming in the least consequential, nor saying a single word for effect.' Joanna Baillie[3] was accompanied to Edinburgh by her sister Agnes, whom 'people like in their hearts better than Joanna, though they would not say so for the world, thinking that would argue great want of taste. I for my part would greatly prefer the Muse to walk in a wood, or sit in a bower with; but in that

[1] Captain D'Este.

[2] Southey was then in his forty-fourth year. He had been appointed Poet Laureate in 1813.

[3] Joanna was then fifty-five. She died in 1851, in her ninetieth year.

wearisome farce, a large party, Agnes acts her part much better. The seriousness and simplicity of Mrs. Joanna's manner overawes you from talking commonplace to her; and as for pretension, or talking fine, you would as soon think of giving yourself airs before an Apostle.'

The chief event of the year 1820 was a visit to Dumfries, where the author of 'The Highlander' had an interview with Burns's widow Jean, 'a very comely woman, with plain sound sense and very good manners. She is much esteemed and respected in the place, and lives in the same house that her husband inhabited in a retired part of the town. The street is now called Burns' Street. Her house is a model of neatness and good taste; the simple elegance with which everything is disposed is so consistent, and the room in which the hapless bard used to write is still in its former state, as if it were a crime to alter its simple furniture.' Another interesting visit was to Abbotsford, which Mrs. Grant declared she should have guessed to belong to the 'gifted baronet,' even though she had known nothing of the fact.

'I can scarcely believe,' she observes about this time, 'that any one has more vivid enjoyment of Scott's novels and Wordsworth's "Excursion" than myself; for I am convinced there does not exist a person of decent station, in any degree cultivated or refined, who has had more intercourse with the lower classes. Long days have I knit my stocking, or carried my infant from sheaf to sheaf, sitting and walking in the harvest-field, attentively observing conversation which for the first few years I was not supposed to understand. Seldom a day passed that I did not find two or three petitioners in the kitchen, respectfully entreating for advice, medicine,

or some other little favour. Often I sat down with them and led them to converse, captivated with the strength and beauty of the expressions in their native tongue. . . . Edinburgh has done its best to laugh Wordsworth out of fashion, but without success. People laugh at the Pedlar [in the 'Excursion']. I do not; all the realities of life are so real to me, and the peculiarities of the Scottish manners of fifty years ago have left so vivid an impression on my mind, that I can easily conceive a pedlar reading Milton. . . . Whoever has read the Bible with an open mind and with a certain degree of imagination, has nothing more to learn of the sublime and the pathetic; moreover, he will not find the transition to Milton very difficult.'

In 1821 Mrs. Grant lost her youngest daughter Moore, who died after a long illness at the age of twenty-four. She was herself now more or less crippled by a fall which had injured her side, but otherwise she retained her wonderful health and her courageous serenity of mind. She observes in a letter written in her sixty-eighth year that it has always been the fashion to hold old women cheap everywhere except in Scottish novels, and among the North American Indians. 'I think,' she continues, 'we old women begin to be more appreciated since the spread of knowledge has made us all a *thinking* people. Formerly, a woman uncultivated and moving in a narrow circle was only of consequence in the days of her youth and usefulness; and unless animated by a lively devotion, was apt to grow torpid, and be forgotten by all but her nearest relations. Now that the powers of the mind are more called into action, that season lasts longer, and old women take more interest in the young, and create more interest in themselves. We grow

old without growing mouldy, and the young mingle our knowledge with their own acquirements.'

Certainly Mrs. Grant did not allow herself to grow mouldy, but kept up gallantly with the times. In 1821 the Highland Society of London awarded her a gold medal for her essay on 'The Past and Present State of the Highlands,' while by the advice of Henry Mackenzie she occupied her leisure in translating Gaelic poems. In 1823 she is full of a new book that everybody is reading, De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, and observes: 'Many strange people have I encountered in my journey through life, and among the rest this same opium-eater. I spent an idle half day talking with him some fourteen years ago in London, when he was a student at Oxford, and have met him once since. I directly recognised him through the thin disguise in his book.' Another new literary celebrity of this period was Miss Ferrier, whose first novel, *Marriage*, was thought by some of her admirers to surpass anything that Scott ever wrote. Of this Mrs. Grant remarks: 'It was evidently the production of a clever, caustic mind, with much good painting of character in it. I have just finished a hasty perusal of a new work by the same author, *The Inheritance*, and join the general voice in calling it clever, though there is perhaps too much of caricature in it throughout.' Mrs. Grant delighted in the novels of Jane Austen and Miss Edgeworth, and upon certain other specimens of contemporary fiction—now dead—she utters the following piece of criticism, which is worth quoting if only because it is so peculiarly applicable to certain popular productions of the present day: 'The dialogue, though clever and witty, has too much of the "snip-snap short and interruption smart" of the old

comedy; you cannot fancy people playing thus at intellectual shuttlecock. The author is so pleased with the sparkles he continually strikes out that he neglects probability and the conduct of the story, forgetting that in a picture shade is necessary as well as light.'

In June 1823 Isabella Grant, who was generally regarded as the flower of the flock, died after a short illness. The mother bore up with her never-failing courage under this terrible blow, which left her with but one daughter and one son remaining out of a family of twelve. Great sympathy was felt for her in her troubles, not only by her fellow-citizens, but also by visitors to Edinburgh. In the privately-printed correspondence of Mr. John Carne, author of *Letters from the East*, there is a curious little word-portrait of Mrs. Grant about this time. Writing from Edinburgh in September, 1823, he says:—

'Among the literary ladies of my acquaintance here is Mrs. Grant, whose *Letters from the Mountains* and *Memoirs of an American Lady* you have probably read. An extraordinary woman, now just sixty years of age, she has lost, one after the other, within a few years, three lovely and accomplished daughters and a son, one of the former in a very melancholy way; to use Beattie's affecting expression of his son, "her elegant mind became mingled with madness." But the vigour of her mind supports Mrs. Grant through all. She had reared them in the retirement of Laggan with such exquisite pains and attention, and they were so very handsome and elegant, that their friends seem to say they have left no equals behind them. The powers of conversation possessed by Mrs. Grant are considerable, as well as her acquaintance with the manners of the country, and most

of its characters. And what person would you give to the mother of such loveliness, the romantic writer whose sensibility of style made you love the very wilds of America? Did you ever wish to see the Meg Merrilies of Scott? You should see Mrs. Grant then enter a room with her very tall large figure, Highland plaid thrown over her shoulders, masculine features and harsh voice, with a cast in one eye. There you have the stern and dark Queen of the Blue-Stockings in Edinburgh.' This picture, one hopes, is rather over-coloured, since the portrait of our heroine by Mackay, R.S.A., represents her as a pleasant, sensible-looking old lady, no beauty certainly, but scarcely our idea of a typical Meg Merrilies.

In 1825 Scott, Mackenzie, Jeffrey, and other *littérateurs* joined, as we read in Lockhart's *Life*, in subscribing a petition for a pension to Mrs. Grant of Laggan, which, as Scott observes in his *Diary*, 'we thought was a tribute merited by her as an authoress; and in my opinion much more by the firmness and elasticity of mind with which she has borne a succession of great domestic calamities. Unhappily, there was only about a hundred pounds open on the pension list, and this the ministers assigned in equal portions to Mrs. Grant and a distressed lady, granddaughter of a forfeited Scottish nobleman. Mrs. Grant, proud as a Highlandwoman, vain as a poetess, and absurd as a blue-stocking, has taken this partition *in malem partem*, and written to Lord Melville about her merits, and that her friends do not consider her claims as being fairly canvassed, with something like a demand that her petition be submitted to the king. This is not the way to make her *plack a bawbee*; and Lord Melville, a little *miffed* in turn, sends the whole correspondence to me, to know whether Mrs. Grant will

Art. Repro Co.

Mrs. Grant of Laggan.

From a Portrait by Mackay. R.S.A.

accept the £50 or not. Now, hating to deal with ladies when they are in an unreasonable humour, I have got the good-humoured Man of Feeling [Mackenzie] to find out the lady's mind, and I take on myself the task of making her peace with Lord Melville. There is no great doubt how it will end, for your scornful dog will always eat your dirty pudding. After all, the poor lady is greatly to be pitied—her sole remaining daughter deep and far gone in a decline.'

Two or three weeks later there is the further entry in the *Diary*: 'Mrs. Grant intimates that she will take her pudding—her pension I mean—and is contrite, as Henry Mackenzie vouches. I am glad the stout old girl is not foreclosed.' It is an amazing proof of Lockhart's want of consideration for others, to say nothing of his want of taste, that he should have published these extracts from a private diary when the subject of them was still living. Fortunately, when Lockhart's *Life* appeared, Mrs. Grant's family contrived that she should not see the obnoxious passages, and we read that she thoroughly enjoyed the biography of her hero.

The passionate love and admiration with which the author of the *Letters from the Mountains* was regarded by some of her country-folk is well illustrated by the following curious and touching little incident. In May, 1823, a person named 'M. Jones' wrote to Constable the publisher to ask if Mrs. Grant of Laggan was still alive, and if so, where she lived, as the writer wished to send her a present. The desired information having been given, 'a box arrived,' to quote the recipient's account, 'containing some very good black silk for a dress; three shawls, one a black silk one, and all calculated for a widow's garb; a pair of excellent black silk stockings; six beautiful

French cambric handkerchiefs, all marked with my cipher impressed on symbolical figures; likewise two pairs of gloves; and finally, neatly wrapped in paper, a gold sovereign to pay the carriage, and a very business-like invoice of the whole. But then the letter along with them, in native beauty, simplicity, and originality, was worth the whole. You would be shocked were I to tell you how long my *Letters* had been the delight and consolation of that excellent person.'

In August, 1825, Mrs. Grant made a short tour in the Highlands for the benefit of her daughter Mary's health, an arduous undertaking for a lady of seventy who could only move about with the aid of crutches. The travellers spent a few days at Laggan among other places, this being the first visit that its chronicler had paid to her dearly-loved village since her departure a quarter of a century before. Here Mrs. Grant received an invitation from Lady Huntly to pass a couple of days at Kinrara, the widowed Duke of Gordon's place on Speyside. The invitation was accepted, and Mrs. Grant was delighted both with her visit and her hostess. The most distinguished of her fellow-guests were the Duke and Duchess of Bedford, of whom, she says, 'we had merely a glimpse for half an hour; but a descendant of Lady Rachel Russell is always worth looking at, and the Duchess one may look at for herself, she being still very handsome.' Mrs. Grant had intended to return home by a certain steamer from Inverness to Greenock, but was fortunately prevented by an accident from taking her passage. The steamer was lost on the voyage, and nearly all the passengers perished.

The last few years of our heroine's life may be briefly passed over. The failure of Constable in 1826, involving

as it did the ruin of Scott, caused much concern to the many friends and admirers of the Wizard. But Scott, in the words of his ever-faithful worshipper Mrs. Grant, was far too great a man to be lessened by adverse circumstances. 'He will, I am certain,' she writes, 'bear this vicissitude as he bore the harder trial of the two—prosperity. One of his chief mortifications arising from this business is that his works, seized by his creditors, must be owned as his.' A year later she writes that 'Scott appears greater than ever. He lives with his daughter in a small house, seeing no company, and devoted to his literary labours, but always cheerful, placid, and unaltered.' In this year, 1827, Mary Grant, the last remaining daughter, died of consumption. A young niece came to live with the bereaved mother, remaining until the marriage of Mrs. Grant's son in 1833.

In June 1828 Edward Irving was creating a great sensation in Edinburgh, and Mrs. Grant was persuaded by her son to go and hear him. 'He preached,' she says, 'at seven A.M., but it was necessary to take possession of a seat an hour before the service began. I heard nothing that raised him above the place that he formerly held in my estimation; but in justice I must add that the prophet is less affected and theatrical than I expected, that he has a pleasing voice, and that his action is not unsuited to his doctrine, which he evidently supposes to be authorised by inspiration. Of his discourse I will only say at present that it has little coherence, a great deal of verbiage, and no indication of high imagination or sound reasoning. He is the sole subject of conversation.'

Two interesting visitors of these later years were Mrs. Hemans and Thomas Campbell. Of the first her hostess says: 'I had a very charming guest before I left town

—no other than Mrs. Hemans,[1] for whom I have long felt something like affection. She had two fine boys with her, the objects visibly of very great tenderness. She is entirely feminine, and her language has a charm like that of her verse—the same ease and peculiar grace, with more vivacity. She has not the slightest tinge of affectation, and is so refined, so gentle, that you must both love and respect her. . . . I was sitting alone one day lately, and the servant announced "Mr. Campbell." Looking up, I saw a dejected-looking gentleman. "I should know you," said I, "but I cannot be sure." "Campbell the poet," said he, with a kind of affecting simplicity. Though by no means approving his political principles, my heart warmed to him when I saw this sweet son of song dejected, spiritless, and afflicted. The death of his wife, to whom he was much attached, appears to have sunk him greatly.'

To the last, we are told, Mrs. Grant was a delightful companion, her conversational powers being even more attractive than her writings. She never lost her interest in life, was always delighted to welcome visitors, and loved to collect children and young people about her. Even her powers of being actively useful to her fellow-creatures continued long after she had reached an age at which most women are content to sit with their hands before them and rest. In June, 1831, when she was in her seventy-seventh year, she describes a typical day of her life. Besides her usual occupations of reading, writing her *Memoirs*, knitting, entertaining friends, and playing chess, she mentions receiving dependants, and adds: 'Could you dream of my having dependants who

[1] Mrs. Hemans was born in 1774, and died of consumption in May 1835.

have been all my life standing on the edge of the gulf of poverty without falling in? and this not because I had much worldly prudence, but because I made stern self-denial, and what Miss Edgeworth calls civil courage, serve me instead. Well, but my dependants want a letter to some one, or advice, or a governess's place; and my *protégées* have turned out so well, that I have constant applications for such persons.'

In the same year Mrs. Grant gives an amusing description of an adventure that happened to her on what was perhaps her last appearance at a large public gathering, a flower-show, at the Hopetoun Rooms. 'I had no bonnet,' she explains, 'but a very respectable cap; and as I walked in from my sedan-chair I was surprised to see another lady with exactly such crutches and precisely such a shawl as my own. I looked with much interest at my fellow-cripple, which interest she seemed to reciprocate. She took her place in another room, equally large and splendid, but so open that I had a full view of it. Amidst all the flush of bloom before me, I often withdrew my attention to regard this withered flower with still increasing interest; the more so, that every time I turned to look her eyes met mine, and at length I thought with a familiar expression, till at last I remarked it to those around me, and said I thought she would like to be introduced to me when the show was over. I thought too I had seen her somewhere; her figure was as ample as my own, but I comforted myself with the reflection that I had a better face, hers being almost ugly. I rose at length, and so did she,—but I saw her no more. Think of my mortification at having the laugh of the whole house against me on coming home. There was no such room, and no such lady; large folding doors of looking-

glass and the reflection of my own figure had deceived me. When I had been talking of this other lady they had imagined it all playfulness, and never thought of the deception. This could scarcely have happened had I been familiar with my own countenance; but I have actually not looked in a mirror for more than two years.'

In 1838 Mrs. Grant succumbed to an attack of influenza, being then in her eighty-fourth year. Her character and her life-work cannot be better summed up than in the memorial written by Scott twelve years before, and sent to the king with the petition for a pension. In this the undersigned expressed their opinion that 'the character and talents of Mrs. Grant have long rendered her not only a useful and estimable member of society, but one eminent for the services she has rendered to the cause of religion, morality, knowledge, and taste. Her writings, deservedly popular in her own country, derive their success from the happy manner in which, addressing themselves to the national pride of the Scottish people, they breathe a spirit at once of patriotism and of that candour which renders patriotism unselfish and liberal. We have no hesitation in attesting our belief that Mrs. Grant's writings have produced a strong and salutary effect upon her countrymen, who not only found recorded in them much of national history and antiquities, which would otherwise have been forgotten, but found them combined with the soundest and best lessons of virtue and morality.'

THE
ROMANCE OF JOHN TWEDDELL

THE ROMANCE OF JOHN TWEDDELL

(WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS UNPUBLISHED LOVE-LETTERS)

(1769-1799)

THE latter half of the eighteenth century will probably always be celebrated in history as the age of the purest reason, the reign of the commonest sense. Even its poets were reasonable, while its lovers adored before all things the good sense and 'judgment' of their mistresses, and based their hopes of matrimonial happiness upon a mutual good understanding, equality of sentiments, and similarity of tastes. From passion, with its feverish heats and chills, its absurd exaltations and irrational depressions, they shrank back in alarm and disapproval, while the very words and phrases of endearment were expurgated from their vocabulary, or chilled down to a becoming degree of temperature. Love became 'regard,' and a lover a friend, passion was transformed into 'sentiment,' and charm into 'propriety of conduct.'

This tendency is peculiarly characteristic of the love-letters addressed by John Tweddell, sometimes called the English Marcellus, to Miss Isabel Gunning, which curious effusions have recently come to light. Tweddell, though he has found a niche in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, will probably be unknown even by name to most modern readers, since he owed his chief celebrity to a

posthumous literary scandal, long since forgotten. Yet he was regarded as a 'coming man' in his own day, and probably it is due to his premature death that he must be classed among the might-have-beens. If his horoscope had been cast, it would certainly have been found that he was born under an unlucky star; for love, death, fame, even the elements, all seem to have cherished an equal spite against him.

The son of Francis Tweddell, a country gentleman living at Threepwood, near Hexham, in Northumberland, John was born on June 1, 1769, and educated at a Yorkshire school, whence he was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he distinguished himself by winning nearly all the prizes and medals for which he competed (notably the three Brown Medals in one year), and was elected a Fellow in 1792. On leaving college he published his prize compositions in Greek, Latin, and English, under the title of *Prolusiones Juveniles*, a work which was treated with respectful attention by the reviewers. He entered at the Middle Temple in obedience to his father's wishes; but having no taste for law, occupied himself with his favourite classical studies, and with vague aspirations after a political or diplomatic career. He held what were regarded as 'advanced' views, admired the principles that led to the French Revolution, and was on friendly terms with Charles Fox, Charles Grey (afterwards Earl Grey, a fellow Northumbrian), as well as many other members of the Whig party. He was also an intimate friend of Dr. Parr's, though that great scholar was more than twenty years his senior; and he was on visiting terms with Dr. Paley.

In July 1794 Mr. Tweddell, who was then just twenty-five, met Miss Isabel Gunning, daughter of Sir Robert Gunning (cousin of the 'beauties' and ex-Ambassador to

St. Petersburg), at a country house; and after an acquaintance of three weeks, made her an offer of his hand and heart—valuable assets, no doubt, but not likely to be approved by his prospective father-in-law. Miss Gunning assured her lover that Sir Robert would never consent to his suit, but acknowledged that he was not indifferent to her, and agreed at his earnest request to carry on a secret correspondence with him. The first letter is dated July 29, 1794, and it is evident that the pair were then staying under the same roof, possibly in the house of the Hon. Stephen Digby, who was a friend of Tweddell's, and brother-in-law to Isabel. This Colonel Digby was one of the equerries to the king, and figures largely in Madame D'Arblay's *Diary* as 'Mr. Fairly.' When Miss Burney made his acquaintance at Court he was a most disconsolate widower, having lost his first wife (a daughter of Lord Ilchester) in 1787. He evidently made a strong impression on Fanny's heart, and she can hardly conceal her disappointment when he consoles himself, in 1790, with Margaret Gunning, one of Queen Charlotte's ladies-in-waiting, who figures in the *Diary* as 'Miss Fuselier.' Mrs. Digby is described by her rival as a woman of learning, and her literary quality is proved by a manuscript found after her death containing her 'Last Wishes,' which is written in very beautiful and touching language. It is evident that Isabel Gunning was also an intelligent and well-read woman, or a man of Tweddell's stamp would hardly have written to her, as he does, in the tone of one addressing an intellectual equal.

To return to the summer of 1794, which saw the beginning of our hero's brief romance. The young man, to quote his brother's testimony, was of the middle stature, and of a handsome, well-proportioned figure.

'His address was polished, affable, and prepossessing in a high degree, and there was in his whole appearance an air of dignified benevolence, which portrayed at once the suavity of his nature and the independence of his mind. In conversation he had a talent so peculiarly his own as to form a very distinguishing feature of his character. A chastised and ingenious wit which could seize on an incident in the happiest fashion; a lively fancy, which could clothe the choicest ideas in the best language; these, supported by a large acquaintance with men and books, together with the further advantages of a melodious voice and a playfulness of manner singularly sweet and engaging, rendered him the delight of every company. . . . Accomplished and admired as he was, his modesty was conspicuous, and his whole deportment devoid of affectation or pretension. Qualified eminently to shine in society, and actually sharing its applause, he found his chief enjoyment in the retired circle of select friends, in whose literary leisure, and in the amenities of female converse, which for him had the highest charm, he sought the purest and most refined recreation.'

John Tweddell's first love-letter seems to have been written directly after his declaration of his passion, and, like all the others in the series, it is inscribed in an exquisite hand, with scarcely an erasure or alteration, while it is expressed with an accuracy and formality that are somewhat at variance with his professedly strong feelings and warm heart.

'My dear Miss Gunning' (it runs),

'The opportunities I have of speaking to you are so very few and so much interrupted, my mind also at these times is so distracted and confused, that I feel myself compelled to write what I am unable to say. My pen,

JOHN TWEDDELL.

From a Silhouette.

I fear, will not more avail me than my lips; and if so, I am certain of being under little obligation to it. Yet silent I cannot be, tho' I am conscious that those feelings that might furnish expression to some men will render me embarrassed and almost unintelligible. I shall endeavour, however, to be as explicit as I can; and if you should not understand me, you will in justice pardon a confusion which you have yourself created. Believe me, my dear madam, I did not speak lightly when I said that I shall have serious reason either to delight in or to regret our accidental meeting. When I first had the happiness (may I call it so?) of taking a part in that conversation which introduced me to you, I was not aware that it was to be bought at the price of so much future anxiety. . . .

'You have asked me how an attachment so strong as to require confession can have arisen from an intercourse of so short a date. It may be impossible perhaps for you to conceive this, because you are unacquainted with your own attractions; and it certainly is impossible for me to explain it, because I am not able to detail them. You know that such a question cannot admit of a very ready solution. It depends upon feelings, and upon an infinity of little things, the power of which is not to be described either singly or collectively. Of this I beseech you to be assured, that my regard is not of a whimsical or fleeting nature, nor the result of momentary passion. It is not the boyish admiration of a fine person, or of winning and engaging manners; tho' you will permit me to say that these alone have in you more attractions in my eyes than all the united accomplishments of other women. You are too sincere yourself, if you are not too discerning, to suspect that I can mean to insult you by flattery. God Almighty knows that everything which I have said, or shall say to

you, is the genuine effusion of a sincere and honest heart. You will therefore believe me if, after having stated those causes which *alone* are not adequate to such a profusion of regard, I should attempt, however imperfectly, to acquaint you with some of the real grounds of my attachment.

'It is founded, then, in that similarity which I discover in our tempers and dispositions, in our common notions of men and things, and in our mutual opinions of the means of happiness. Do not conceive that I have drawn my ideas upon this subject solely from the different conversations I have enjoyed with you. Where we are much interested we can derive information from occurrences apparently the most trivial and unimportant, which to inattentive persons are neither pregnant with meaning nor productive of remark. But to a person in my situation every gesture has significance, and every word a force. Since first I saw you I have scrupulously watched every motion and look, have examined your conduct, and listened to your conversation. I have beheld a disposition such as I never before saw; and which, manifested as it now is in the sweetest and most captivating affection to your father, affords the most undoubted proof of those domestic virtues which constitute the greatest happiness that mortals can partake of. The qualities of your mind are equally delightful to me, for I never conversed with any woman (excepting one, the wife of a particular friend) who possessed the same information. and was at the same time so unostentatious of her knowledge, and so diffident of her powers.'

After assuring his lady once again that these expressions contain no grain of flattery or compliment, the lover continues:—

'My dear Miss Gunning, whether I estimate happiness

wisely or not, that Being only knows who endowed me with the desire, and I hope with the capacity, of attaining it. I may be deceived in my notions of the things wherein it consists; but they appear to me at least to be agreeable to reason, and not inconsistent with wisdom. To the exercise of the social affections, to the peaceful habits of domestic life, I look as to the foundations of my comfort and the limit of my wishes. I have not seen much life, but I have seen as much perhaps of the world and its ways as most other men of my years, and of what I have seen I trust I have been no unprofitable nor incurious observer. Amongst all the various means that are pursued for the attainment of happiness, that universal end, few, very few, appear to me successful or satisfactory. The irrational dissipations of mankind, the prodigal waste of natural and moral excellence, the degradation of intellect, and the perversion of all physical good, make me melancholy whenever I reflect upon them. Those beings alone appear to me to be really happy who, under the tranquil conviction of a benevolent Providence, spend their lives in improving their minds and in exercising their virtues; who have one friend, at least, on whose affection they can at all times rely, and in whose bosom they can deposit their most intimate thoughts—one who, in sickness, in sorrow, and disaster, can alleviate their pains, and to whom in joy they may turn with the certainty of communicating equal happiness. All my thoughts and wishes are bent to this point; and if I never attain to it, my mind is not, I fear, of sufficient strength to refrain from envying the bliss of others. But never, till very lately, did I see a person on whom as the object of such a pursuit my mind could contentedly rest.

'I have three times been thrown, twice by design, and once by accident, into situations the eligibility of which has been cried up to me by my friends. But who can judge for another? Certainly, if fortune, I had almost said opulence, had been the object of my wishes, I might once at least in my life have been a very rich man. But the want of something or other which I have conceived essential to my happiness, and the firm belief that I should in future meet some woman whose superior merits would cause me to repent, have always repelled me from embracing any connection. More than once I have felt that light, fluttering fancy which begins and ends we know not how, nor why, nor when—which "dies in the cradle where it lies." And that I should have felt such capricious freaks of a temporary humour I cannot repent, since that circumstance furnishes me at present with the power of comparing the very different sensations which accompany a volatile and occasional taste, and a rational and stable affection. In the very long acquaintances that I have had with women, when opportunity was not to be sought, but was constant and perpetual, I could never endure the thought of talking to any one in the same strain that I have talked to you, whom I have hardly known three weeks, and whom I have only conversed with as by stealth.

'No, my dear madam, do not conceive that I know myself so little as to mistake fancy for esteem, and liking for attachment. I know the full import of the several terms, and should abhor myself could I have said to you what I have said while there remained any scope for fickleness or caprice. I have always viewed with most unmixed and unqualified detestation that wretch who could make lavish declarations of a permanent regard

that he might wantonly indulge the frolic of his vanity, or give vent to the burden of a hasty tho' oppressive feeling. There is misery enough in the world without studiously devising means of creating it. Do not then repeat to me that I know nothing of you, and that I may possibly have formed an erroneous opinion of those qualities which now attach me to you. You are she whom my imagination has formed, when it has been most sanguine, as the companion of my days, and the partner of my happiness. Thus was I acquainted with you before I had seen you, and to you I had waited for the first introduction, to enter at once into the concerns of your life and the history of your feelings. Count therefore, I entreat you, on my affection as fixed and constant, the offspring of reason and sentiment combined, and only to be shaken by *the most undeniable* conviction that either it is not returned, or that it cannot be gratified.'

Here the writer breaks off for a time, but the reader knows little of the 'staying powers' of an eighteenth-century correspondent if he thinks that the letter nears a conclusion. Before it was resumed, however, the lovers had had a private interview, and Mr. Tweddell had explained his pecuniary position to the lady, who apparently held out small hopes that her father would consent to the match. At the same time she gave him reason to believe that he had already made a decided impression on her heart. Her suitor continues his epistle next day, July 30th, in a decidedly warmer strain.

'Thus far, my sweet friend,' he resumes, 'I had written to you yesterday. And here I should have proceeded to give you a candid statement of my circumstances, had I

not sufficiently explained them to you in the long conversation that I enjoyed with you last night. This most melancholy part of my letter I am therefore spared; melancholy no otherwise than as from it would arise the objections of your father. You see how contracted my present income is. Yet it gave me comfort to find that your ideas of happiness were such as to induce you to think that were there no other obstacle you could live contented upon our little fortunes united, having before us the prospect of a comfortable reversion. According to my own ideas of competency, you and I would have enough for all the present comforts and conveniences of life; and I would only show that if, in the natural course of events, accident should multiply our family wants, this contingency would be thus provided for. I am more and more convinced that all beyond competence contributes little to comfort, and that one may have a competence upon much less than is imagined. It has always been perfectly inconsistent with my sense of real attachment to induce any person to remove from a scene of ease and plenty to conflict thro' life with difficulties. I love you much too well to wish to place you in a situation where you might labour under the pressure of embarrassments, or where you might cast back a wishful eye upon the neglected opportunities of superior comforts. If I could ever persuade myself that the mind of her whom I had selected was fixed on things which were above my humble reach, and which, but for me, she might have enjoyed, I should feel really unhappy. But your wishes, as you have told me, are moderate; your desires are contracted. Mine are so too. You have no extravagances, nor many fictitious wants—I have none which are not those of perfect and mutual comfort.

'You will excuse me if I appear anywhere to reckon too precipitately upon your entertaining an equal regard for me. I do not believe it, nor do I see how it is possible. But the favourable opinion at least which you kindly confessed to me with that amiable candour which disdains all prudish managements and affected reserve, gives me everything to hope from a longer and less interrupted intimacy. Yet why, or what should I hope? Your father measures happiness on another scale of things, and wishes you to move in a higher sphere. Well calculated you are indeed to decorate any situation, to be the pride of any and every condition. But would you think I only spoke an interested language if I said that happiness is not frequently found in company with grandeur? You would not; for I believe you think so yourself. If you were intended to be allied to opulence only, why was your mind so cultivated? Why have its powers been so much inured to distinguish between what is just and what is fashionable? Why have you those dispositions towards everything that is good and sensible, if you are to be planted in a situation where there are so many impediments to their exercise?

'Should I really be unfortunate in this my first attachment; should your knowledge of your father's views and opinions convince you *without question and beyond the possibility of doubt* that an union between us is *evidently* impracticable; should you see no prospect, no rational and sober hope, no "spot of azure in a clouded sky"—then, my dearest and best affection, accept from me as a sincere friend that advice I could have no occasion to give in the happier character I would aspire to. As you value your own precious peace of mind, never let *any* inducement

under heaven tempt you to become the wife of that man whom for his mental and his moral qualities you do not love above every other being in the world. I am sure you would be unhappy. Pardon the presumption of one who can never cease to esteem and love you, and to be interested in your welfare, tho' he should be denied the exalted privilege of peculiarly contributing to it. Do I not seem to require forgiveness in thinking it necessary thus to counsel you? I know your goodness and your strictness of feeling. But even the best and the strictest have been betrayed into a sort of pious sacrifice by a regard to the unhappy prejudices of ill-judging friends. Be not you so. If you cannot marry to make yourself happy, do not, to make others *conceive* themselves happy, make yourself unquestionably miserable. For on this step depends happiness or misery. There is, in my mind, no mean. I must either love to the excess of attachment or loathe almost to disgust. I have the warmest and the strongest feelings that ever inhabited any bosom, for the unhappiness, I fear, of the possessor. I therefore could never endure a state of insipid mediocrity. Her whom I could not consider in everything as my other self, to whom I could not disclose every sensation of my heart, her I could not live with. Such an one may do very well to dine with once a year as a country neighbour; but live with her I never could till I prefer solitude to indifference.

'This is the advice I give a sister for whom I have the fondest affection, and to whom, for the same reason as to you, any disappointment in so serious a concern would, I am sure, be productive of the bitterest affliction. The same generous sensibilities which, if tenderly cherished, are productive of the most refined happiness, are, if

rudely discouraged and checked in their operations, the source of the most unqualified sorrow. Think, my dearest friend, should you meet a man who received your kindness with unconcern, and repaid your endearments with indifference, think what adequate compensation could you derive from exterior appendages? I know you feel on this topic as I do, and therefore all I say upon it may appear nugatory and useless. But, alas! I feel as tho' I were taking a last sorrowful farewell of my best beloved friend. And I cannot part without manifesting in this way the interest I take in what may hereafter befall her. Would to God that this presentiment may prove untrue—that my difficulties may be conquered, and my fears visionary. Then should I not regret my sleepless hours, and my anxious and troubled reflections. But how may this be? or may it be at all? I will not despair—till you *absolutely command me.* And can you bear to do this? Already, when alone, I am half distracted! Write to me immediately, my very dear friend, write and say what appears to you most expedient for us both. Is there any hope for me? Consider it well. I have grievous and deadly fears, and the misery of that day when you tell me finally to cease to love you will require an age of happiness to atone for. Then shall I have nothing left but to regret most deeply the unhappy circumstance of having first met you. How are all my feelings at war with each other! How can I endure to express regret at having seen and conversed with you? How many different ways I am pulled by the conflict of reason and passion! I cherish the very cause of my distress, and recall with melancholy pleasure that first conversation which is the source of all my present anxiety. Oh, Miss Gunning, my best friend, how weak is the pride

of intellect, how sparing and feeble are the resources which we derive from our understanding! I ought, if my worst forebodings were true, to shudder at the recollection of a day which has been productive of so much pain to me. Instead of that, I dote on the delicious sufferings which I experience from a terrible suspense, bordering upon a still more terrible certainty.

'I have long ago arrived at the conclusion of a reasonable letter, but I do not appear to have advanced one step. I know not how to stop, nor what it is I wish to say to you. You leave this place on Tuesday. What shall I do, or how shall I feel without you? I cannot live without you in the very spot where I have doated on you. Few, alas! are the opportunities I now have of being with you; but when I cannot talk to you, I am delighted to look at you. Write to me quickly, I beseech you, and *use no reserve whatever*. I never could think of you, at any distance of time, however cool or phlegmatic I may become, without admiring everything I have heard you say, or seen you do. Never have you been guilty of the slightest deviation from the strictest propriety. Heaven is witness of the sincerity with which I say that no accident of time and fortune, nothing but a defect of my mind and the corruption of my heart, can ever wring from me a thought injurious to you. I cannot even faintly describe that kind of regard which I have for you. In you is comprised everything that can excite or perpetuate affection. Oh, for God's sake, my dearest of friends, let me see as much of you as I can while you stay. Even if it should be found necessary to discontinue our acquaintance hereafter for our mutual peace (which yet I will not and cannot believe), still

consider that I am now so far wretched that I cannot be more so from continuing to talk to you. What thin partitions divide the bounds of happiness and misery! When I talk with you, or even when I gaze upon you, I am happy, in spite of the most unpleasant considerations; when I leave you, I am half mad and distracted. You went to bed last night, and I into the supper-room. I had no sooner sat down than I was compelled to come out again. The people wanted to eat, and I to think; so I am come up into my bedroom, but think I cannot. I fear I cannot write very intelligibly. I am sure I cannot sleep. I am almost ashamed to confess how weak, and how like a child, I passed the greater part of that long and tedious night. I am forced to assume cheerfulness when I come downstairs—yet I detest hypocrisy. Oh, how greatly is everything in this world in favour of the unfeeling! . . .

'There is one thing which I much wish, but I fear to mention it to you, because, as you do not feel as I do, you may possibly refuse to grant me so great an indulgence. We know, as you have said, not much of each other. Will you then permit me to correspond with you for one year at least from this time? It is, I fear, probable that we may not have much opportunity of meeting each other; and it is possible also that you may not have the means of attaining much knowledge of my character. . . . In the course of a year many things now unforeseen may happen; and if no prospect should open in that time, I could not then in reason object if you judged it expedient for your comfort to break off the intercourse.' After assuring her that his attachment can never suffer abatement, he continues: 'It is no wonder that a boyish fancy for a pretty face *alone*

vanishes with the face itself. But you know that my regard is of a very different complexion. Certain it is, I have not been educated in the school of Plato. No one can be more sensible of the power of beauty. But this is not "all the magic you have used." Before I really love, mind and disposition must also act upon me. . . . Should all my endeavours to be happy with you vanish into air, you will have rendered it almost impossible that I should ever attain the happiness that I before counted upon with any other woman. For *I am just as undeniably convinced of this truth as of my own existence*—that I shall never behold upon this earth any woman whom I shall believe so much created and born for me as yourself. I shall, *I am positively sure*, institute a comparison to the disadvantage of every other female in the world. . . .'

The conclusion of this letter is lost, if it ever was concluded, which one is inclined to doubt. Its pleadings were so far successful that Miss Gunning consented to carry on a secret correspondence with her lover. From the specimen of Mr. Tweddell's epistolary powers that has already been given, it seems probable that he wrote his lady a double letter every day; but the next that has been preserved is dated September 25th, and was written from the young man's home at Threepwood, near Hexham. He begins by apologising to his 'ever dear friend' for his last letter, 'which contained many absurd things written under the immediate impulse of violent feelings.' Can it be that he had so far forgotten himself as to substitute the word 'love' for 'regard' or 'attachment'? However that may be, he expresses his desire to converse with her in a calmer, more rational spirit, and in pursuance of this object sends her a list of books which she had

asked him to recommend to her. John Tweddell, though in most respects a true child of his age, was as regards his opinions on the 'woman question' distinctly in advance of his contemporaries. They, as has been observed, valued 'good sense' in a woman, but held that she had no business with learning. Tweddell, in more than one of his letters, strongly condemns this prejudice, and he certainly had the courage of his opinions; for from time to time he sends his 'dearest friend' a list of books, the assimilation of which would test the mental digestion of a strong man.

Miss Gunning was apparently engaged in reading *Locke on the Understanding*, and her lover recommends her to read the same author's essay on the *Conduct of the Understanding*, but not to rely too confidently on what he says of power and will, liberty, and necessity. He proceeds to recommend her Search's[1] *Light of Nature Pursued*, Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*, which he describes as '*the only true system of grammar*,' Millar's *History of the English Constitution*[2] (which she is not to be alarmed at because it is dedicated to Charles Fox), the Abbé Millot's *Elements of Modern History*, Formey's work on *Ecclesiastical History*,[3] and Bacon's *Essays*, which, he observes, 'if you have not read them, will be a copious source of information. I delight in everything that great man ever wrote. But neither his *Life of Henry VII.* nor his *Advancement of Learning* are more fraught with everything that characterises pre-eminent powers of mind

[1] Search was the pseudonym of Abraham Tucker (1705-1774).

[2] John Millar's (1735-1801) *Historical View of the English Government* appeared in 1787.

[3] Formey's work was translated from the French, and published in 1766.

than his general essays. At the same time that his sentiments are most commanding from their wisdom, his expressions, equally original, are most cogent and brilliant. His forecast is almost supernatural. In his works you see carelessly scattered the elements of almost all future discoveries. Many things that Newton himself afterwards unveiled, seem to have been in part foreknown to Bacon, tho' his mind did not pause to undertake their intricate evolutions. . . .

'Those books I have recommended that you have not read, I wish, my beloved friend, that you and I could peruse together. How I should delight in our minds thus travelling through such pleasing and fruitful regions! I believe we should each of us profit by the other's remarks. I am sure I should by yours. This is a mode of reading to which I am very partial; and when I am in town, I communicate the substance of everything I read to a very dear friend of mine, with whom I am in the habit of daily intercourse, and from whose superior mind I constantly derive important benefit. He pursues the same plan towards me, and thus is the extent of our respective studies, exclusive of their improved advantage, doubled to each of us. From these collisions of reason truth is most likely to be struck out; and we are not so apt to be led away by the authority of great names when the subjects they treat of, and the opinions they advance, are subsequently investigated, stripped of the persuasion of style and the graces of diction.'

In a previous letter Miss Gunning, it would seem, had laid before her lover certain scruples relating to their correspondence, and more especially to the secrecy with which it was carried on. She could not have done him a

greater kindness, judging from the enthusiasm with which he plunges into the argument. 'And now, my dear friend,' he continues, having concluded his catalogue of books, 'I must recur to the main subject of your letter. I hope you would not conceive that I meant to treat your reasoning with disrespect, because I briefly replied to it that it was not convincing. Your whole argument hinges upon your aversion to conceal our intercourse from your father till a favourable moment may occur for revealing it, and you are willing to persuade yourself that in so concealing it you would act morally wrong. If, indeed, you are absolutely wedded to this notion, I would not wish to weaken your good opinion of me by advising you to act in opposition to it. But that you should be so after serious reflection would, I assure you, not more afflict than it would surprise me. You say, "Consider it well yourself as an abstract question, which does not particularly relate to either of us; and then tell me if you wish me to do that which you would be obliged to confess was wrong." Most certainly I do not wish you, I will never persuade you, to do anything which I think wrong. But I give you my honour that is not the case here. I know of no duty, nor can divine any, which obliges an unmarried woman to disclose every action of her life to her parent. It is possible (and I am now assuming a very whimsical hypothesis) that some parents might expect such a thing. But am I therefore obliged to gratify every strange expectation? And shall it be said that I deceive the person who entertains it? In such a case it is not I who deceive him; he deceives himself. As well might that person accuse me of a trespass upon morality who had made up his mind to the belief that I should kill myself. Shall I fulfil his expectations, or

have I not a previous obligation to myself to disappoint them? If, indeed, I privately commit any action which is in *itself* improper, then I may justly be said to deceive those friends who had a reasonable ground for contrary expectation. But against whom is the offence committed? Against those friends? Surely not. The offence is committed against that Being whose laws imposed a prior obligation to an opposite conduct—which laws are obligatory on man *because they are conducive to his happiness.*

'Indeed, I never heard of any duty of the nature which you speak of, and you know very well that were you "considering this as an abstract question," you could find no argument in Mr. Paley, nor any other moralist that ever wrote, capable of convincing you that any such duty could in reality ever have existed. Religion is a good thing, and morality is a good thing; but as in the first case we are not more religious for carrying our religion to enthusiasm, so neither in the second are we more moral for refining too far upon morality. Those duties which are real and substantial are sufficiently defined, and abundantly adequate to guide and direct us to the end which they propose, without our industriously framing new ones which may be false, and must be superfluous. Yet I love you still better, my amiable friend, for acting as you have done under such an impression, and no one could possibly have argued better in such a cause, or have acted more nobly and ingenuously. What an uneasy fate is mine, to be compelled to admire you in proportion to the pain you give me! But I am sure, if you reflect on this subject again, you cannot retain the same opinion. You are as capable of judging for yourself as any human being can possibly be. You

are equally entitled, and equally obligated, with every other human being, to act for yourself in those things which concern your own happiness, without participating your design unless you deem it expedient. Our intercourse is at least very innocent, and may be very fortunate.'

This mode of reasoning was, of course, rank heresy in 1794; but the daughter's instinctive objection to deceiving her father by carrying on a secret correspondence of which she knew that he would disapprove, at the same time that she was living under his roof in professed obedience to his laws, was swept away by her lover's fluent casuistry. In combating the lady's second scruple, Mr. Tweddell displays himself and his logic in a better light.

'Your other objection is,' he admits, 'of more weight, and it is very well and properly stated by you. You conclude that by continuing our acquaintance for a certain period we should become more attached to each other; and that if it should then be found absolutely necessary for us to break off all connection, we may thus be rendered very miserable. Here there is a question of your feelings and my own. As far as my own are concerned, you will allow me to judge for myself; I do not mean to let a warm heart check the reasoning of a cool head. I therefore *deliberately* protest to you that, so far as I consider myself, I am at this very moment arrived at that degree of affection for you that if our intercourse must cease, all periods are nearly alike to me. If you could only know what kind of affection that is, how little it partakes of any momentary turbulence, how little it resembles the flourish of a youthful fancy, you would never again believe that it *may be* founded

on a trivial knowledge of your character. My regard for you is at once so strong and so delicate, so tempered and chastised by reflection and esteem, that if, knowing its nature, you could ever doubt either of its reason or continuance, if you could persuade yourself of the possibility that any little increase it may yet admit, would make any material variation of distress, in case of its being interrupted, then my heart must, in your idea, be made of such perishable stuff, that you would do well without further thought to abandon it for ever. . . .'

After defending the suddenness of his passion on the grounds of his lady's surpassing qualities and merits, and assuring her that her manners, address, understanding, and principles, her mental and personal endowments of every kind, are a source of inexpressible delight to him, the writer proceeds :—

'How comes it if you take me for such a paltry machine, as only fit to be acted upon by meaner influences, that I was never in love before? You cannot know this, but as I assure you of it, you will believe me. I have certainly seen and intimately known many young women who had every charm that can flow from mere beauty, and from manners too—never, I confess, so pure and cultivated as yours—but yet pleasing and agreeable, and such as the world is content to flatter and admire. But the truth is, I am rather a critical and jealous observer of those things, and I always found some deficiency which either impaired the effect of exterior graces, or which exterior graces could not supply. But still I could mention some of these women who had a competent portion of sense and virtue. But they were not like you, and therefore I could not love them. Never till I saw you had I seen a woman into whose keeping I dared to confide my happiness; and Nature

is far too penurious of her good gifts that I should ever hope to meet again with one who resembles you. Do not then tell me again you were always surprised that I could so suddenly conceive so powerful a regard for you. We may be employed many days in detecting the excellences of Mr. West, but an hour is sufficient to display the merits of Sir Joshua Reynolds or Michael Angelo. I only wish to assure you by what I have said that my present affection for you is not produced by the "fervour of an ardent imagination," but that it really is such as you describe, that which you could wish the man you love to bear for you. . . .'

Having repeated that it is for his own happiness to continue the intimacy, end how it may, he concludes: 'But I will say no more upon what I feel advisable for myself. As this is a question of your feelings as well as mine, it becomes me to consider yours; and this consideration is, after all, the only one. It is impossible that I can here speak at all decisively. I can only reason of your feelings by analogy from my own. What is not analogy would be bare conjecture. In short, this part of the subject *must* remain with you. You *only* must determine for us both. If you have firmly persuaded yourself that your intimacy with me will render you miserable, that for the difficulties we may possibly have to encounter you shall receive no recompense in my continued friendship and affection, you have then imposed an eternal silence upon me. My doom is sealed, for I cannot invade your peace. I may be convinced of the contrary, and may lament your hasty determination. But your happiness is as dear to me as my own, and if I cannot comfort, I will not torment you. No, my dearest love, you shall never be able to say that you have shed

one tear for me that I might have prevented. If you are *convinced* that I shall make you unhappy, let us part for ever. God, I trust, will give me strength to bear up against all inevitable afflictions, and so to His benevolence I commit my hopes. . . . If what I have said can make no impression on you, I must submit to despair. The advice you gave me was, "Consider well all I have said to you, and then tell me what you think advisable for us; but let your opinion be the result of deliberation, and such as it becomes you to give and me to receive." That advice I have followed to the best of my ability—and so farewell. "Think of me as I am." Consider all my conduct, and approve of it, I beseech you, when you can. You will find that I have been oftentimes foolish, sometimes inconsistent, and once, perhaps, rather petulant, in what I have on different occasions addressed to you. But remember how violently I have loved you; and when you can find no other excuse for my weakness, attribute it to that.

'Read once more what I have written to you at different times, and *then write to me*. You have never read my letters more than once: I have read yours fifty times. If you forbid me to reply, *depend upon it, I will not*. Yet, lest anything very important should occur, tell me in that case how I should direct to you. But let me write to you if you can, and *at all events write to me in answer to this letter*—and be minute, not distant and reserved. Recollect that upon your conduct depends the happiness of one who, however unworthy of your love, is not undeserving of your pity. For he would now have been happy had he never met you.

'And now I have only one more request to make of you, and that is, that you will never let us part, if we ever

must part, without a last interview. You promised me that we should meet in town, at a moment when, *perhaps*, you did not see *quite* so clearly the objections to our intercourse. Tell me when you mean to return to town, and promise that you will never agree to separate from me without a meeting. I hope you will grant more than this. But this you certainly will not deny me. My dear friend, do not break my heart if you can help it. God for ever bless you, and make *you* happy. J. T.'

PART II

In spite of Miss Gunning's doubts and scruples, the secret correspondence continued to flourish; and after Mr. Tweddell's return to town he writes a long epistle, only by courtesy a love-letter, detailing his political opinions. It is evident that Isabella was afraid that her lover's 'views' would find as little favour in her father's eyes as his limited income. If John Tweddell had lived in these days he would have called himself a Radical; in 1794 he seems to have been a more or less independent follower of Fox, that 'friend of the people' who was widely regarded as the enemy of his country. The horrors of the French Revolution were still fresh in men's minds, and the words 'liberty' and 'equality' were thought to spell blood and anarchy. To the old-fashioned Tory, the man who held progressive views in politics, or on social questions, was the man who yearned to set up a guillotine at Charing Cross, and to line the streets with the heads of aristocrats. Hence Isabel writes to reassure herself on the subject of her lover's opinions, and to ask what part he would take should 'disturbances' arise.

'My dear friend' (he replies), 'I am delighted with your last letter. I cannot describe the satisfaction which I feel upon seeing more and more how closely and intimately our sentiments are allied upon almost all subjects. I would not reply so soon, having at present very insufficient time to write at such length as I could wish, were it not that I believe it gives you pleasure to have the earliest assurance that your letter is destroyed. I can supply what I should wish to add in a day or two. For you and I, my best friend, will not observe the forms of exact reciprocity. Keep only in mind that the oftener I hear from you, the more happy I shall be. . . . Should my letters ever give you *nearly* the same pleasure, you will then have a sensation that will remind you more effectually than anything else to converse with me constantly.

'In this letter I will answer your questions respecting my political opinions. To represent these to you with every particularity in all their divisions and subdivisions, would be to write you a volume. Of course you expect me, by letter, merely to give you their general complexion, which I will do as fully and sincerely as you wish. I need not prepare this avowal of my political faith by desiring you, as I should most others, to shun a habit very common in these days, of imputing more than is confessed. People in general have no conception of an interval lying between extremes. This seems very absurd, but it is not the less true. It is naturally and easily to be explained. The nation is at present divided into two parties, each of which maintains with considerable vehemence the propriety of the part they are severally acting. The greater number of those who compose them both are either the slaves of interest or the creatures of prejudice. The conduct of the former is readily accounted for; and it is

a sufficient cause for the latter to be furiously addicted to either party, that they are ill disposed to consider, or incapable to appreciate, the merits of both. So soon, therefore, as any one avows sentiments in favour of liberty, for instance, it is immediately concluded that his opinions extend to the widest reach of the widest theory upon that subject. Should he approve of a uniform opposition to the present war, he is a Jacobin. Should he hazard an opinion that the French resources are inexhaustible, he is a cut-throat, etc. etc. etc. But, above all, it is usual to confound speculative opinions with the intention of practical assertion—two things, in fact, as wide from each other as the polar distances, and yet most uniformly and intentionally substituted for each other.

'I will not, I say, caution *you* against this habit of judgment in political matters. Your candour, in the first place, removes from me this necessity; and, in the next place, your powers of reasonable and just distinction. You must not form your opinions upon what the *British Critic*[1] says of my principles. All that it says about the introduction to my essay on Liberty is true, for it is a mere translation of it. But when it accuses me of going to the extent of Mr. Paine's principles, it is at least mistaken; and, if you observe, it does not point out the particular passage to which it alludes (I think it only mentions one such). The *British Critic* is professedly a ministerial review, and is not always very nice in its manner of condemning opposite opinions, being accustomed to deal in imputation more than refutation. I do not, however, accuse it of any injustice to me, except in that one assertion. The only violent passages that I recollect in my essay are against Burke and the partition

[1] In the review of his prize essays.

of Poland. Neither can I call to mind any opinions which I there advanced that I could wish to retract now. I wish with all my heart that you could read it. I think it would not frighten you.

'These are my general principles. I am, and shall, I trust, ever remain a most firm and zealous advocate for the enjoyment of as much liberty as the present imperfect state of the human mind can admit of, compatibly with good order. But I never carry any theory so far (tho' it is very common with reformers) as to exclude the consideration of that first principle of human infirmity. I believe most confidently that the state of society will improve; and that as men grow more generally wise, and more equally informed, they will grow better, and that as they grow better the reins of coercion ought to be proportionately relaxed. But the time is not yet arrived when these principles can be followed to their fullest extent with safety. So, also, I prefer a republican form of government to a kingly. Even in the present state of things I prefer this, and so far I am certainly a republican. But then I make a material distinction between establishing a government *de novo*, and destroying one that is at present established, for the purpose of substituting another in its place. I think it must be an extreme necessity that can justify the latter measure. If, therefore, I were to legislate for a country that is at present forming a government, as we lately did for Canada, I would unquestionably vote for a republican form; but I would not agree to encounter a certain and present evil, thro' the medium of a favourite theory, for the sake of a precarious and distant good. In other words, I can never consent, with many speculists on government, to put out of the calculation all regard for

the comfort and peace of the present generation. And so far I am not a republican. But all republicans are classed under one general denomination, while in effect, you see, their principles and objects are very distinct.

'For my own part, I should be thoroughly content with such a reform in Parliament as might secure the people against the dangerous and increasing extent of the present corruption, which would give them the power of speaking their own sentiments, and thereby diminish the frequency of wars, that severest scourge with which offended heaven chastens the indulgence of criminal ambition. I would put it out of the power of any minister to bribe a representative to part with the money of his constituents for a share in the common plunder. No pensioner or placeman should sit in the house. Apparently, therefore, there would be no unworthy influence—and really there could be none when the election of parliaments was rendered so frequent as to make it impossible for any funds of corruption to be so extensive as to furnish bribes which must be constantly repeated every year, instead of one year in seven. I believe you will see nothing unreasonable in this; and even if you did, I could not promise you any probability of change in my own sentiments. Those opinions which I now hold upon this subject seem to me so utterly undeniable, and not only so safe in practice, but so utterly unsafe to be neglected, that I feel it an absolute obligation incumbent upon me as an honest man to endeavour to realise them by all peaceable means in my power. . . .

'As to my party attachments, I can assure you that in the usual acceptation of the term I have none. I approve of the sentiments of one party because they agree

with my own, and so long I shall continue to approve of them. I do not deny that I have a personal attachment to certain members of that party—more particularly perhaps to Mr. Grey. I am acquainted with almost all the leading men in opposition, and I like many others of them. But be assured of this, that should they ever desert the principles on which I coincide with them, respecting reform more particularly, all my attachment is immediately gone. It is absolutely impossible for me, while I retain my present sentiments of right and wrong, ever to be unconditionally bound to any set of men upon the earth. So long as they continue that line of conduct which is honest and consistent, so long do I feel a regard for, and a common interest with, them—but no longer—not a minute. They have not, *nor can they ever have*, any inducements to hold out to me, should they think it worth their while to attempt it, possessing sufficient force to make me swerve from my present unalterable conviction. . . .

'What you mean by *taking an active part*, perhaps I do not exactly understand. Do you mean the coming into Parliament? If so, I will tell you the precise state of my mind upon that subject. There was a time when this was the first object of my ambition. I then feared it was unattainable. I knew very well that I should never be enabled by my hereditary fortune to afford to seat myself in *the honourable house*; and I had not, at that time, formed any connection by whose means I might expect to arrive at it. Things now stand otherwise. I think it not improbable that such an offer may be made to me. But my ambition is greatly on the wane. It has been declining in proportion as the means of attaining it have advanced. I see more clearly every

day of my life the folly of building happiness on such trifles as the sally of a successful speech—and the name of an orator. This supposes you succeed to your wishes. We all of us have a tolerably good opinion of ourselves, and we are often deceived by it. Suppose, on the other hand, a disappointment. What should I have gained? The privilege of franking, and a silent vote. I would just as soon be a candle-snuffer.

'But even counting very sanguinely on my hopes of success, as perhaps, to speak ingenuously to my best friend, I am too willing to do, yet even then I have lost much of my relish for such dainty food, and am more and more reconciling my palate to a more homely diet. I am not insensible to flattery, I know very well. Perhaps I have received it in too great abundance to be entirely unhurt by its poison. But I am sure of this, that at least it has not so far corrupted me as to make me insensible to my imperfections, which I daily feel, or to make me believe the sincerity of every one who speaks me fair. Besides, I really find that praise conduces very little to happiness. Who would consent to live amidst the tempests of the mountains to whom the valley offered tranquillity and peace? . . . In consequence of these feelings and some others, I doubt very much whether I would accept of a seat in Parliament, were it offered to me; and in addition to that, I much doubt whether any man would be mightily inclined to offer it to me upon those conditions upon which alone I would accept it. I would not represent a borough without expressly stipulating for the permission to vote for the extinction of all boroughs whenever the question of reform should involve such a clause; and no plan of reform would be worth a farthing without such an one. I would be at

liberty to deviate as often and as widely as I pleased upon any question, just according to my own opinion in all cases, never considering the wishes or ideas of those who brought me in. In short, I would be *entirely independent*, for I never will be otherwise with my own consent. Now let me assure you that there are very few persons who would have the liberality to bring a man into Parliament upon such conditions. And I also assure you that I will never sit there on any other, if I should sit at all. But my mind at present is a good deal alienated from that kind of ambition, and the instance of *any friend whom I loved* might detach me entirely from all thought or intention of it. . . .

'I will own to you, my dearest friend, that I had a good deal more ambition than I now feel, even so late as last July. I will confess that a great deal of my present indifference may very possibly be the result of some new feelings of which I was at that time ignorant. . . . You, my dear friend, have certainly had no inconsiderable share in reforming many things which were wrong in me. You cannot judge of this yourself, because you never saw me under the dominion of my worse habits. I am not afraid to confess this to you. You do not expect perfection in any one: I am far from it. I used to be peevish and petulant, apt to be suddenly provoked, and rather quarrelsome, irritable upon almost all subjects, and impatient of contradiction. To be sure, I was then very nervous; and whatever struck rapidly and with surprise upon my bodily system, communicated a proportionable shock to my mind. But still I am nervous, tho' in a far less degree, and still in a degree I am hasty and impetuous. I am sensible myself, however, and others have observed it to me, that I am much

changed in this respect. My sister remarked to me when I was last at home. She said that till this last summer, tho' she knew how tenderly I always loved her in my heart, yet that there was sometimes an air of severity and sharpness about me, which deterred her from consulting me so often and so confidentially as she could now do. My mother made the same observation to me, and was glad to see me more thoughtful and more mild. She attributed this change wholly to you, and said that, however *our* intercourse might terminate, whether successfully or not, I should be the better man for it. If successfully, then that the same influence which operated upon me at that time would continue to operate. If unhappily, then that a certain captious spirit which arises from having "known no care and felt no sorrow" would be subdued and softened by disappointment. Indeed, my beloved friend, among the many obligations I owe to you, I must account this one. You have a secret influence over me, which, if I am about to relapse into a momentary impatience, calls me back to my better reason by representing how you would act, or what you would approve. I appeal to you more frequently than you imagine; and tho' you know nothing about it, you either advise me so well, or reprove me so kindly, that I always seem to feel the salutary influence of an invisible director. God bless you, my best friend. I often regret that I am so little worthy to be your friend as I am. But it is, and shall be, my constant endeavour to become more so.

'"May I be assured," you say, "that you will never take any active part unless it should become indispensably necessary?" The only sense in which you can mean *an active part* is in the case of a disturbance in the country. Should such a disastrous event happen (which is, I fear,

greatly within the bounds of possibility), I think every honest and conscientious man must feel himself dreadfully distressed as to the part he should take and the conduct he should pursue. It is impossible for both parties to be right, but it is very possible for both to be wrong, and, I fear, very probable too. In such a situation it is very difficult to say how a good man would act. Circumstances must determine him. There is something to be said against total inactivity, were it possible, and perhaps it would not be. I am supposing that he is a single man, and that his own life and happiness alone can be affected by his conduct. In that case he must determine to act as his conscience may dictate and circumstances demand, and the sooner perhaps that he and his life take leave of each other the better. At least I should feel so in such a situation, rather than be witness to many scenes enacted by both parties very grievous and afflicting. I persuade myself that there are so many things far more difficult to endure than the transition from life to death,—that I could, I hope, submit to the latter in many cases not only without compunction, but with joy.

'Upon the whole, therefore, I think it impossible to say how *such a man* would act. I, for one, should be most ardently desirous not to act at all, even in the case of being a single individual, as unconnected and insulated as is possible. But (for in my opinion the two situations are as opposite and distinct as they can be) were I a married man, and had I the happiness of another as well as my own in my keeping, there would not exist any inducement in nature, nor can I comprehend nor figure to myself those circumstances (bating always that case of indispensable necessity for which you provide) which could make me take any part, or side with any party.

So far, I have no hesitation whatever in giving a most decided opinion and resolve.

'*Monday.*—Since I wrote the above I have read your letter again and again, and think that I have not omitted to answer every question in such a way as you would wish. I am anxious to give you every satisfaction that you can wish upon all my sentiments, opinions, and actions, for I desire that you should know me thoroughly. When I left off writing to you yesterday, I was so much occupied with my subject that I neglected to dress for dinner till the very hour that I was engaged to dine at, and after dressing I had to drive to Hertford Street to Mr. Grey's. When I arrived there, the greater part of the dinner was removed from the table, a situation which of all others I feel embarrassing were I upon a ceremonious footing with my host. However, there was no company—only himself, his wife, and a young sister of his. Mrs. Grey[1] is surprisingly beautiful, very unaffected, and good-humoured. This is *generally* the extent of the judgment I can venture to pass upon an acquaintance of the few first hours. I have not *always* found it so. I am told she is clever, and I have reason to believe she is at least a sensible woman from the manner in which I have understood that she treated some previous proposals. They are remarkably attached to each other. I do not mention this as being very wonderful. But it is a good system, and to me also was a pleasant circumstance, to find people who have not been very much accustomed to quiet and retirement seeking and finding society in themselves. He lamented to me the necessity of attending to public affairs instead of to private. He

[1] Charles Grey (born in 1764) married in November 1794 a daughter of Mr. Brabazon Ponsonby, afterwards the first Lord Ponsonby.

was obliged to prepare his motion of to-day as soon as I left him, and was afraid, as he had neglected the consideration of it before, that he must sit up the greater part of the night. "I like not that sleepless honour that Sir Walter hath."

'I have written you a very long letter, filled with a great deal of stuff, more calculated to give you ennui than pleasure. You will not thank me for it. But I am insensibly led on to pour out to you all things that occur to me, and just as they occur. . . . Everything more that I wish to say to you must be deferred. Write to me soon. You see I have never talked to you as if you were christened. Why should you be ashamed of your *good name*? You say you are not used to it. What does your father call you? I will not call you by any name that you do not like, and it may seem trifling in me to parley about the *term* of address as long as I have the delightful privilege of addressing you at all. But it is now long since you were Miss Gunning. Friend you certainly are, but then you are also a good deal more; and I wish to approach you even in idea as nearly as I can. Now that we are on this subject of addressing one another, will you excuse me if I, in my turn, make a similar request of you—yet not very similar either—inasmuch as mine is about your not addressing me at all. I am only talking of an idea. But then half the comforts of life are composed of such light materials. Sometimes you begin your letters to me without using any *vocative case*. Use any that you please—but call me something. Your last had a kinder aspect to me—principally, I believe, tho' not entirely, I confess, from its forming an exception in that one particular to your frequent practice. Forgive me this trifling request, as it may

appear to you. It does not appear so to me. God bless you, my very dear and excellent friend; you can never know how sincerely I love you, nor how loth I am, even at the extremity of my paper, to break off this imperfect sort of conversation with you.'

Although a letter such as this ought to have softened Miss Gunning's heart, since no woman ever yet found letters too long or too frequent, it seems to have been still some time before 'dear friend' became translated into 'dearest Bel.' Unfortunately, Mr. Tweddell, so exact in other respects, had a bad habit of leaving his letters undated, and therefore it is only possible to guess at the order in which they were written. Possibly this may have been a measure of precaution, since in one only is the address given, and the signature seldom appears. The Stephen Digbys were evidently in the secret of the correspondence, as well as other friends or relations who helped to convey the letters from one lover to the other. Among the earlier epistles is one that describes in some detail the young man's early education and remarkable university career.

'I am not uninterested myself, I assure you,' he begins, 'in hoping and thinking that there are advantages in a reformed character. I have been as different from what I am now, at least, as you. When I first went to college, I was introduced to a set of pleasant agreeable men who lived in a very different way from any that I had been accustomed to. I had just left a private school in Yorkshire, and was perfectly ignorant of mankind and all its ways. I had never been introduced into society (a grand defect in education!), and, in short, knew nothing except a *little* Latin and Greek, of which I thought I knew a good deal, because I knew more than

my companions. When, therefore, I arrived in college, what could be expected of me, young, with strong natural passions, and now for the first time master of myself? I attended to no academical discipline; I never, or very seldom, frequented the hall, and more seldom the chapel. I dined out with a pack of what are called *good fellows* every day, and supped until very late hours as frequently. Luckily for my constitution, I was very soon affected with wine, which prevented me from taking such copious libations as most others. But then I was in such moments equal to any mad freak that the maddest fool could propose to me. I used to insult the proctors and officers of the University; and this life I continued, regularly irregular, for the first year and a half of my academical career.

'Some part of my foolish acquaintances (foolish only so far as they were guilty of the same extravagances, for many of them were men of much wit and talent) then left the University, and I had for the first time an interval of thought and leisure for reflection. I recollected that my friends had cherished hopes of my distinguishing myself at the University; which, however, were sufficiently extravagant had they considered or known how much my old master had overrated the knowledge which I had gained from him. This consideration, acting upon a stock of ambition which, tho' long dormant, was yet very large, incited me to attempt to gain some one of the annual prizes which were just then proposed. I wrote for them all, after shutting myself close prisoner to my chambers for near two months, and, as it fell out, they were all adjudged to me.[1] This, I confess to you,

[1] These were the three Brown Medals for Greek, Latin, and English Compositions.

flattered my vanity very considerably, more especially as I knew the University was well acquainted with the idle life I had led. From this period till the time of taking my first degree I was neither wholly dissipated nor wholly studious, but both, and sometimes both extremely. After spending one month in idleness, I would spend the succeeding one in severe study, and have frequently put off writing my prize exercises till within a few days of their required delivery, and then to complete them have sitten [*sic*] up for three nights successively. I tell you all my weaknesses. There was much affectation and vanity in this proceeding. I wished to be thought capable of doing that which no one can do—I mean attaining knowledge and the habit of composition without industry and application. I continued for a long time to be desirous of this reputation, and in some measure may say that I attained it. I possessed great vanity at bottom, but I did not appear vain to others, as I never presumed upon my different successes.

'After the first four years of my college life had thus passed, I began to make progress in reason. But it was very gradually. I often recurred to my former waywardness, but every time with less avidity. I thought and read more; I saw the glaring folly of my former conduct, and framed a plan of life, sober and rational, which, tho' I did not immediately pursue it with steadiness, I had frequently in my thoughts, and approached more nearly without quite arriving at it. I had always in the bottom of my heart the most correct ideas of moral subjects, and never departed from them without a secret compunction. I believed in religion, and never, or very rarely, ridiculed it in company, even when urged by thoughtless jesters. But this I did at that time, not

because I was convinced, but *because my mother told me that I ought to be*; and at that time I was content to inherit my opinions, as it saved me the trouble of forming them for myself. (For it was not till within these two years that I inquired very accurately into the grounds of this subject.) There was an additional feeling that hastened my reformation. It may seem very trivial; but I am sure that wheresoever it resides, it is a valuable possession, and is more connected with morals than people suppose. I had always a very quick and lively perception of natural and moral beauty. Any *gross* violation of taste, whether in language or in morals, affected me almost nervously. I could have wept at any time, even in the midst of my own dissipation, over a graceful display of moral excellence or literary beauty. In those moments, had I had any serious, well-judging friend at hand, he might have taken advantage of my passion to have wielded me to a wiser system. You will perhaps think that this was very silly and romantic. But I know that it has operated beneficially upon me by repeated and almost invisible influence.

'Another feeling, again, in some degree connected with this was, that in spite of those libertine actions which I heard so constantly inculcated, and from which I do not pretend to have been entirely exempt, I always passionately adored the character of a virtuous woman; and invariably contended that no happiness, no state of mind worthy of such a name, could possibly be enjoyed, if not principally derived from such an union. I used to be rallied for introducing some opinion of this kind into almost all my public compositions whenever I had the opportunity, and this remark you would also observe in the criticism upon my book in the *British Critic*. (By the

way, what do you think of my essay on Happiness, as far as you can guess at the plan of it from that obscure and short analysis? Do you agree with me? I wish you could read it all through.) These thoughts and principles, which never at any time left me, returned upon me frequently at last, and united with the habits of reflection, which gradually increased as my mind gained strength and firmness, completed the entire mastery over my ridiculous follies and extravagances. I don't mean that I have none left—I believe otherwise. But I am sure they are different in their kind, and I hope and believe in their degree. . . .

'I have given you, my dear friend, a very long, perhaps an uninteresting and tedious, certainly an unfavourable account of what I once was. I hope it will not injure me in your opinion so much even as it does in my own. But it was due to you. You have a right to know of what materials I was originally composed, and what new forms and changes I have undergone at different periods. I wish you to know me just as I am, "with all my imperfections on my head." You see I have undergone a more necessary reformation than yourself, and that I have a great interest in wishing it to be believed that "some dependence may be placed upon an altered character." Tell me, do you think worse of me than you did?

'With regard to your studies, my dear friend, I hardly know what to advise; I will think about it, and reply more largely another time. You have, if I do not miscount the rapidity with which you travel over a country, a great stock of general reading upon your hands. If a lady for whom I had no regard, and who was ignorant of my opinions upon female education, were to put such a question to me, as relates to the propriety,

or rather the expediency, of learning Latin at your age, I do not know that I should be anxious to dissuade her from attempting it. She might conceive me a bigot to those narrow prejudices which would give a sex to mind, and narrow information to the men. But you already know that my sentiments are the reverse of this. But still, *upon the whole*, I cannot recommend you to lend your time to the acquisition of the Latin language. I wish you knew it at present, because I think you would derive great gratification from the authors who have written in it. But the time that you must devote to it before you can acquire a relish for its beauties frightens me. I think it would be too laborious an undertaking for you without a master. In short, I think it would not easily repay you the trouble of acquiring it in perfection, and to attain it superficially can hardly be your object. General reading will be much more useful to you, and so much more entertaining. Consider how many new ideas you might acquire in the time that you are only acquiring another and less customary mode of expressing them. However, if your desire is very ardent, I will talk it over more at length with you in another letter. I wish I could be always near you. I think I could teach it you in less time than most other persons could, not because I possess superior skill, but because I should more than supply any defect in that by the excess of my anxiety and attention to my dear pupil. If, in the bounty of your heart, you should think me not adequately repaid by the comforts of so sweet an intercourse, you could crown your generosity by teaching me German in exchange.

'I don't think it argues a want of taste in you that you are not extravagantly fond of poetry. Coxcombs and fine ladies like nothing else. I should defer in some

measure to them if they understood what they read. But as they do not, I confess that I like good prose better than bad verse, and good prose is much more common (I was going to say than bad verse, but I beg leave to retract) than good poetry. You have yourself mentioned the three poets I most particularly admire after Shakespeare—Milton, Pope, and Gray. When I say *most* particularly, I must be obliged to substitute Dryden in the place of Gray, tho' Gray ranks very high in my estimation. There is a poet now alive (it would be better perhaps for himself that he were dead, if later accounts be true), I mean Cowper, whom I admire extravagantly. He is *much underrated.* His genius is most powerful in my opinion; and I look upon him as standing in the very foremost ranks of our English bards. Did you ever read Bowles's sonnets?[1] If not, I will give you a copy. I will give no opinion about them, but shall wait for yours. But do not tell me again that you "feel it arrogance to give one." Why should you talk so? The opinion you have given me of the verses I sent you last is, according to my own judgment, most accurate and correct. You have enunciated the very objections which I was conscious they possessed when I made them. Did you know that they were mine? I used to indulge a foolish Muse very frequently some years ago; and tho' I have not kept many of my productions, as none were worthy of being preserved, yet one or two I have, and will submit them to your criticism, which you will pass upon them with the same degree of just severity when they deserve it. Do not spare me, I beseech you. I am not like the Bishop in *Gil Blas.* I have really procured

[1] The Rev. William Bowles (1762-1850) published, in 1789, his *Fourteen Sonnets*, which met with an enthusiastic welcome from the critics.

some of my early compositions for the sole purpose of laughing at the infinite nonsense uttered by an ill-favoured Muse in the pains of labour. . . .'

PART III

An interesting undated fragment, which gives some insight into the writer's views on the religious aspect of the French Revolution, and other matters, apparently belongs to the earlier letters.

'Believe not,' it begins, 'that the mind of man can long rest contented with the denial of a First Cause. The French in the midst of their insanity under Danton affected to abjure the existence of a God, and voted by acclamation the nullity of Providence. Did I therefore believe that the French were a nation of atheists? By no means. It served the purpose both of our political and clerical ministers here to say so, in order to irritate us against such a prodigious solecism. But I must first be deprived of reason before I can believe the possibility of plucking the truisms of nature from the heart of man. From that black and baneful superstition which converted the Deity into the worser agent of the Manichean system, I do not wonder that all the thinking part of France revolted. Unhappily, they recoiled with too great elasticity, and reached, a part of them, the opposite extreme of infidelity. Certainly, the greater part of the Academicians were unbelievers. But I have no doubt that in a little time truth will be generally received, and the rational worship of a benevolent Deity substituted instead of the worship of the Pope. . . .

'I am glad you are pleased with my promise about

public meetings. You may depend that whatever promise I make, I keep. I am not, therefore, hasty in making them. I am just now reading a book upon *morals*, which declaims against promises, and the adherence to them, against gratitude and against that love which I bear you. You must read this some day or other—not that you may agree with the opinions (that is, not all) contained in it, but because it is a very able book, and has much truth mixed with much absurd paradox. The book is Godwin's *Political Justice*.[1] It is much talked of, and deserves to be talked of, and you should therefore be able to form your own opinion of its merits, upon which we will communicate. Nothing hurts me more, as far as the consideration of weakness can hurt me, than to hear a person condemning a book which they have never read, perhaps cannot read, and probably cannot understand. Yet this is very common. They condemn by report, and a work is very frequently abused by a hundred men, whereof one only has read it. The rest judge, according to their *just competency*, by hearsay. A lady was abusing a book the other day. I said, "As I suppose, madam, it is needless for me to inquire if you have read it, pray, which part is the most offensive to you?" "Read it! God forbid, sir, that I should have read it. I have heard too much of it to think of reading it." She could not have given a better reason for its attentive perusal.

'So my squib amused you! Oh, my dear Bel, how I wish I could make you feel more independent of the opinions of fools! To be free from the despotism of folly one must be a little hated. Why should I care what is said of me by Lord Delaval and his profligate gang? I wonder at you sometimes. Why will you, as

[1] Published in 1793.

you sometimes do, put your *light* under a bushel? Upon this very subject I could say much to you, but I have exceeded my time, and must walk very quickly with this to Burlington Street, whither I fear Mr. Digby may have gone before me. Expect a letter left at Lord Ilchester's on Sunday, for I have said to you nothing of all that I meant to say. Now I know that I shall frighten you by enclosing a letter from Mr. Robinson, but I cannot help it if you will start at shadows. It is a very friendly and a very honest letter, and you shall tell me how far I may converse with him farther to remove his scruples about the introduction. But do not fail to preach me a sermon about the unfortunate notoriety of my political tenets. If you fail in this, you will disappoint me. I will reserve therefore my remarks upon this letter until I get yours. God bless you, my sweet friend.—Yours for ever and a day.'

A letter dated February 17 (1795) gives a detailed account of a visit with Dr. Parr to the elder Ireland's, for the purpose of inspecting the 'Shakespearean' documents which his son professed to have discovered.

'You have heard, no doubt, of the treasure that has been found relating to Shakespeare.[1] I went on Monday with Dr. Parr to look at them, he being acquainted with the possessor of them, Mr. Ireland. I assure you, my dear Bel, they were a very rich repast. I have no doubt whatever of their authenticity. There is every internal

[1] The elder Ireland exhibited the documents at his house in Norfolk Street, and invited literary men to inspect them. On February 25, 1795, Dr. Parr, Sir Isaac Heard, Pye the laureate, and sixteen other gentlemen, signed a paper testifying their belief in the genuineness of the 'finds.' Dr. Joseph Warton was another of the dupes. The fraud was not exposed until after the performance of *Vortigern* at Drury Lane in April 1796.

evidence. They consist of an agreement between Shakespeare and Condel, the manager, to act at the rate of one pound one shilling a week—another agreement some time after for thirty shillings a week. A bargain between Shakespeare and some other person for a house and six acres of land. A curious letter from Shakespeare to one of his brother-players, containing a drawing by himself, enriched with various enigmatical devices. A confession of his faith a few years before his death, concluding with a penitential prayer. There is also a love letter written by him at the age of sixteen to the lady who afterwards became his wife, containing a lock of his ambrosial hair, which is in great perfection, and tied in silken twist. For the same lady there is a valentine. A letter from himself to Lord Southampton, professing his gratitude in very fine and brilliant language, and Lord Southampton's answer, from which it appears that he had offered him £2000 (an immense sum in those days), but Shakespeare would only accept of £1000. There are some very divine conceptions in his profession of faith (from which, by the way, it appears he was not orthodox) and in the love letter. There is, moreover, a sketch of him in the character of Bassanio. The new play in MS. [*Vortigern*] and the MS. copy of *King Lear* in his own handwriting I did not see, Mr. Ireland not having yet received them out of the country. I was delighted exceedingly, and wished at the time that you had been with me, as I always do whenever I feel any pleasure that is capable of participation.

'Are you an enthusiast about Shakespeare? The last time I passed through Stratford I visited carefully every place or thing that was hallowed by his residence or possession. I cut off a piece of the old chair which

belonged to him—the seat of which was sold just before for thirty guineas. I bought very many gewgaws made out of a mulberry tree, which is reputed to be the same that he planted. Whether this is true or not, I cannot tell. But I know that my enthusiasm made me lay out more money than might have bought most mulberry trees in the kingdom. I have given all these fragments away, except a little box and a smelling-bottle, which I will give you. The carving is not very exquisite, but the smelling-bottle is carved the best, and I therefore reserved it for some one whom I should like better than any other person in the world. Is it not yours then, my dearest friend?'

Bel having presumably got through the books that her lover had recommended to her in the autumn, he sends her another Gargantuan list, which includes Locke's *Treatise on the Reasonableness of Christianity*, Dr. Watts' *On the Improvement of the Mind*, the Abbé Condillac's *Essay on Human Knowledge*, Bolingbroke's *Letters on History*, Melmoth's *Translation of the Essays of Tully*, Hooker *On Ecclesiastical Polity*, Adam Smith *On the Wealth of Nations*, Beccaria *On Crime*, Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Priestley's *Lectures on History*, Hartley *On Man*, Bubb Dodington's *Diary*, Lord Chatham's *Memoirs*, and Paley's recently published *Evidences of Christianity*. 'By the way,' he adds, 'when I was last at Carlisle, I dined with Mr. Paley, and spent with him seven very pleasant and instructive hours. His manners are not very polished, a good deal like those of an old collegian.[1] But his conversation is highly entertaining, and very much in the manner of his writings. . . .

'I do not wonder that you have found so much

[1] Paley was then in his fifty-third year.

difficulty in reading Locke, for we are naturally apt to measure the intellect of others by our own, and it was the case with me. I can give you, indeed, very little account of the great Essay at present; for I would not have you imagine that the consciousness of little benefit from studies and the want of memory and attention are peculiar to yourself. They are common complaints with almost all persons who read a good deal, and I have at least as much occasion to make them as you can have. Few minds can retain all they read, and a great deal of what I have read has departed from me, leaving only the general impression. Thus am I frequently enabled to talk superficially upon books which I have once read and comprehended, tho' I afterwards have forgotten the greater part of what they contain. . . .

'But I cannot bear that my dearest friend should talk of acquired knowledge as being of little advantage to a woman. This is a received prejudice which you should not humour; and, believe me, much more than is suspected of the evil in society is derived from this very source. The education of your sex is grievously neglected, and it is a national calamity. Women must, from physical causes, have great influence upon men; and were they more enlightened than their own contracted system-makers will permit them to be, they might wield that influence to the wisest and most beneficial purposes. But inveterate habit has made men slaves and women tyrants. Hence "bevies of fair women" are

> "Bred only and completed to the taste
> Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
> To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye."—MILTON.

Ignorance in them is indeed rendered excusable, because

it is admired by the men, who consider wives merely as domestics. But my idea of females is very different. Providence could never intend one-half of the species to be thus degraded at the lawless and imperious requisition——'

At this interesting point the fragment unfortunately breaks off, and we have no opportunity of learning any more of Mr. Tweddell's very modern and enlightened views upon the 'woman question.' It has already become evident that 'Bel' was not a little alarmed at the 'advanced' opinions of her lover. Her regard for him was perhaps already beginning to cool, but it is pathetically obvious that he was as faithfully devoted to her as at the opening of their correspondence.

'You don't know,' he assures her in another long epistle, 'what a consolation it is to me that I have in you a friend to whom I can so confidently unbosom myself and pour out every feeling of my heart. Have I a thought which I could not with pleasure communicate to you? Not one. Even my faults and weaknesses, past or present, I would not wish to conceal from you. I hope they never were very many, and that they are now much fewer than before. Had I had the good fortune of being sooner acquainted with you, some of them would certainly have been avoided. . . .

'Consider this sometimes, my dear Bel, and above all at those times when you mention the sensations with which you reflect upon the formation of our friendship. The greatest pang that I could feel would be in the case of your ever expressing a wish that our intercourse had not commenced, be it on my account or your own. No, look if you can with regard and complacency upon that moment when we became friends. I believe that no

disaster that can betide my ill-fated being shall ever make *me* contemplate without pride and triumph, as well as without pleasure and satisfaction, an acquaintance far more precious than my life with all its other enjoyments. My blessed love, I feel how impossible it is to say what I feel upon this subject; add, therefore, to what you feel yourself all that may be inferred from my greater warmth of temper, from the circumstances of a first attachment, and from the advantage on my side of having in you more to love, venerate, and esteem. Recollect that the more susceptible of two hearts always bears the joys as well as the anxieties of both. . . .

'By the way, I have always omitted to remark upon your observations on Mr. Robinson's letter to me. I did this intentionally; you said you were *shocked* at his refusal to introduce me to his sister, a refusal which I could not find anywhere in that letter, and I was assured that he fully intended to introduce me the next time that I came to town, tho' we had no more conversation on the subject. You made no allowance for the banter of some of his expressions, such as *unfortunate notoriety*, etc., expressions such as he would never use to me in sober meaning. And you observed that you were the rather shocked as he was a liberal man, and "certainly not averse to the opinions which you profess." I think very well indeed of Mr. Robinson, and I do not think him so illiberal as many men with his sentiments are; but as to his not being averse to my political opinions, I am amazed at your saying so. If you mean that once in his life he was a Foxite, I grant it; but after that it became *dangerous* even to defend Mr. Fox. Besides, Mr. Robinson went into France, and when he returned seemed unable to separate his reprobation of the cruelties prac-

tised at the time of the Revolution from a reprobation of the principles of the Revolution itself, and of the principles of its advocates, between which I humbly conceive there is no necessary connection, tho' it has been very customary to make one. Hence, it became impossible for any one to wish well to France without being classed in the list of *assassins*.

'You said also that it could not surely injure me in my own opinion to be thought moderate, and not to be attached to any party. Undoubtedly not. But to be *thought* moderate does not depend upon myself. To *be* so does, and that I am. Neither *am* I attached to any party. I am intimate with certain individuals of one party. But to the party itself I have no attachment whatever, as a party, nor ever can have, except so long and so far as they are attached to my principles. You were grieved to think that the *notoriety* of my conduct was such as to prevent a man, whose political principles were different from mine, from being acquainted with me. If this is the case, so am I—but I am grieved for that man, and not for myself. My political conduct never has been, and never will be, such as shall not convince any enlightened man that whether I be right or wrong, I act from principle. If he conceives that the mere difference of *principle* is a sufficient reason for shunning me, I am content. I pity him, and respect myself. For my own part, I know that I never yet saw that man whose opinions, however widely differing from my own, yet appearing to me to be *honestly and sincerely* professed, and himself in other respects such a man as I should like,—I never yet saw that man whom under such circumstances I should not regard just as much as tho' he agreed with me in every tittle.

'You see, my dear Bel, I write to you upon anything that occurs to me, and am not afraid of wearying you, though I have said so much about myself. There is no way so good for becoming acquainted with everything that has relation to either of us. Act you in the same way towards me, and talk to me about yourself as much as you will; I shall be more delighted than with any other subject. Let me know your thoughts as they rise naturally, and do not put off the expression of them till you know of an opportunity of writing to me. I am rejoiced to think that in a little time you will spend a month at Mrs. Digby's. I hope you will contrive to let me see a good deal of you. I am glad your dislike to London increases, and assure you that mine does; and I wish that you and I were together in the country, enjoying each other's society and conversation in peace and tranquillity, *dans une maison simple et bien réglée, où règnent l'ordre, la paix, l'innocence; où l'on voit réuni sans appareil, sans éclat, tout ce qui répond à la véritable destination de l'homme.*

'I have this moment received a letter from Mr. Digby. I had sent to ask him to dine with me on Tuesday, but I find that he is engaged to you. Alas! alas! my Bel, why is not this the same thing?'

From the concluding paragraph it will appear that Miss Gunning was in town, but evidently the lovers had little or no opportunity of meeting, for the letter is continued under the date of 'Tuesday morning.'

'The most trifling thing that relates to you, my dear Bel, is not indifferent. I will therefore tell you that I sometimes observe with no small degree of surprise that you, who are so accurate and correct, and a great deal more than that in every other part of your writing——

[Here follows, it may be inferred, some criticism which has been carefully erased, probably by the recipient.] Again, if I am not mistaken, when you would denominate a Free-thinker, you call such an one an *esprit fort*, not a *fort esprit*. But I speak with submission. You understand French much better than I do. Besides, I do not even undertake to say that you were guilty of this mistake, if it is one, as you may rest assured that I have not the letter by me in which it was mentioned.

'Now you will not think me either finical or fastidious for making these trifling remarks to you, will you, dear Bel? All you do appears so perfect to my eyes, that the slightest deviation from your general habits of correctness and elegance strikes me quicker than in any one else. In any other person I should have looked upon these little inaccuracies as things of course, and not worthy of mention. But the least soil is visible on a fair skin, while dirt escapes observation on the face of a mulatto. The great charm of your letters to me consists in their honest negligence, and the absence of all care and study, which is the base of friendly and familiar intercourse, so that your very mistakes originate in your excellences, and (will you tolerate for once a paradox?) if you were more perfect you would be less so. . . .

'I was a great rake last night. For the first time since you knew me, I went to a public place. And yet I think this would hardly have happened had not a friend of mine, who is gone to Bath for a few days, given me the charge of his wife, and a ticket for the opera concert. One dissipation leads to another. I met there Lady Shaftesbury, and she made me promise to wait upon her on Monday. I almost doubt whether I shall keep my engagement. I hate *routs* and cards and *nonsense*. I

should not wish to meet you at any public place. I always thought so, and now I am convinced of it. That air of indifference kills me. How miserable I was after seeing you at Hastings' trial![1] If *my own* life had depended upon my showing indifference to *you*, I should have lost it. You hardly looked at me. But, my sweet Bel, don't think I am blaming you. Your father was very civil to me, and came up to me and shook hands, and I think if you had talked to me easily, I might have conversed a little. But I was quite chilled by my first approach to you, and no longer knew where I was, nor what I was doing. Good God, Bel, you have no conception how nervous I am on such occasions! What must your father have thought at seeing that we did not talk to each other? Either that we had forgotten our intimacy, or that we had *improved* it. Was it possible that he should think the first? *Ah, mon amie, le mauvais refuge pour nous qu'une assemblée! Quel tourment de se voir, et de se contraindre! Comment avoir l'air tranquille avec tant d'émotion? Comment être si indifférent de soi-même?*

'God bless you, my dearest Bel, friend of my heart, and only comfort of my life. Write to me soon, I beg of you. I have often seen, my dear Bel, that you were much alarmed by the "Friends of the People." I have talked with you very little about politics. But I am convinced that there would not be much difference between us if I were to reason with you a few days upon the subject. That society, however, has certainly shown itself a very *harmless* one. It has done some good, but little. *Harmless, perhaps*, was the word. I have sent you its different publications, which you may read and *keep*. But take care that Sir Robert does not see them lying negligently

[1] Hastings was acquitted by the House of Lords in April 1795.

about, to create anarchy and confusion among his domestics, and to subvert the constitution of his family. . . . You see, Gray has behaved well about the Prince's debts. He told me some days ago that if that proposition was made, he should oppose it.'

Another letter, dated April 8th, is written in rather a desponding frame of mind. He writes, he says, merely because he must occupy himself about her, and it is less painful to write than to think. He has been debarred from reading in consequence of the illness of his best friend, to whom he was accustomed to communicate all his thoughts.

'I have, of course, very many other acquaintances,' he continues, 'with whom I have lived both at the University and in London upon terms of the greatest intimacy. But to live always upon the same footing, it is necessary that if one party changes, the other should undergo an equal and similar alteration, and that their minds should receive simultaneous effect from the progress of age and the external action of events. This can seldom happen; the same causes cannot operate upon many in the same way. Some are more cold; some are more worldly; interest predominates with the greater part, and whithersoever that leads, they must follow. Things assume gradually another aspect; and what passed at eighteen for the warmth of generous sympathy, appears at five-and-twenty to have been the league of unmeaning merriment, or the alliance of mutual follies. We are amazed at such a bond of union; and whether the one is stationary, while the other is progressive, or each advances in his journey of life in opposite directions, the habits are no longer analogous, the artificial junction is dissolved, and the minds of both parties are gladly released from

an ill-assorted connection formed during the minority of intellect, and before the birth of judgment!

'You are very kind when you "hope to see me in the course of this month." Pray, contrive it so. It is near half a year since I saw you—and I have volumes to say to you. But let us meet at Mrs. Digby's. To see you in any other way just now would indeed give me great pleasure, but it would be mingled with much regret that I could be able to say so little to you. I was satisfied, my dearest friend, with the account you gave me of your health. When you go out in the carriage, drive into the Park, or out of London anywhere, rather than make calls. I can hardly tell why I have written this letter to you, as there is nothing in the combination of all its letters which can possibly give you pleasure. But I have appeared to spend a little time in conversing with you; and tho' I have engrossed all the conversation myself (which is not my fault), you are yet in time to reply to me. Do so quickly, tho' I grant such a foolish scrawl hardly deserves that you should. But your generosity will not allow you merely to satisfy a legal claim. You do more; and your creditor no sooner loses that character than he becomes your debtor. God bless you, my dear Bel, God Almighty bless you.'

Only one more letter has been preserved besides the melancholy answer to the communication in which Bel broke off the connection (it could hardly be called an engagement), and at the same time very nearly broke the decorous, well-regulated heart of John Tweddell. In this last letter but one, he continues his literary discussions, and shows symptoms of a tendency to criticise his lady for shortcomings in the way of moral timidity, and an exaggerated deference to public opinion.

'I shall send you along with this letter,' he writes, 'Brand's *Popular Antiquities*[1]—a book which I persuade myself will afford you both amusement and instruction . . . Formey's concise *History of Philosophy* I shall send you in the same parcel. . . . Are you well acquainted with the history of late years? It is important, very important, that you should be. The information of late date is generally collected in scraps and piecemeal from annual registers and such sort of miscellaneous collections. But I will, if you choose, lend you a set of books which shall give you in regular connection a history of England, and of other countries so far as they are connected with England, from the accession of George I. to the present time. There is also a book not long published which you must read—I mean Ramsay's *History of the American Revolution.* I have it, and you shall, therefore, have it from me.

'I wish, my dearest friend, that I could always assist at your studies. It would be one of the greatest pleasures of my life to be appealed to by you on any subject; and sometimes, perhaps, it might not be wholly useless to yourself, as when I could not immediately solve a difficulty, as would frequently happen, yet the desire of satisfying you would supply all that energy and application and inquiry which might be finally victorious. In good truth, I wish to find myself in a new situation respecting you. I wish to be able to converse with you on calmer topics than I have yet been allowed to do by the shortness of the time in which I have enjoyed your society. You would find that I can reason far more coolly than I can love. But those temperate moments are among those prayers to which heaven lends no ear. A large majority of mankind are putting up daily

[1] Published in 1777.

petitions for riches and distinction; they pursue with a mad zeal all that is unreasonable; and are, if their exertions correspond with their desires, for the most part gratified. I have only one wish—a little and a rational wish. I covet neither wealth, nor honour, nor distinction. My happiness is all centred in social and unambitious retirement, in the attachment and possession of one only friend, to whom I might impart all that I should feel or know, and in whose gentle bosom deposit all my thoughts and sentiments. . . .

'But I will not weary you, my best friend, with repetitions of what you know already. Yet you must also know that it is difficult to be on the verge of such a subject which embraces in it all that affects me most sensibly and vitally, and not to enter upon it. Give me all the comfort you can by writing to me. That soothes my mind and makes it for the time feel happy; which, I assure you, few other things do. How long do you mean to stay in town? Has your father determined whether he will go to Harrogate in the summer? Pray, do not you go. Then, wherever else you may go, it is *possible* for me to see you. I wish Sir Robert would go to Harrogate and leave you at Mr. Digby's; what a blessed event that would be! I wish you could contrive it so. Mr. Digby lent me a book which you, I dare say, have read at the Lodge. The title is *Original Love-Letters*.[1] I read it last night. The letters are well written, and I do not believe them to be fictitious; at least, they are not written by one and the same pen. The lady's are incomparably the best. In his there are

[1] During the period of his widowhood Colonel Digby had read aloud these *Original Love-Letters* to Miss Burney, and discussed them with her (see her *Diary*).

sometimes good remarks, but there is no ease. There is a pedantic constraint that alienates and disgusts. In short, her mind is very superior to his in my opinion. His visions and descriptions are pedantry and bombast. But her style is easy, and her remarks natural, and her sentiments beautiful. What is *your* opinion? Do you not agree with me?

'The mention of *agreement* brings me to the recollection of an opinion of yours which I do not quite assent to. Certainly it is most desirable that the minds of two persons who are married should be generally conformable to each other. But I think the kindness of your heart seems disposed to carry that conformity too far. From some little conversation which I once had with you on this subject, I suspect that you would sometimes resign your opinion without conviction, and adopt *rather* too implicitly the opinion of your husband. I know it is not customary to give this advice to a woman, and perhaps it is not very advisable without taking into consideration the temper of him whom she is to live with. You know my opinion upon the manner in which the stronger sex conducts itself towards the weaker. Men are tyrants, by usurpation indeed, but by consent also. They are disposed to exact rigid obedience where they should use entreaty. And, therefore, such being unfortunately the case, if a woman is to be united with a man who expects an unlimited and unqualified compliance with his commands, it is happy for her if her temper has been prepared by education and expectation to conform implicitly to this established barbarism. But in speaking for myself, I confess to you I should be better pleased if you (for why should I make a general hypothesis? I cannot bear it),—if you, my dearest friend, should occasionally dissent from me, and preserve your own opinion, till you

were convinced that mine was the better. Do not imagine me so wayward as to *wish* for any dissent at all, even in the most trifling occasion. But as it is impossible that two persons should invariably think exactly the same on *everything* in the *world*, however they may generally, and in the *constitution* of their minds, resemble each other, I should therefore be somewhat jealous of a *constant* and *uniform* assent in *every particular*. It would seem to me to imply a sort of distrust of my temper or affection, lest either the latter should be diminished or the former ruffled by an accidental difference of opinion. In the case of such a difference, why should not you be as right as I? I have no idea, my dear friend, how two persons living together in the most intimate of all conditions, loving each other sincerely, and possessing good understandings, good tempers, and good dispositions, can possibly differ upon any material question. Even now, I do not think that you could mention to me any opinion of your own which would not either have the effect of convincing me, or else that my opposite opinion would not produce such an effect upon you. We should argue with candour for the sake of truth, and for the desire of conviction; and I will not believe that two such persons meeting with such propensities, and possessing nearly an equal comprehension and an equal intelligence upon the subject, could possibly withhold the one from the other their assent and agreement. You see, therefore, that I only considered before the case of an immediate and uninquiring assent without, or previous to investigation. Believe me, that the powers of the mind, and the excellence of it also, are much injured and impaired by the loss of its independence. I am far from wishing you, as you know, to think too highly of yourself, but I would

not have you to disparage that intellect which is worthy even of your own respect. It was implanted in you to guide you. Why should you make a surrender of its energies? A *certain* confidence in yourself is good; I have no occasion to warn you against too much.

'I could have expressed all I have said much more fitly in conversing with you, but we so rarely meet that I cannot reserve everything for conversation. In writing I am always afraid of saying either too much or too little. In conversation that may immediately be corrected if a wrong impression is conveyed. But I think you will understand me exactly. I am afraid I have not *always* been strictly intelligible. In the short note which you last wrote to me, I perceived that you had written the following sentence, tho' you afterwards struck your pen through it: "You afflict me when you talk of the gradation between perfect right and wrong being so delicate and fine as to be hardly perceptible." I think, my friend, you do not quote me *very accurately* in a part where a slight variation of words makes a material difference in the sense. I do not exactly remember my words, but I recollect perfectly the idea. I meant to say that I was afraid sometimes of expressing my disapprobation of any observation of yours, lest by not conveying it in terms sufficiently precise and definite I might appear to condemn *in toto* that which I only doubted of, or differed from in degree; that in questions simply of degree the shades of right and wrong seemed sometimes to approach each other, in the same manner as the excess of any particular virtue might be neighbour to some kindred vice. This I recollect to have been my meaning. How I expressed or applied it I cannot tell.

'I must some day talk with you upon the habits of

thinking, which make you so *tremblingly alive* to the opinion of the world. There is a proper deference due to it. But to be the slave of its capricious awards, and blindly led by it, especially upon subjects which affect your happiness in any degree, I cannot but call a great weakness. Indeed, my dear friend, *your* mind ought to be superior to it. You see, if you will challenge me to find fault with you, I *can* do it. If you say that the things I have objected to are of little importance, and not worthy to be urged, that is not my blame. If I knew of anything that was worse, I would not spare you. I wish very much to *talk* with you upon these and some other subjects. There are one or two questions which I could wish you to answer me. But as I am not sure whether you would choose to reply to them, I will not, by putting them, run the risk of a refusal. I could gain the information I want thro' another channel, but I will not, except from you. It is principally a motive of curiosity which urges me to wish for this intelligence; but nothing that relates to you can possibly be indifferent to me. Remove, indeed, such subjects of inquiry as these, and you would at present put an end to almost all my pursuits. Investigation with me is nearly asleep on all other subjects. I do nothing when I do not think of you; and look upon myself to have lost so much of every day as your image has not occupied. Upon this head, however, I have very little to tax myself withal. If to lose sight of you be to furnish myself with an occasion of reproach, I shall not so endanger the quiet of my conscience.

'I was to have gone with Charles Grey on Friday to visit the prophet.[1] Unfortunately he was taken up the

[1] Samuel Brothers, an ex-naval officer, who believed himself a descendant of the House of David, and announced that on November

day before. So that an experiment we had meant to make on him was left unattempted. He says Grey is descended from the Hebrews, and therefore, like all the rest of that generation, makes him (Mr. Brothers) an unconscious obeisance when he passes him. By this token he says he knows Grey. Now we were in hopes that Brothers would have been unable to recognise him when we waited upon him. But the man is, I believe, quite mad.

'I was out of bed this morning before half-past six o'clock, and went to enjoy *les rêveries d'une promenade solitaire* in the park. I walked from Spring Gardens thro' the Queen's and Hyde Park as far as Kensington, and returned to breakfast at a quarter after eight. It was one of the most delicious mornings I ever beheld, and calculated to excite all the benevolence of a heart that rejoices in the display of natural beauty. Certainly, there is a fine moral feeling that diffuses itself thro' the frame of man when he contemplates the softer embellishments of the material system. That man has no soul who can walk indifferent and unmoved amidst the gorgeous scenery of luxuriant nature, who cannot descend to communicate with the objects of sense, or find incitements to virtue and dissuasions from vice in tracing the progress of vegetation. All these things have great effect upon me. I feel myself improved by considering them. My soul seems almost stripped of "this muddy vesture of decay," and to partake for the moment of a superior intelligence. This, my dear friend, is not romance; it is the effort of our purest

19, 1795, he would be revealed as Prince of the Hebrews and Ruler of the World. He was arrested on March 4, 1795, for treasonable practices, was defended in the House of Commons by Mr. Halhed, and finally placed in a lunatic asylum.

reason; it is a struggle to get rid of our earthly encumbrances; it is a virtuous feeling, flowing from a quick susceptibility of the beauty and the goodness of God's works. Do you never feel this, my beloved friend? If you do, good and kind as you are at all moments, yet in such as these you feel some more than ordinary inclination, some loftier and more sublime propensities, to relieve distress, to comfort the afflicted, and to diffuse far and wide, without distinction and without limit, the blessings and the benefits of heavenly charity. Oh, my dearest friend, what would I not have given to have had you with me this morning! Farewell. Write and comfort me.'

PART IV

THE last letter of the series is dated May 23rd, and tells its own melancholy story. From it may be gathered the reasons given by Bel for putting an end to the correspondence.

'MY DEAR FRIEND [it runs],—

'I could give you a world of reasons why I have not yet answered your last letter. But it is of little use to mention them. Neither shall I *attempt* to make you conceive the severe affliction which I have suffered, and yet suffer. My sorrows only concern myself, and I feel them too acutely to affect to describe them. I confess that I was surprised—I was not quite prepared; for I did not perceive the necessity for making me miserable. Yet as you mean me well, I must be grateful for your kindness, tho' it is associated with death. Once in my life I have been made uncomfortable, and once beyond measure wretched, by two persons who chose to consult my happiness, *not by my idea of it, but by theirs.*

My father has for many years made me uncomfortable, because he foresaw that it was essential to my comfort to be a great lawyer. Another person, in whose hands was every hope and every wish of my life, is destroying those hopes and wishes with one blow, because she *knows* it is expedient for my happiness to lose all that can make me happy. It is true, my own ideas are very contrary—as opposite as the two poles. But where I am not consulted, I can have no voice, and therefore submit, not indeed with satisfaction, not by conviction, not from reason, but by necessity and thro' force. He who lies bleeding at the mercy of another may die without struggling, be he ever so reluctant to part with life. I have too much reason to fear that this is my case. Your letter is not written in the spirit of conference, but of decision. My own happiness is professedly the question. Yet it does not advise with me, but determines. In that case, what part can I take? I have no choice. You must, therefore, my friend, act as you please. You will always act as you believe right—of that I have no doubt. As for me, it is quite another consideration. *You* have only to act. It is I who must feel the consequences for ever. Your part is simple and quickly taken. Mine is the sad remembrance and long regret.

'How little did I think when I wrote you that last letter, which, it seems, determined you to think of so hasty a resolution,—how little did I dream of the effect it was to produce. You had previously expressed your concern at my uneasiness. I wrote to assure you that so far from being uneasy at our connection, it was my only pleasure. This still more convinced you that I was unhappy. I wish to God that I had never written that letter; but I could not possibly foresee that you would

understand it in *such a light.* There were expressions of affection in it that you did not like. I do not recollect in particular what these were. It is perhaps unfortunate that I love you so tenderly. But I cannot help it, and sometimes I cannot avoid saying so. Have you no motive to forgive this? Surely you should not make me miserable because my expressions discover that I wish you happy.

'One or two of your sentiments that I have lately *guessed* at have taught me to suspect that since you have known me more, you have liked me less. You may not be aware of this, and perhaps you will tell me so. *But I feel that it is so*, tho' I cannot prove it. If you could read my mind, you would know my reasons. But they would appear ridiculous on paper.

'I do not wish to say much upon this unfortunate subject. My heart is too full to utter what is intelligible; and since your thoughts upon the letter that I last wrote to Mr. Digby have been known to me, I despair of saying anything which may be any more persuasive to you. I regret mightily that you saw that letter, *for more reasons than one.* I forgot to desire Mr. Digby not to show it to you. I could have said a great deal more in favour of what I then proposed. But I perceive you are not likely to listen to what I might then have added, and my heart is so exhausted that it cannot waste itself in expressing what it foresees to be ineffectual. You were grieved, you said, at thinking how uneasy your illness would make me. Would my friend Losh have been justified in loosening our intimacy merely because I discovered my anxiety by attending him every day at Hampstead?

'No, my dear Bel, if you seek to reduce and cool my affections till they cease to feel pain when the object of them is in danger, you must model me anew. If I am to

be punished, first by the suffering of my friends, and then for having sympathised with them, I shall not long experience such double chastisement. A heart like this cannot long endure it. In short, I can say nothing. I know not what to ask of you, because I know not what you may not refuse. If you think proper to allow me to spend a few days with you at the Park, and to talk with you seriously upon all these things, I need not say whether that will give me pleasure. But tell me first whether you are resolved upon acting wholly from yourself, or would listen also to me. I would not willingly tease you, if you are forearmed against all I may say, and that my reasoning is all to no purpose. As for seeing you for a few hours, this would in my present state only agitate without relieving. I have too much to say to you to say it in one breath, scattered as are all my ideas, and confused and tumultuous as are all my feelings. I could observe upon your letter at great length. But the time is passed away when I found happiness in lengthening my letters to you! Be not angry at anything I may have said—I hardly know what I have said—*ce pauvre cœur a tant aimé.* God bless you. May *you* be happy.'

There is no evidence to prove that the lovers ever met or corresponded again. In the following October Miss Gunning married General Alexander Ross, best known as the friend and aide-de-camp of Lord Cornwallis. General Ross, who was then in his fifty-fourth year, had been appointed Surveyor-General of the Ordnance in June, 1795. In September John Tweddell went abroad for an indefinite period, avowedly with the object of studying men and manners in order to qualify himself for a diplomatic career. His letters from the Continent,

which were published in his *Literary Remains*, contain little that would interest a modern reader, since they deal for the most part with regions now familiar to every tourist. A few short extracts, however, may be worth quoting, as illustrating the acquaintances he formed with several of the distinguished French *émigrés* who then found an asylum in Germany or Russia.

Mr. Tweddell's first stay was at Hamburg, where he remained about four months in order to study German and perfect himself in French. His letters of introduction admitted him into the best society of the place, and here he became acquainted with Madame de Flahault (1761-1836), author of *Adèle de Senauge* and other romances; M. de Souza, the Portuguese minister, whom she afterwards married; Madame de Genlis, Madame de la Rochefoucault, the young Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe, that political cleric the Abbé Montesquiou, and the Comte de Rivarol,[1] once among the brightest stars of French society, and now condemned to hide their brilliancy in the remote Northern town. Most of Tweddell's letters are addressed to his own family; but among his other correspondents were Mr. Digby (whose wife had died on May 25th), an early friend, Mr. James Losh, and a Mrs. Ward. In writing to the last-named lady he assures her that he cares little for the news of the day, since from births he has nothing to hope, and from deaths he has everything to fear, while 'with marriages I have no concern. Only this I know, that for the most part they are ill-assorted, and that those which promise happiness are generally broken, together with the hearts of those whose hopes are disappointed. . . . Some of my

[1] Author of the famous *Petit Almanach des Grands Hommes* and other works.

recollections are of the painful sort, as you know. I, however, do everything in the world to give myself spirits. But I am not always the same. Madame de Flahault says in a letter which she has given me to her niece, the Marquise de Nadaillac, at Berlin: "Il est un peu mélancolique. Je l'ai assuré que si ses chagrins venoient de quelques souvenirs heureux, ou trop infortunés, mais chers encore, votre amabilité lui feroit oublier toutes les femmes de son pays."'

At Berlin, where Tweddell arrived about the end of January, 1796, he was cordially received by our Envoy Extraordinary, Lord Elgin, and presented at Court, where he had long and serious conversations with the Prince Royal, afterwards Frederic William III., on political matters. 'Royalty has been extremely civil to me,' he says in a letter to his father. 'Last Sunday night, at the Queen's, one of the Princes engaged the lady whom I meant to have danced with, and I was for a moment without a partner. The Princess Royal[1] asked me why I did not dance; and upon telling her the circumstance, asked me to dance with her. You see to what honours a traveller may advance! She is really a charming woman, much the handsomest in Berlin. Who would have said last year at this time that I should now be dancing every other night at a Court, and playing cards two or three times a week at a minister of state's? After such a revolution, you need not be astonished if I should be converted into a courtier and a rascal. I assure you, the two characters travel well together in this country. Profligacy overflows in every way, politically and physically, in public and in private life; the virtue of the women and the poverty of the men are well matched.'

[1] Afterward Queen Louise of Prussia.

His chief friend among the women was the Marquise de Nadaillac. In a letter to Mr. Losh, dated Dresden, March 24, he says: 'I have left at Berlin an acquaintance that I regret very much, the Marquise de Nadaillac. She is really an excellent woman, extremely instructed, full of *esprit*, and *esprit* of a much higher cast than what is usually called by that name. She converses better than any person I ever saw, I think without exception. [He had said much the same of Bel a year before.] At first, seeing her only at Court, and in large societies, I did not particularly admire in her anything but her style of talking; she seemed quite a coquette, as I often told her afterwards. But upon knowing her more and more intimately, I was very much pleased with her. She has a greater stock of real virtues than one can easily conceive. She is an *émigrée*, and therefore has prejudices. Sometimes we almost quarrelled about politics, and sometimes about religion. . . . Since I left you I have talked with no one so intimately upon what relates to myself. The people of Berlin talked very confidently of a relation between us of a different nature, which was not true, friendship alone being our bond of union; but that their manners did not allow them to comprehend. Plato did not publish his system at the Berlin press; besides that, Platonism is not very common between a young man of twenty-six and a young and interesting widow of twenty-seven.'

At Vienna, which was reached on April 6, Tweddell had letters from Madame de Nadaillac to her friend the Duchesse de Guiche, daughter of the Duc de Polignac,[1] with whom he quickly became on terms of intimacy. 'The family which has chiefly contributed to my enter-

[1] The Duchesse de Polignac, the favourite of Marie Antoinette, had died at Vienna in 1793, shortly after the execution of her royal mistress.

tainment and interest at this place,' he writes, 'is that of the Duke of Polignac and the Duchesse de Guiche, his daughter, which is literally the pleasantest family I ever was acquainted with. They were, as you well know, the first family at the Court of France, and their very delightful manners and interesting society have chiefly contributed to render this place pleasant to me; I spend some part of every evening with them.' Another new acquaintance was that literary and military genius the Prince de Ligne, who was pronounced by no less an authority than Madame de Stael to be the most brilliant talker in Europe.

After a short stay at Munich, Tweddell passed several weeks in Switzerland, where he visited many regions then unfamiliar, and is said to have prepared an account of his tour for publication. He was not much attracted by what he saw of Swiss society, except that of Lausanne, where he was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of M. Necker and Madame de Stael, who invited him to stay at Copet. To his mother he writes from the Castle of Copet on November 9, 1796:—

'My visit here has been highly agreeable. We have had a very small party in the house—a Madame de Rillet, M. Michel de Châteaurieux, and M. and Madame de Stael. Necker talked to me a great deal, and with much interest, about England. Upon France he said less, and wished in general to avoid the subject. He is generally thoughtful and silent, but I have had the good fortune to contribute to his amusement by recounting to him different circumstances in our political affairs; so that Madame de Stael tells me she has never seen him for many years so much interested, and so abstracted from himself and his own thoughts. He was anxious that I

should give him an idea of the different manners of style and oratory of the first speakers in our House of Commons. As I recollected speeches of almost all of them, and possess in some degree the base faculty of mimicry, without being, I hope, a mimic, I repeated to him different speeches of Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, and Dundas in their respective manners. He understands English perfectly well, and you cannot conceive how much he was delighted with this. He desired me to go over them again; and almost every day we have passed several hours on similar topics. . . . Madame de Stael[1] is a most surprising personage. She has more wit than any man or woman I ever saw; she is plain, and has no good feature but her eyes; and yet she contrives by her astonishing powers of speech to talk herself into the possession of a figure that is not disagreeable.'

From Switzerland the traveller returned to Vienna, where he had intended to spend the winter. Here, however, he found a letter awaiting him from the Duc de Polignac, which changed all his plans. The Duke, who had gone with his family to settle in Poland, explained that his own house was not yet habitable; but that among his neighbours was the Countess Potozka, who was accustomed to invite such distinguished persons as she thought would be an addition to her circle to spend the winter at her house, and having heard much of Mr. Tweddell (from the Polignacs), she now invited him to stay with her for three months. This invitation Tweddell thought too good to be refused. 'I shall see new people and a new style of living,' he writes to his family. 'For the great houses in Poland, such as the

[1] Madame de Stael was then thirty years of age, and had just published the most important of her earlier works, *De l'Influence des Passions.*

Countess Potozka's, are conducted upon a footing quite different from those of other countries; it is a sort of palace in which you have your own apartment perfectly independent. She has officers to preside over the different provinces of her household in the same manner as in a little court. She was particularly connected with the late Empress Catherine, and her fortunes were therefore not affected in the division of Poland.'

The journey from Vienna to Tulczyn in the Ukraine was not a pleasant undertaking in mid-winter. 'My journey hither,' he writes just after his arrival, on January 8, 1797, 'was full of accidents. I travelled almost every night, and yet was eighteen days on the road. During the snows I was lost several nights in the Ukraine, and one night was overturned in a very unpleasant manner. The carriage fell from a considerable height. I did not, however, suffer much; my head and one of my legs were bruised, and I have still headaches. The Countess has a very princely establishment indeed, about a hundred and fifty persons daily in family. The Marshal Suvarrow and a very great number of his officers occupy one wing of the palace, which is a very large and magnificent building. I have an apartment of three rooms to myself. The family never muster before dinner-time. Each person orders breakfast in his own apartment, and has all the morning to himself; this is very convenient. The Countess sends a servant to me every morning to know if I want anything, and to ask at what hour I choose to ride out. I have a carriage and four horses whenever I please. . . . The Duc de Polignac's house is at a distance of half an hour's drive; I go thither upon a *traineau*, *i.e.* a carriage embarked upon a sledge; and the road is one entire sheet of glass, over

which the horses gallop almost the whole of the way. I have dined twice there, and was witness of the arrival of news which gave me most cordial joy. . . . During the time of dinner a courier arrived from Petersburg bringing a letter to the Duke, written by the Emperor himself, and containing these words:—

'"I have this day made a grant to the Duc de Polignac of an estate in Lithuania, containing a thousand peasants; and I have the pleasure of signifying it to him with my own hand. (Signed) PAUL."

'The estate is worth about £2000 sterling a year, in a fine country, where the living costs absolutely nothing; for according to the tenure of the estate, horses, meat, eggs, butter, etc., down to the minutest article, are furnished by the peasants exclusively of their rent. This grant, in addition to that of the Empress, will make the Duke almost a rich man, and diminish his sense of the losses which he has sustained in France.'

To his friend James Losh, Tweddell writes from Tulczyn on February 5: 'I have been here just a month, and am much delighted with my residence. We are just restored to tranquillity after a mighty bustle. There has been a great wedding in the family; we have had a mob of Russian princes, and all the feet of Ukraine have been summoned to dance. At present we are reduced to about sixteen persons. Among these is the Marshal Suvarrow, the hero of Ismäel. He is a most extraordinary character. He dines every morning at nine o'clock. He sleeps almost naked. He affects a perfect indifference to heat and cold, and quits his chamber, which approaches suffocation, in order to review his troops, in a thin linen jacket, while the thermometer is at ten degrees below

freezing.[1] His manners correspond with his humours. I dined with him this morning. He cried to me across the table, "Tweddell!" (he generally addressed by the surname), "the French have taken Portsmouth. I have just received a courier from England. The King is in the Tower, and Sheridan is Protector."'

Another long journey of eighteen days and fifteen nights, with two upsets on the road, brought the traveller to Moscow in time for the Coronation of Paul in April, 1797. The ceremony he describes as one of unique magnificence, but says that Paul is only a caricature of Peter the Third, and an imitator of Frederick the Great. He supped with Stanislas, ex-King of Poland, saw a great deal of the highest Russian society, and in May followed the rest of his friends to St. Petersburg. The journey which he had projected to Constantinople at this time was postponed until the autumn, and he spent the summer in a tour through Finland to Stockholm, whence he writes to Mrs. Ward, who was contemplating a visit to Paris:—

'Madame de Stael is now at Paris, and perhaps Madame de Flahault. I will give you letters to both these ladies; they are both very clever women; the former, indeed, is a most superior person; I have seen very few men by any means equal to her in conversation; she is not handsome; that, I suppose, makes no difference to you. . . . Madame de Stael, however, has, I understand, entirely eclipsed Madame Tallien, who is the *belle* of Paris, and whose beauty has retired in grand disarray before the prevailing wit of the daughter of Necker. I am sure she will be glad to see you, on your own account first,

[1] Suvorof's (as the name is more commonly spelt) wardrobe is said to have consisted of one uniform and one dressing-gown. He died in disgrace in 1800, aged seventy-one.

and next on mine, as I have the good fortune to stand well in her good graces.[1] . . . I understand that —— [probably Dr. Warton] is terribly annoyed about the Shakespearean forgery. There is the misery of being a proud critic. I am also among the number of the wise ones duped on that occasion, and I should be well content to have no other cares than those which that circumstance has occasioned me; it was, to be sure, a very facetious humbug.'

In September Tweddell was back again at St. Petersburg, and at the end of the month he set out for the Crimea.[2] The Duc de Polignac's place, Woitovka, lay directly in his way, and here he stayed several weeks. Of course he was nearly killed in a carriage accident on the way, his twelfth overturn in twelve months; and it may here be noted that he was as unlucky on sea as on land, never making a voyage, according to his own account, without encountering either a storm or a calm. On his journey through the Crimea he stayed at Sympherol with Professor Pallas,[3] 'the most distinguished man of letters in Russia,' made drawings of all the most interesting views in the neighbourhood, and copied all the inscriptions he could find. It was during his visit to the Polignacs that, as he explains in a letter to Mr. Digby, a material change took place in his way of living.

'I no longer,' he writes, 'eat flesh-meat, nor drink fermented liquors. . . . I am persuaded we have no other right than the right of the strongest, to sacrifice to our

[1] Madame de Stael said of John Tweddell: 'J'ai rencontré peu de personnes dont le caractère inspirât plus d'attachement, et dont la conversation fût plus intéressante.'

[2] As will be seen, Tweddell covered a great deal of the same ground that Lady Craven had traversed twelve years earlier. After his death her *Travels* were found among his books.

[3] Author of the *Flora Rossica* and many other scientific works.

monstrous appetites the bodies of living things, of whose qualities and relations we are ignorant . . . to flay alive and to dismember a defenceless creature, to pamper the unsuspecting beast which grazes before us, with the single view of sucking his blood and grinding his bones. . . . Our passions must be much tamed and reduced by abstinence from whatever irritates the blood, and consequently the habits of virtue must be invigorated, and the facility of its practice greatly increased. . . . The Duchesse de Guiche has adopted this plan also, and we sustain every day the artillery of the whole house. In the meantime we live upon rice, milk, eggs, potatoes, bread, and dried fruits.'

After being compelled to wait six tedious weeks at Odessa for the vessel in which he had engaged a passage, Tweddell arrived at Constantinople on May 21, 1798, and was hospitably entertained at the English Palace by our Ambassador, Mr. Spencer Smythe. His further plans were then uncertain. 'The French and the plague,' he observes, 'must decide in some measure where I shall go. Be assured that I have no inclination to encounter either disorder; but, oh! those monstrous despots who call themselves republicans. They have degraded the name; they have done more harm to real liberty than they ever promised to do good.' It is interesting to note from this and the following passage how the feelings of a true lover of liberty, a theoretical republican, and a former admirer of the principles of the French Revolution, changed towards the people and the government that preached brotherhood and freedom, while it practised cruelty and oppression:[1]

[1] His friendship with the exiled aristocrats may have had something to do with this change of feeling.

'The inordinate ambition of the five kings of France [the pentarchial directory]; their utter contempt of their own principles in every one of their own acts of interior government; their profligate usurpation of power in annulling elections and ruling by military force; their hateful plunder of their own infatuated allies; their arrogant and disgusting pretensions to universal sovereignty, and to all the property of the affiliated republics; together with their fulsome panegyrics upon their own virtue, their patriotism, their superiority to the ancients, and that purity of honour which in no one instance they have not violated with the most offensive and nauseous aggravations;—all this horrible union of whatever is calculated to wound a feeling and a generous spirit, makes me especially execrate those who, having had the fairest chance of benefiting the human race, have converted all their medicines into poisons. Their conduct towards America, and more especially towards Switzerland, transports me with rage. The French have done an eternal injury to the cause of freedom; they have misassigned its holy name and its divine attributes to despotism in its worst form—to violence personating justice.'

The traveller spent the whole summer in or near Constantinople, relinquishing his plans of a tour in Egypt in consequence of the disturbed state of the country. 'Rebels on one hand,' he writes on September 10, 'and the French on the other; a tottering government and a discontented people; the strongest fortress of European Turkey invaded; add to all this the plague in every quarter, and you will easily imagine why I have chosen to pause rather than to proceed.' Things, however, were beginning to wear a more favourable aspect owing to the news just received of

Nelson's victory over the French at the battle of the Nile, which had spread a great satisfaction throughout the East. 'There have been public celebrations of the victory at Rhodes,' writes Tweddell, 'during the three days that Nelson stayed there; and the Sultan, when he heard of it, took an *aigrette* of diamonds out of his turban (worth at least £1200) and sent it, with a letter signed by himself, to Mr. Smythe, as a present to the Admiral. This is the greatest honour he can confer on any subject; he knows no higher distinction.'

It was not until the end of October that our hero found himself able to set out on his projected tour in Greece, which was to include visits to Nicea, the lake of Apollonia, Sestos and Abydos, the plain of Troy, Smyrna, Ephesus, the Grecian islands, Athens, and the Morea. He had already collected a large number of valuable drawings of Constantinople, its environs, and the costumes of the country, and carried with him on his journey through Greece a clever French artist, M. Préaux, who had been employed by the Comte de Choiseul; and being unable to return to his own country, was glad to make the proposed tour, during which he was to execute drawings of the most interesting buildings and ruins upon very moderate conditions. Not wishing to be burdened with overmuch baggage, Tweddell left all his papers and notes, his collection of drawings, and his journals of the tours in Switzerland and the Crimea, at Pera, with a Mr. Thornton, a servant of the Levant Company, and author of *The Present State of Turkey*.

Naturally, Athens was the principal objective of so ardent a classical scholar. Here he intended to spend at least two months; and 'I promise you,' he writes to his father, 'those who come after me shall have nothing to glean. Not only every temple and every archway, but

every stone and every inscription, shall be copied with the most scrupulous fidelity.' He arrived at Athens on December 29, and here he spent nearly double the proposed period, living, as he writes, 'very economically and philosophically; solely intent upon the great objects that surround us. We rise early, and dine at five o'clock. The whole interval is employed in drawing on the one hand; and on the other, in considering the scenes of ancient renown, the changes which they have undergone, and the marks that yet distinguish them. I shall certainly have the most valuable collection of drawings of this country which was ever carried out of it.' Tweddell believed, it is evident from his letters, that by his laborious investigations he should be enabled to correct and supplement the observations of other workers in the same field. His special qualifications for such an undertaking were stated by no less an authority than Dr. Parr, who says in a letter to Robert Tweddell, written after John's death:—

'I know, and have often said, that in good taste and good learning John Tweddell was more qualified to discover and communicate what scholars would value than any other traveller with whom I was acquainted. . . . He had the finest ear both for the prose and poetry of Greek and Latin writers; he had a gaiety of fancy which must have been of the highest use to him in surveying the works both of nature and art. He had a clearness of judgment which must have preserved him from the impositions to which ordinary travellers are exposed. His mind was impregnated with the poetical imagery of the ancients. . . . In truth, Mr. Tweddell! he was pre-eminently formed to be a learned traveller; and then, dear sir, to ardent curiosity and a right imagination he added that love of truth which must have protected

him from the glittering ornaments and the false statements which often disgust me in Volney and other French writers.'

In March Tweddell was contemplating a tour in the Peloponnesus, and was only waiting at Athens for a Tartar messenger with letters from Constantinople; but on April 25 he is still at Athens, the messenger not having yet arrived. He had received information, however, of the total destruction of Pera by fire, and had every reason to fear that the collections and journals which were deposited with Mr. Thornton were irrevocably lost. 'My share of this calamity appears no doubt very inconsiderable,' he writes, 'yet perhaps I would have consented to lose one-half of all I may one day have rather than the fruits of three years and a half of constant application. . . . Amen! I am wedded to calamity, and so must think no more of this.' These words are worth quoting, as showing the value that Tweddell set upon his papers, which, as it happened, were rescued from the flames by Mr. Thornton, only to suffer a more mysterious fate. The owner heard of the safety of his property during the travels which he undertook during May and June in the Peloponnesus. From thence he returned to Athens in July, intending only to remain there a week, on his way to the Grecian Archipelago.

But the Grecian islands were to remain for ever unseen, for both Tweddell and Préaux the artist were attacked with a malignant fever, of which the former died on July 25 after four days' illness, having only lately passed his thirtieth birthday. He was buried at his own request in the Temple of Theseus; and twelve years later, through the exertions of Lord Byron and other travellers, a block of marble, sawed from one of the bas-reliefs of the Parthenon, was placed over the grave,

bearing a Greek inscription composed by the Rev. Robert Walpole. Many were the expressions of grief and regret called forth from those who had known the dead scholar, and expected him to fulfil the promise of his youth. Dr. Parr, in a letter to Mr. Losh, alludes to Tweddell's death as 'an event which must blast many of my fairest prospects in that portion of existence which is reserved for me. [Dr. Parr died in 1825, aged seventy-eight.] You may assure his father that no man ever esteemed his son more unfeignedly, ever respected him more deeply, ever loved him more fondly than myself.'[1] Several other admirers struggled valiantly, if unsuccessfully, in elegiac verse with the impracticable name of Tweddell, *e.g.*—

> 'There where e'en Tweddell's mortal fire,
> Alas, how soon must all expire!'

And again—

> 'Is Tweddell gone? and shall no voice be raised
> His high endowments or his fate to sing?'

It might be thought that the misfortunes of our hero were over with his death, which perhaps to him was no such unwelcome event. There are many passages in his published letters which show that he suffered from a profound melancholy, caused, it may be, as much by his disappointment in his career as by his disappointment in love. His ambition, he declared, was extinct, his enthusiasm burnt out, all the brilliant society that he had enjoyed since leaving England had made no serious alteration upon the permanent feeling of his mind. 'I have no particular grief at present,' he had written while he was in Sweden, 'but I am not happy; I feel a want of something I once thought necessary to me; and I don't know what it is to possess that tranquil habit of thought

[1] Dr. Parr composed a Latin epitaph for a tablet commemorating John Tweddell, which was placed in the chapel of Haydon, Northumberland.

or feeling which some persons owe to mere health, and others to the tenor of a contented life that has never been disturbed.'

With the literary scandal that conferred a posthumous celebrity on the name of John Tweddell it is not necessary to deal at any length. Briefly, the facts are as follows: After Tweddell's death, Lord Elgin, who had just been sent out as Ambassador Extraordinary to the Porte, ordered that all the dead man's effects (he died intestate) should be sent to the British Chancery at Constantinople. The collection of drawings and manuscripts that had been left at Athens was embarked on board a vessel which was wrecked or stranded in the Sea of Marmora, her cargo remaining under water for three days. The boxes containing Tweddell's property were recovered, and on their arrival at Constantinople were placed in the cellars of the Chancery, where they were left for eight weeks. When at length they were opened, the contents were found to be in a state resembling pulp, but the manuscripts were still legible, and the drawings were 'restored' by a local artist. According to Lord Elgin's account, all the effects, including those that had been deposited with Mr. Thornton, were carefully packed by Professor Carlyle, a member of his suite, and seen on board a homeward bound vessel by his chaplain, Dr. Philip Hunt. This property, valuable at least to the Tweddell family, never arrived in England, nor, in spite of the most anxious inquiries on the part of the dead man's friends, could its whereabouts ever afterwards be traced. It had disappeared as completely and mysteriously as though the earth had opened and swallowed it up.

The matter was allowed to rest for a dozen years; and then, the suspicions of Robert Tweddell having been aroused that his brother's collections had been treated

with culpable negligence, if not actually tampered with, he made further inquiries of Lord Elgin, and receiving no very satisfactory answers, petitioned the Levant Company at Constantinople to institute a searching investigation into the whole matter. The petition was granted, but no further light was thrown on the mystery. Lord Elgin, 'by a strong effort of memory,' expressed his conviction that the goods had been sent home on the *New Adventure*, which had suffered shipwreck on the way. But inquiry proved that her cargo had included no packages belonging to Mr. Tweddell, while no invoice or bill of lading could be discovered to show upon what ship the property had been embarked. On the other hand, Mr. Thornton and other witnesses, who were evidently adverse to Lord Elgin, declared that the drawings and manuscripts had been left lying about at the Embassy, where they were examined and copied by members of the suite, and that some of the original costume drawings were afterwards seen in Lord Elgin's private collection. Mr. Thornton stated that in 1801 Lord Elgin expressed to him the disappointment he had just experienced at the refusal of Dr. Hunt to proceed to Athens for the superintendence of his lordship's *Pursuits in Greece*, adding, 'I had prepared him for the purpose by allowing him the use of Tweddell's papers and collections.'

In 1815 Robert Tweddell published his brother's *Remains* in two quarto volumes, containing his correspondence, his *Prolusiones Juveniles*, and an Appendix (of between two and three hundred pages) describing the extraordinary disappearance of his collections. The editor set forth at full length his communications with Lord Elgin, and did not disguise his suspicions that his lordship had tampered with the property committed to his care. The book (which went into a second edition in

1816) was reviewed in the *Edinburgh*, the reviewer taking a line which, though carefully guarded, was on the whole inimical to Lord Elgin, and demanding that further light should be thrown on the subject. The Ambassador published his defence in the form of an intemperate and not very convincing letter, which concludes with a warning to the editor that if he persists in his evil courses his journal will become an 'intolerable nuisance.' The *Quarterly* also reviewed the book;[1] and while pointing out that the charge of misappropriation was absurd in view of the absence of motive, held Lord Elgin convicted of negligence in his treatment of Tweddell's property.

The subject caused, as might be supposed, a nine days' wonder in the literary world. In the end Robert Tweddell withdrew the most serious of his charges, and the controversy was allowed to drop. Fate, grown tired of its sport with a victim who was unconscious alike of good or evil fortune, allowed poor John to sleep undisturbed in Theseus' Temple, where the traveller may still, in the words of one of those forgotten elegies—

> 'Pause on the tomb of him who sleeps below;
> Fancy's fond hope and learning's favourite child,
> Accomplished Tweddell!'

[1] It was also discussed at considerable length in the *British Critic* and in *Blackwood*.

INDEX

Printed by T. and A. CONSTABLE, (late) Printers to Her Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press